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Gendered Leadership Dynamics and Rural Community Development in Nigeria: The Case Study of Iyaloja and Iyalaje Women Leaders in Ekiti State

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Introduction

Rural areas are usually referred to as small, inward-looking, and idyllic communities held together by kinship relations and supporting basic agricultural occupations (Ekong, 2003). The characteristic features that differentiate rural from urban areas include: size, particularly areas inhabited by the people, low population density, homogeneity, presence of few social classes, low standard of living, presence of few / no social amenities such as electricity, pipe-borne water, low social mobility, mainly agrarian in nature – producing the bulk of food consumed in urban areas and the attendant drifting of young able-men to cities in order to benefit from the urban resources and modern life. People living in rural areas are characterised by low capital investment, low savings, and low production. The poverty level is usually higher among women than men. Women continue to struggle with dual responsibilities of economic production and domestic labour, while most of them are confronted by poverty, illiteracy, high health risks, inadequate access to productive resources, and lack of credit/market access. Land ownership in rural areas determines the asset for production as well as access to credit and agricultural support services and the social power to negotiate for resources and membership in decision-making agencies. Paradoxically, most countries still lack adequate provision for women to hold land rights independently of their husbands or male relatives. Statutory laws often do not ensure independent land rights for women (FFTC, 2008). Also, technological development and extension programs have not been responsive to household drudgery associated with different production activities undertaken by women. Persisting gender biases, deep-seated community dynamics and time constraints prevent women from actively participating in programmes intended to bring about social capital benefits and female empowerment.

Several attempts and approaches have been adopted to bring about rural development. Most of these are top-down approaches which impact little on rural development and most especially on the womenfolk. According to Ozor and Nwankwo (2008), the true success of a comprehensive economic and social development programme in Nigeria is primarily dependent upon the extent to which it contributes to the well-being of those living in rural areas. Usually, community development programmes should aim; at creating awareness of rural possibilities; providing information on resources, inputs and infrastructure; deploying technical assistance; skills acquisition and development; increasing literacy levels; improving productivity and productive systems; adapting appropriate technology in agriculture; sensitizing potential volunteers and donors as well as focus on peoples' felt needs and basic amenities such as the provision of good roads, electricity, health clinics, markets, school buildings, and farm settlements among others. An attempt to achieve these laudable goals requires the intervention of good leadership. When good leadership is provided, the people would participate voluntarily in the accomplishment of stated objectives.

The approach to rural community development is always through local leaders who not only act as pioneers of projects but also help in influencing and motivating their people to action. Under the past regimes, the womenfolk was penetrated and used to secure political position through their leaders by

voting after which they were dumped. Though women may contest for elective posts but they are usually defeated by men. Women, according to Ubi (2007), constitute at least half of the human race, yet on the basis of three recognized dimensions of inequality- class (economic situation) status, (social position) and political power, women occupy secondary place in relation to men, a position which correlates in many respects with that of minorities. Nigerian women have been marginalized in all spheres of life and most especially in democratic governance (Sofola, 2008). Since post-independence period in Nigeria, women have been clamouring for inclusion in all spheres of life. The need for women's empowerment and political participation has been seen and regarded as an effective means of attaining a just and egalitarian society as well as rural/urban development. In view of this, Nigeria becomes a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and part of the nations committed to the international agreement in Beijing-platform for action to a document that should take measures to ensure women's access to full participation in power structure and decision making as well as increase women's capacity to participate in decision making and leadership. Despite all these, the *status quo* of Nigerian women remains the same.

