

## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

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Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

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## RESULTS

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mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

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## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

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Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

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The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

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## HYPOTHESES

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1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

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Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

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**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

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In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

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**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

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Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

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The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

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## HYPOTHESES

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1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

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mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

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In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

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Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

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The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

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## HYPOTHESES

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1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

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Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

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**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

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In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

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Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

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mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

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In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

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Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

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The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

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## HYPOTHESES

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1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

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## RESULTS

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mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

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## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

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Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

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The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

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## HYPOTHESES

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1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

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## RESULTS

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mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

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## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

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Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

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The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

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## HYPOTHESES

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1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

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## RESULTS

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mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

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## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

&

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

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**&**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

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Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

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Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

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The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

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## HYPOTHESES

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1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

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## RESULTS

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mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

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## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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## **EFFECTS OF WOMEN EDUCATION (LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL) ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGONILAND, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

**&**

**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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**Dr. Adekola, G**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

Ganiyu.adekola@uniport.edu.ng

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**Kumbe, S.A**

Department of Adult & Non-Formal Education

University of Port Harcourt

sylamakums@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the Effects of Women Education on their participation in Community Development in Ogoniland. The researchers employed the Descriptive Survey Design. Two (2) research questions and Two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 548 women was randomly drawn from a population of 5,485 registered women organizations in Khana and Tai Local government areas. The instrument used to obtain data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Women education and participation in community development (QWPCD)". The instrument had a reliability index of 0.76. Mean analysis was used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that women's acquisition of literacy and vocational education have positive effects on their participation in community development. It was also revealed in the study that there is significant difference between the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended among others, the removal of every cultural and religious belief that impede women education and their optimal participation in community development, provision of free and mandatory education for women from primary to the tertiary institution and establishment of women literacy and vocational education centres in every village in Ogoniland.*

**Keywords:** Women Education, Literacy Education, Vocational Education, Participation, Community, and Community Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the African societies, education of women over time has generated lots of arguments. Some people argued that the place of women is in the kitchen so it is a waste spending time and resources to educate them. Others suggested that since she will ultimately be married out, it is unreasonable to invest in her education. She is to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance her being a good wife and mother (Fafunwa, 1994; Oroka 1996). In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 1999). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building.

Accelerated development in the third world countries hitherto, was geared towards capital accumulation. In recent years however, development whether urban or rural, is hinged on human capacity building. Consequently, improvement in the quality of people as productive agents is the major concern of

development policies. As observed by Onyeozu (2007a) emphasis is now placed on policies needed to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease and to provide more diversified employment opportunities, thus reducing income inequalities. Palm in Onyeozu (2007a:10) defined development "as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons".

One of the potent tools for the development of the human capital is education, whether formal or non-formal. Considering the recent studies on significance of human capital in the process of development, the education of every unit of the human resource of a nation cannot be down played in the path to development. However, Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Ugwu and Oyensehi (2009) posited that women even now, face numerous restrictions which hamper their acquiring formal education. Eheazu (2009) reports that it is common knowledge that the female sex in many parts of our world is the victim of educational inequalities, leading to their absence in the upper echelons of the economy and the political arena. The United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA (2006)] observed that more than half of the illiterates in the world are women especially so in Africa. United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Okoli (2011) recorded that almost two thirds of the population of the world are females and this accounts for the two thirds of the over one billion people who now live in abject poverty. It further revealed that in the Pacific, Southern Asia and Sub- Saharan Africa 83% girls do not go to school. The New Partnership for African Development [NEPAD (2002)] reported as tragic the situation where over 50% of the population of women in Africa is illiterate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when knowledge is of utmost importance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) equally recorded that; girls are 60% of the 300 million children of school age who are not in school.

Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics revealed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by Eweama (2009) who reports an employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria.

Adebosoye-Makinwa (1991) stressed that the education of women has the ability to revive and strengthen traditional skills and build confidence in women in their pursuit for upliftment. She blames traditional barriers and burden of family as constraints to women attaining education and participating and contributing optimally to national development. Women education therefore, according to Suara (1999) has "salutary spin-off" on the pace of economic growth and development. Much work has been done by women development scholars on women education and national development (Idakwo, 1996; Okoli, 1996; Oji, 2000; Okemini and Chukwuemeka, 2011) but not much focus on the rural communities of Ogoniland.