In Ekiti State every town and village have an *Oba (*king)*,* and within the traditional settings, very few women are installed by the *Oba* to leadership positions among which are the *Iyalojas* and *Iyalajes* . These installed represent women on the traditional board and advocate for the improvement of the lots of women. In the present political dispensation in Ekiti State, the women leaders thought of the way out of their problems and thus formed themselves into formidable groups, and have extended their roles beyond the traditional institutional permissions as they also perform political functions. Through their role dynamics, the *Iyalojas* and *Iyalajes* embrace the use of feminism approach and self-propelling advocacy to participate effectively in community governance. It is in this light that this study aims at examining the female-gendered embodiment of *Iyalojas* and *Iyalajes* and their role dynamics and impact on rural development.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between gender leadership role and rural development

Literature Review

The words rural and community development have been used interchangeably. Rural development, in general, is used to denote the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban [neighbourhoods](#), [countryside](#)s, and remote [villages](#). Rural development actions mostly aim at the [social](#) and [economic development](#) of the areas. Community development, according to Ekong, (2003), is a conscious and deliberate effort aimed at helping communities recognize their needs and to assure in carrying out responsibilities for solving their problems, thereby increasing their capacity to participate fully in the lives of the nation.

According to Sanders (as cited in Ekong (2003), community development is regarded as a method or procedure of tackling the problem of community, organized in order to bring about economic development. Some social scientists think that community development is a process, focuses upon the sequences through which community or their segments go as they move from a pre-industrialized to an industrial age or a similar kind of overall change.

The United Nations (UN, 1956) defines community development as a process by which the efforts of

the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities in order to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. In this context, community development is seen to be made up of two essential elements. One is the participation of the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiatives. Two is the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiatives, self-help or mutual-help and consequently make these services more effective. This is expressed in programmes designed to achieve a wide variety of specific improvement.

Considering all the varied conceptualizations of the term 'community development', it is obvious that community development emphasizes the following- self-help, attention to community-felt needs, and the development of community as an integrated whole and technical assistance. To help bring a rural community to action, it is necessary for individuals and groups to provide good leadership.

Leadership is described as the "process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. According to Keith (as quoted in Wikipedia, 2009)"Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen." Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills. Good leadership makes the followers want to achieve high goals, rather than simply bossing people around. (Boulding, 2009). For any rural community development to be successful, influential local leaders must be involved, else they might undermine the progress of such programmes. Traditional authority, according to Wikipedia (2009), is a form of leadership in which the authority of an organization or a ruling regime is largely tied to tradition or custom.

Traditional leaders are the custodians of culture. They have a very important role to play in promoting sustainable development by influencing progressive behaviours and practices that are rooted in positive values and forward-looking traditions and norms. Women, according to Lindaelswick (2009), have been seen as a driving force for rural development, hence for any community development to take place, there is the need to involve women leaders. However, evidential data show that women are still stereotyped and marginalized when it comes to sharing power and assigning political responsibilities. Gender disparity has been of concern and has generated a great deal of interest from the citizenry. In Nigeria 49% of the population of 140 million people are women. In the agricultural sector of the economy, women are responsible for the reproduction of the labour force and production of about 70% of the nation' food supply but have access to less than 20% of production resources such as land, agricultural input and credit facilities available in the agrarian sector. In the formal economic sector, women constitute about 18% of the work-force and majority of these are found at the lower cadre as cleaners, messengers and paramedical staffs. In the political arena, throughout the world, women, according to GTZ (2009), face obstacles to equal participation in political decision-making processes. Although female representation at national levels has increased in recent years, progress remains marginal and slow. The advocated ideal of parity between men and women in national legislatures is still a distant goal. Women in Nigeria, according to Adereti (2005), were grossly underrepresented in party membership as well as in the decision-making structure of the party .This, according to Alao (2007), emanated from the exclusion of women from political governance and leadership in the colonial

rule which introduced the British single sex model of administration as it was practised in other British colonies. The basic promise of the colonial gender ideology was based on the principle that women are not to function in public domains as men but to be domesticated, According to GTZ (2009), multiple factors that hinder women's political participation include male-dominated cultures of formal political processes, traditional gender roles that exclude women from the public political sphere, absent or weak networks among women and lack of knowledge concerning public rights and duties, imbalances in access to education and resources, as well as unequal share of the burdens of reproduction. The womenfolk are being discriminated against in leadership and educational policies. This makes them play the role of the second fiddle and suffer many loses. According to Lewu (2005), political instability arising from frequent and uncoordinated changes of government hinders political participation of women. The prevailing intra-party politics makes it difficult for women to get party nomination to contest elective posts because there are few women party members, even the few party women are unable to capture significant party offices, consequently, the very low level of representation at the party executive level impact negatively on them as decisions and shadow elections are made at that levels. Some parties even refuse the candidature of women and thus, after campaigning with their resources, they are dropped at nomination level in favour of male candidates.

Despite being chained by various hurdles, women leaders according to Gayatridevi (cited in Radheshyam, 2009) have shown the way for bringing about development. Women farmers are the main food producers in developing countries. Their economic empowerment to produce more and to participate in policy formulation is critical to addressing poverty and food insecurity. Just as the social and the political aspects of the society affect the outcome of development programme and planning, so do the traditional sex roles and occupation. However this aspect of development has been ignored and the possible contribution of a woman has been discounted. Policy makers have apparently assumed that there is a consistency of sex roles throughout the world. According to Tickner (2001), development planners have constructed policies that in many cases have undermined the traditionally relative independent roles of women in many societies. Policies made by them have tended to be for men and to have discounted half of the population.

In order to bring about improvement in the conditions of women, there is need for women empowerment. Empowerment, according to Bergriffswelt,(2007), means providing resources to people in disadvantaged situations, so that they can strengthen their own capacities in order to fully participate in the community and to articulate their interests. This requires the full participation of all affected people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions that determine the well-being of societies. Empowerment of women is a 'bottom-up' process of transforming gendered power relations as well as social, economic, legal and political institutions. Increasing women's participation and improving their shares in resources, land, employment and income relative to men, are necessary and sufficient for lasting changes in their economic and social position. This can not be achieved in the absence of the existence of good gender relations and interaction between men and women. Gender relations are determined by the social, cultural and economic organisation of a society as well as by dominant religious, legal and moral conceptions. The nature and characteristics of gender relations affect access to power and resources, to political influence or status within society. In many societies, men and women have unequal power, and men, as a group, enjoy social and institutional power to command women's bodies, intellect, labour and fruits of their goods. But since gender relationship is a social construct, it can therefore be changed. For any change to take place there is need for a deliberate attempt or effort on the part of the change agents. In most societies, leaders have significant

roles to play in bringing about change. A change agent must be dynamic.

Feminist Model of Political Economy

Feminism is a political, cultural, and economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism includes [sociological](#) theories and [philosophies](#) concerned with issues of [gender difference](#). It is also a movement or advocacy which campaigns for [women's rights](#) and interests. Nancy Cott defines feminism as the belief in the importance of [gender equality](#), invalidating the idea of gender hierarchy as a socially constructed concept

Feminist political economy (FPE), according to Riley (2008), is one among several heterodox systems of economics that challenge the reigning orthodox neo-liberal economic model and focuses on the provisioning of human needs and human well-being. It employs gender as a defining category and focuses on the actual lived experience of women, men and families and what it means to be a human person. A feminist political economic approach "reveals and clarifies how gender determines or influences the social and political relationships and structures of power and the differential economic effects that flow from these relationships and structures (Interpares, 2004). Feminist model of political economy assumes a connected interdependent individual whose behaviour includes activities related to reproduction and as well as production The model, according to Ubi (2008), is based on the assumption that the personal is political and that the intimacy of personal relations within families and between colleagues is directly involved in the production of political economy as experienced and explained by women. The model posits that there is unity between the economy and people's lives but capitalists came to rent asunder this unity while profit becomes the main focus of production. The agenda of political economy remained structured by the ruling apparatus who pre-defines what the main business of political economy should be, what it should talk about and what it should ignore.