Ogoniland in Rivers State (Niger Delta), Nigeria is a major oil producing area. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that Ogoniland is bedevilled with environmental degradation especially of oil spill that pollutes both the water and farmlands in all communities in Ogoniland. This environmental problem has resulted in serious health and socio-economic challenges among dwellers of Ogoniland for which the inhabitants have been clamouring for compensation especially the implementation of the UNEP 2011 report on compensation from Shell British Petroleum, a major oil company whose oil exploration led to spillages in Ogoniland. This therefore reveals the need for education, especially among the womenfolk who are the most hit by the challenges. However, according to Adekola and Kumbe (2012) evidences abound that the education of women in Ogoniland until recently had not been given priority because of the social prejudice against the girl-child and women in general. They were mainly encouraged to be involved in domestic and farm work; also many of them were given out as house helps to nearby and distant places. This attitude of under-valuing women and the girl-child and giving them an inferior status invariably affected their being educated. For instance, the findings of Roberts in Idakwo (1996) on Parental Attitude towards the Education of Female Children in the then Bori Local Government Area (now Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas) revealed that 76% of families in the face of scarce resources would prefer to send their boy instead of the girl to school. Sons were generally preferred to the daughters when it came to education except the girl came from an affluent background and sometimes the girls were withdrawn from school for early marriages.

Kumbe (2009) revealed that culture in Tai (Ogoniland) has a very strong influence on the formal education of the girl-child due to its patriarchal family system as in most other African tribes. Females were relegated to the background to submit to males' domination such that in education, girls were given second place. This prejudice is carried on even when girls are in school because as revealed by Imam in Idakwo (1996) they were often persuaded to read courses related to how to manage the home and family, arts and social science to qualify as teachers, secretaries, nurses etc and actively discouraged them from taking science related subjects that will lead to technological and scientific careers. This invariably impedes their contributing optimally to all areas of national and specifically community development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars all over the world agree that education is an instrument per excellence to bring about change and development in man and his environment. Therefore education is a tool relevant to the life of everybody. The structure of the population of Nigeria has shown that women constitute about half. However data on literacy has also revealed that most of the women are illiterates and this is associated with some gender-based hindrances that retard access of the womenfolk to education. There is no doubt that education and development are linked but the hindrances to education among women especially in the rural areas like Ogoniland where many of the women lack education leave much to be desired. If education positively correlates with development and women form a major proportion of population in Ogoniland, then underdevelopment is practically obvious. If the bulk of women's population that is illiterates in Ogoniland is exposed to functional literacy and vocational education, it would empower them to effectively participate in the community. It is the need to investigate the extent of participation of women in community development arising from their level of education and the effects that acquisition of education (Literacy and Vocational) would have on their participation in community development that constitutes the problem of this study

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of women education (literacy and vocational) on their participation in community development in Ogoniland, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Expose the difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. Determine the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on the participation of Ogoni women in community development?
2. What are the differences in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

## HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.
2. There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development in Ogoniland.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This is because this design through a systematic data collection seeks to identify and describe an existing phenomenon with a relatively large number of sample subjects representing the entire group. The population of the study was 2,151 members of the 49 registered women organizations in Khana and 3,334 members of the 80 registered women organizations in Tai Local Government Areas of Ogoniland. This gives a total population of 5,485 for the study.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of the membership size in each of the women organizations used for this study. This gave 215 women for Khana and 333 women for Tai Local Governments. Thus a total of five hundred and forty-eight (548) women participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Women Education and Participation in Community Development (QWEPCD)'. The instrument was structured in line with the modified 4- point Likert Rating Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) i.e. SA (4points), A (3 points), D (2 points), SD (1 point).

The instrument was exposed to validity and reliability test. It recorded a reliability index of 0.76 before it was administered on the respondents. Mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the research questions. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The results were presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

What are the effects of education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development?

**Table 3.1: Mean analysis of effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
1	Education (literacy and vocational) enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification in community development.	3.37	Agree
2	Education (literacy and vocational) greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development.	3.37	Agree
3	Educated Ogoni woman participate better in resource mobilization for community development than the illiterates.	3.32	Agree
4	Education (literacy and vocational) empower Ogoni women to participate effectively in implementation in community development.	3.32	Agree
5	An educated Ogoni woman can participate better in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes.	3.41	Agree
6	Education enhances the Ogoni women's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.	3.51	Strongly agree
	Grand mean $\bar{x}$	3.38	Agree

Item one in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.37 this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education enhance Ogoni women's participation in need identification for community development. Item two shows a mean score of 3.37. It implies that respondents agree that literacy and vocational education greatly empower Ogoni women to participate in planning of community development projects

Item three in table 3.1 recorded a mean of 3.32 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that respondents agree that with education, Ogoni women would participate better in resource

mobilization for community development. A mean of 3.32 was derived from respondents weighted response on item four. This indicates that literacy and vocational education will positively affect Ogoni women participation in the implementation of community development. For item five, a mean of 3.41 was recorded from the weighted responses of respondents; this is greater than the criterion mean and implied that education has positive effects on Ogoni women participation in monitoring and evaluating of community development programmes. On item six, a mean of 3.51 was derived from respondents weighted responses on this item; this implies that the respondents strongly agree that education will enhance the Ogoni woman's participation in the utilization of completed community development projects.