Feminist approach to political economy embraces the bottom-up approach in which those at the periphery of the economy are taking into consideration in decision-making, and advocates that political economy should not begin from the accumulation of capital but from the situation of the people in their actual lives. It is believed that once the political economy is re-defined as the enhancement of people's lives, rather than accumulation of profit, then women's work will become central to its analysis. It has basic assumptions about the individual, state and class. It considers the individual as the basic unit of analysis with men as a class, as well as children, depending on the multiple services provided by home makers, in return for the provision of housekeeping allowances. The model portends the fact that the servant role of women is also critical for the expansion of consumption in the world economy and that the consideration of the role will enable women gain some forms of economic independence, which in turn will translate into other forms of empowerment in every sphere of the polity. This will negate the traditional political economy whereby women's work is seen as marginal, living upon wages of productive works while not producing anything themselves. Women empowerment therefore, according to Baden (1999), refers to a situation whereby women take control over their lives, setting their own agendas, gaining skills building self confidence, solving problems and developing self-reliance. Ubi (2008) also sees women empowerment as a process by which women gain ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change at the higher level than previously allowed or thought possible. This may take the form of women-led campaign, women rights or meaningful involvement of women in various spheres of life. Thus women empowerment exists for the purpose of promoting civil engagement, participating democracy, popular education and gaining

authority- political, social or economic – to function effectively in the society.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Ekiti State, Nigeria. A multi-stage random sampling technique was employed in selecting eight out of 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the State. In each LGA, four villages were randomly selected, while in each village, 3 respondents were purposively selected, thus making a total of 96 respondents.

A pre-tested interview schedule and focused group discussion were utilised for the study. The general meeting of the *iyalojas* was attended to get acquitted with their activities. Findings were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics while graphs, pie-charts and histograms were used in result presentation. Probit Model was employed to ascertain the relationship between respondents' political participation and rural development. Other rural development determinant variables were also included as regressors in the model.

The explicit probit regression model used is specified as follows;

$Pr(Y_i = 1) = f(\beta_i X_{i)} + e_i$ Where;   Y is a dichotomous dependent variable which can assume the value of 0 or 1. It measures rural development status of the respondents. The dependent variable (Y) takes the value '1' for rural development and '0' otherwise. Table 1 below shows the description and measurement of the explanatory variables.

Table 1: Description and measurement of the study variable

Variable	Description	Measurement
X_1	Participate in National prog.	Dichotomous participate,1, No participation,0
X_2	linkage with min of women affairs	Dichotomous linkage,1, No linkage,0
X_3	linkage with governance	Dichotomous linkage1, No linkage,0
X_4	women education	years of education
X_5	Disseminate Health Information	Dichotomous, Disseminate ,1, None,0
X_6	participate in government prog	Dichotomous: participate 1: No Participation, 0
X_7	Credit procurement	Amount in ₦
X_8	Communicate Community needs	Dichotomous communicate,1, No communication,0
X9	Group formation/recognition	Number of groups

Social Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Data in table 1 shows that 10.4% of the respondents are below 40 years of age ; 26.0% are between 41-50 years, 54.2% are between 51-60 years while 9.4% are between 61-70 years. The mean age of the respondents is 53.4.

A few(8.3%) of the women leaders had no formal education, 29.2% attained primary six certificate, 16.7% attended Modern school certificate, 17.7% attended secondary schools while 28.1% obtained tertiary education. Majority of the women leaders had large family size with 17.7% having above 10 family sizes 46.9% have between 8-10 family size, 22.9% have between 5-7 family size and 12.5% having 3-4 members. Only a few (7.3%) have no dependant relatives; 15.6%, 39.6%,5.2%,8.3%, 11.5% and 12.5% have 1 ,2,3,4,5 and 6 dependants in that sequential order .Majority (60.4%) of the

respondents are married, 18.8% are divorced while 20.8% are widowed.

From table 1, it could be deduced that majority of the women leaders are young and of working age, full of experience, hence are expected to be able to carry out their leadership roles effectively while combining it with their own entrepreneurship.

The education status of the *Iyaloja's* and *Iyalaje's* in Ekiti state is very low. Majority of them have large family sizes and a large number of dependents. The large family size combined with the dependents might affect their expenditure in terms of meeting the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. This in turn may affect the amount invested on their business enterprise

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency (96)	Total
Age		
<40 years	10	10.4
41-50 years	25	26.0
51-60 years	52	54.2
61-70 years	09	9.4
		100.0
Highest level of education		
No formal education	08	8.3
Primary six	28	29.2
Modern 3	16	16.7,
secondary school	17	17.7
Tertiary education	27	28.1
		100.0
Family size		
3-4	12	12.5
5-7	22	22.9
8-10	45	46.9

>10	17	17.7
		100.0

Number of dependents		
1	7	7.3
2	15	15.6
3	38	39.
4	05	6 5.2
5	08	8.3
6	11	11.5
7	12	12.5

Post held		
Iyaloja	32	33.3
Iyalaje	32	33.3
Iyalode	32	33.3

Duration of Installation to pos	25	25.2
t<5 years	36	37.5
6-10 years	12	12.5
11-15 years	23	24.0
Above 15 years		

Marital statues		60.4
Married	58	0.00
Single	0	18.8
Divorced	18	20.8
Widowed	20	

Source: By the author from field work, 2009.

About 60.4% of women have their husbands as the heads of the family while 39.6% are heads of their

own family.(Fig 1) . Although a large number of the women leaders are married but the higher percentage of the women acting as heads of the family increase the women burden. According to Sylvia (2003), the idea that the mounting 'feminisation of poverty' can be attributed partially, if not substantially, to rising female household headship.

Figure 1: Heads of the family
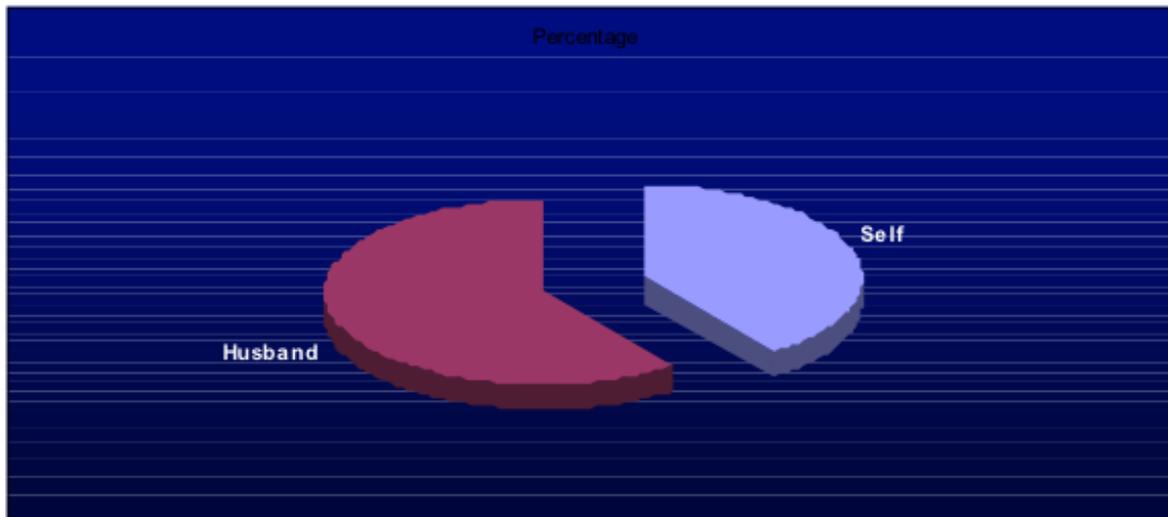
Source: By the author from field work, 2009.

Each of the villages has three women leaders; *Iyaloja's, Iyalaje's* and *Iyalode's* are appointed as Chiefs by the village *Obas* with the *Iyaloja's* as the chairperson or head of the 3 women leaders, *Iyalaje's* are vice- chairpersons while *Iyalodes* act as public relation officers. The 3 of them work hand in hand within the market sector and in other engagements assigned to them.

Majority (37.5%) of the women leaders have been appointed to the post for about 6-10 years, 24.0% have occupied the post over 15 years, and 12.5% have occupied the post for about 11-15 years while only 5.2% spend less than 5 years on the post. The position of the *Iyaloja's, Iyalaje's* and *Iyalode's* are life long posts except for poor performance. Of all the people interviewed only a person indicated that she was made to replace another woman due to poor performance.