On a final analysis, a grand mean of 3.38 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in table 1. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of Ogoni women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects in Ogoniland.

## Research Question 2

What are the differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland?

**Table 3.2: Mean Analysis on differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.**

S/N	Items	Mean of types of women education	Remarks
1	Women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development.	3.52	Strongly Agree
2	Women who are literate have better self worth and confidence to participate more actively than the illiterate in community development in Ogoniland.	3.33	Agree
3	Women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and use them to develop their community.	3.39	Agree
4	Illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland.	3.22	Agree
	Grand mean $\bar{X}$	3.36	Agree

In table 3.2, a mean of 3.52 was derived from the weighted responses on item one. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicated that the respondents strongly agree that women who can read, write and compute figures participate better than women who cannot in community development. For item two in the table, a mean of 3.33 was recorded from the weighted responses. This implies that the respondents agree that women who are literate have better self-worth and confidence to participate more actively in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.39 was derived from weighted responses on item three; this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that women who are literate can better interpret modern technologies and apply them in their participation in community development than the illiterates. A mean of 3.22 recorded on item four confirms that illiteracy impedes women's ability to participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. On the final analysis, a grand mean of 3.36 was recorded from the mean scores of respondents weighted responses on all the items in the table 2. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and establishes that there is a difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1** ( $H_01$ ): There is no significant difference between the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. At 0.05 significance level and a degree of freedom of 2, the computed r-cal was 0.823 r-critical value was 0.195. That is; r-cal 0.823 > r-cri 0.195, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) and accept the alternative that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland.

**Hypothesis 2** ( $H_02$ ): There is no significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development. At 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 4, the compared r-cal was 0.927. This is greater than the r-critical table value (r-crit) 0.81, (r-cal 0.927 > r-cit 0.81). We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_A$ ) that there is a significant relationship between women education and participation of Ogoni women in community development.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study are discussed under the following sub-headings.

**Effects of Education (literacy and vocational) on participation of Ogoni women in community development:** The findings on effects of education on participation of Ogoni women in table 1 revealed an overall mean of 3.38. This implies that education has effects on women's participation in the community development process – need identification, planning, mobilization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of completed community development projects in Ogoniland. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) and Okemini and Chukwuemeka (2011) who opined that for women to understand and take their rightful position in developing their community, they really need education. They buttressed this point by stating that raising women's literacy level is in many ways a prerequisite for improving their socio-economic status and increasing their influence on decision and policy making in all matters including community development. Similarly Nzeneri (2008) explains that education plays a key role in every society and embraces all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, helping him to survive and evolve in a changing world to adapt to constant changes for development and advancement. The finding also supports Indabawa (1996) position that education is a tool par excellence for the facilitation of women's involvement in the development process and that lack of education usually deprive women opportunity of accessing modern technologies.

**Differences in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland:** The findings on difference in the participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland as contained in table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.36 from the weighted responses. This is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore indicates that there is difference in the level of participation of literate and illiterate women in community development in Ogoniland. All the respondents agree that literate women as against the illiterate ones have better self-worth, confidence, can interpret and use modern technologies, and generally participate optimally in community development in Ogoniland. This corroborates Ojo (1996) that literate women unlike the illiterate ones, make informed choices, participate more fully in a complex modern society, take greater responsibility for their own productivity, contribute more fully to the society, maintain better levels of health and better understand how to care for the environment. The finding is also in line with Adekola (2007), Adekola and Oyebamiji (2008) and Adekola and Oyebamiji (2009) that literacy enhances women participation in solid waste management, promotes their patronage of primary health facilities and that literate women have better understanding of atmospheric pollution and global warming than the illiterates.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that education plays a major role in the life of individuals both male and female and have positive effects on their attitudes to development, especially how the grassroots women in rural communities like Ogoniland participate in the development of the communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on this conclusion the following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) The Nigerian government should make provision for free and mandatory education for women from primary to tertiary levels to enable them participate adequately in community development.
- (ii) The Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Mass Media and Churches, should intensify campaigns through talks, seminars/ workshops, film-shows and preaching on the need to abolish every traditional practices and beliefs that impede and stifle the education of women and subsequently affects their participation in community development in Ogoniland and the entire country.
- (iii) Educated women in Ogoniland who have excelled in various fields should serve as role models and mentor the illiterate ones by organizing sensitization seminars, workshops, talk shows, literacy and vocational education classes.
- (iv) Effective Adult Literacy and vocational education centres should be established in every village in Ogoniland by the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non -Formal Education to widen access to literacy education and empower the women to participate more actively in community development.

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