Meetings are conducted at four major levels vis-avis; the village, Local government, State and at the National levels.

The women leaders conduct weekly meetings at the village level within the market sector or at the house of the chairpersons. In most villages where they operate periodic markets (usually every 5 days), their meetings are held after the closure of the market. Major activities taking place at each meeting include local thrift and savings usually referred to as

" *Arijelabooja*" which literarily means 'benefactors from market proceeds'. Money contributed at each market day is usually given to those who requested for it. This money revolves round the members while payment is made also at each market day. The loan can be used for any purpose varying from increasing business enterprise, payment of children's school fees, burial e.t.c.

At the local government level, all the *Iyalojas* from every village within the local government hold

statutory meetings once in a month in the house of their chairperson in that local government. The *Iyaloja* can be represented by the *Iyalaje's* if not disposed.

At the State level, all the Chairpersons of every local Government hold statutory meetings once in a month with their state chairperson while National meetings are attended by state chairpersons when needs be

Theme of the meeting:

Figure 2 shows the major themes of their meeting, with women empowerment and welfare being the most important reasons followed by market strategies (95.8%) community development matters (93.8%) traditional matters and women projects 83.3% respectively, health matters (70.48%) while community problems form the least (15.6%) of meeting matters. Apart from these, Local, State and National information are usually disseminated to the women folk during these meetings.

Figure 2: Themes of Women Leader's meeting
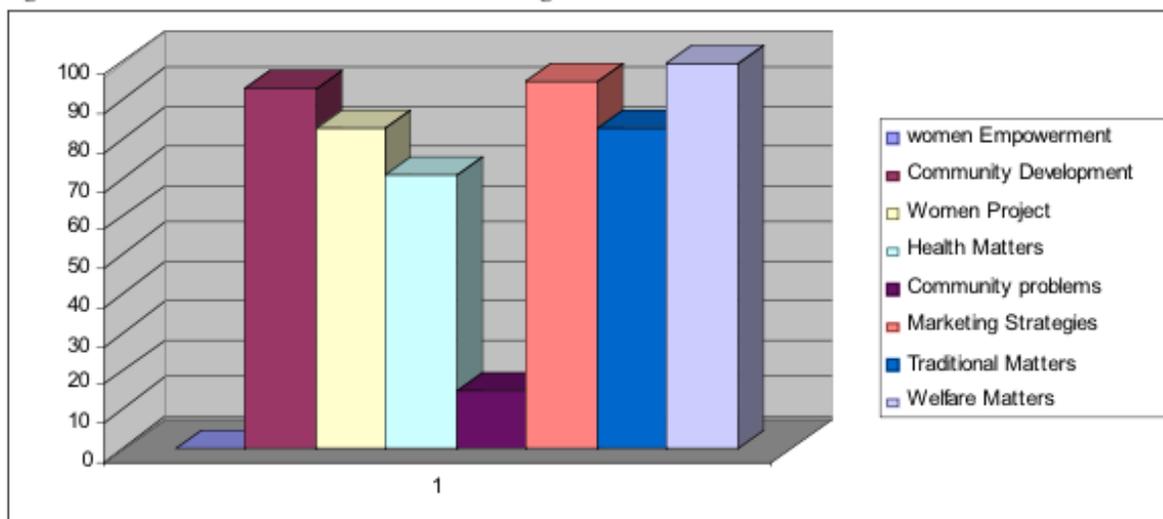
Source: By the author from field work, 2009.

Attempt was made to find out the various political parties they belong to. The women leaders all stated that they do not belong to any political party Parsee but any ruling /reigning party. Hence it can be said that they belong indirectly to the party in government. At the inception of any new government these women leaders identify with the government through visitation of the group members to the first lady as well as the ministry of women affairs, negotiating official meeting with the Governor of the State to establish a formal linkage with them.

Traditional Roles Preformed by Women Leaders.

Data in Table 2 show that within the local sector all (100%) the *Iyaloja's* and *Iyalaje's* perform divergent roles varying from regulating market price, to effecting market tariffs, leadership role among women groups during local festivities, ensuring peace within the marketing sector, settling disputes among women in the market. They also act as intermediary between women and traditional leaders. As much as 93.8% of the women leaders stated that they communicate women problems to local executive meetings as well as sensitizing women on current issues on health, family welfare and children's care respectively; 89.6% took quick action during emergencies, 88.5% represent women in

traditional meetings, 83.3% engage din the enforcement of norms and folkways among women while 66.7% perform rituals when necessary.

Table 2: Traditional roles performed by Women Leaders

Traditional Roles performed.	Frequency	Percentages
Represent women in traditional meeting.	85	88.5
Communicate women's problem to local executive meetings	90	93.8
Sensitizing of women on local issues	90	93.8
Intermediary between women and the traditional leaders	96	100
Enforcement of norms and folk-ways.	80	83.3
Taking quick actions during emergencies.	86	89.6
Performing rituals	64	66.7
Ensuring peace in the marketing sector and community.	96	100
Playing leadership roles during festivities.	96	100
Effecting market tariff	96	100
Market price regulation	96	100
Settling conflict	96	100

Source: By the author from field work, 2009

Table 3 shows the various roles performed by women leaders in the present political dispensation. These were rated on a 5 point likert scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The total response was weighted while the mean was sought. Any score below the mean =3.0 is counted as not significant role played in governance. Going through the table, it was discovered that all the stated roles were significant, hence it could be concluded that the women leaders contribute positively and significantly to governance in Ekiti state in terms of mobilizing women, linking women folks with governance, summoning women groups to government political meetings, disseminating government information and encouraging women to vote during elections.

Table 3: Roles performed in the present political dispensation

Roles performed in the present political dispensation	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean	Level of significant

A. Contact persons in villages	300	80	24	4	16	424	4.42	S
B. Women mobilizers	275	140	06	08	-	429	4.46	S
C. Linking Governance with people in village	310	100	18	06	-	434	4.52	S
D. Encouraging market women to political meetings	100	44	120	50	-	314	3.27	S
E. Acting as Government agency information dissemination	70	48	90	80	-	288	3.0	S
F. Encouraging people to vote for any party or individuals believed having the capacity to lead	275	140	06	04	-	427	4.5	S

Source: By the author from field work, 2009.

Benefits Derived from Governance:

Benefits derived from governance were also placed on a 5 point likert scale in table 4 with mean=3. Of all the benefits stated, provision of electricity (mean 2.7), pipe borne water and youth employment (means 2.4) respectively were not significant. The implication is that the communities did not derive any benefit from these facilities from the government. In terms of electricity provision, the infrastructures are there but the country as a whole is suffering from epileptic power supply. So also the bore holes provided are not functioning including the recently fixed one with the inscription of the Millennium Development Goal. In villages where they function, less than 10% of the population benefit from it even the frequency of water supply among benefactors is very poor/low.

Youth unemployment was a major challenge to the women folk as majority of them complained of having graduates roaming about the street without any job and those that have reached marrying ages

got married with parents feeding them. These compound the level of poverty among women folks.

Major benefits derived from governance includes: school renovation (mean=4.36), health care facilities/renovation of buildings and clinics as well as provision of drugs in clinics (mean=4.21) respectively, provision of stall shops, open and closed shops in the market (mean=3.75) and building of classrooms (mean=3.33). The provision of health facilities is important since health is wealth. It is believed that if the people are healthy they will be able to work for their survival. The constructions and renovation of schools buildings also are also done in pursuit of the realization of improving the educational sector as the state is usually known and referred to as the 'fountain of knowledge' while the provision of credit facilities (mean=4.04) is a means of bringing about women empowerment. Although the credits facilities extend to the different communities differ, some benefited about 35 million naira while others less. The distribution of the credit facilities followed the pattern and amount required for different enterprises engaged in by the women. Some beneficiaries got as much as N100,000, while some N50,000, N20,000 and N10,000 respectively. All these were paid back at regular intervals to government.

The major challenge was that majority of the women did not benefit from the loan. Distribution was carried out using the women leaders' discretion as she is the accounting officer. Another challenge was that the loan supposed to be a revolving one in principle but not in practice.

Table 4: Benefits derived from Governance.

Benefits derived from Governance.	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean	Level of Significant
Electricity	30	112	45	64	15	266	2.7	NS
Stall shops	190	116	30	10	14	360	3.75	S
Classroom building	80	152	24	60	04	320	3.33	S
School renovation	240	140	30	09	-	419	4.36	S
Pipe borne water	30	48	66	90	11	234	2.4	NS
Credit facilities	180	160	30	16	02	388	4.04	S
Employment to youth	25	48	27	20	60	180	1.88	NS
Health care facilities	240	128	18	16	02	404	4.21	S

Building/renovation of clinics	240	128	18	16	02	404	4.21	S
Drugs in clinics	240	128	18	16	02	404	4.21	S

Source: By the author from field work, 2009.

Relationship between roles played by women leaders in governance and rural development

Table 5 shows the regression model of roles played by *Iyaloja's* and *Iyalaje's* in governance and the relationship with rural development. Of all the variables, linkages with the ministry of women affairs, and women's education have no significant relationship with rural development. However, their participation in national program, acting as agents of disseminating health information on family planning, HIV/AIDS, Cancer, and ailments peculiar to mothers and children to community women, constant linkage with the government, acting as women mobilizers, credit procurement, communicating community needs to Government as well as group formation and recognition all have positive and significant relationship with rural development

Table 5: Estimates of the Probit Regression Model

Variable	Coefficients	Standard Deviation
NP	0.132*	0.016
LWA	0.401	0.204
LG	0.223*	0.101
WE	0.289	0.565
DHI	0.490 *	0.380
PGA	0.121**	0.019
CP	0.424*	0.287
CCN	0.130**	0.018
GR	0.347*	0.194

* Significant 5%
** Significant at 1%
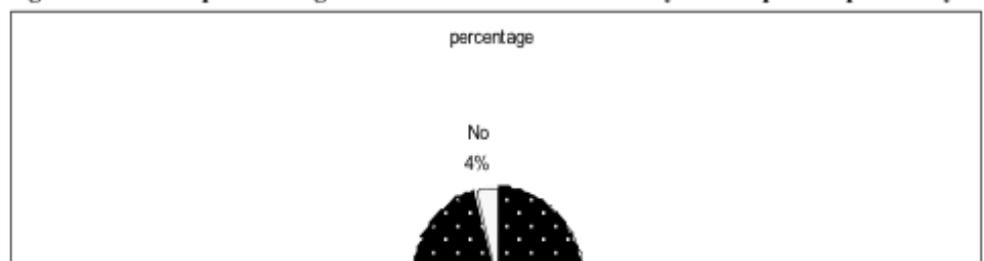Source: Authors field work, 2009

Effect of women leader's participation in governance on rural development

Figure 3 indicates that majority (95.8%) of the women leaders indicated that their participation in governance affects their community development positively and significantly.
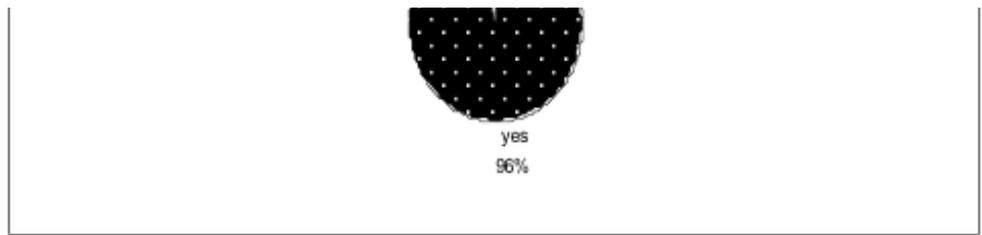
Challenges of the Marketing Sector in Ekiti State

Efforts were made to find out the challenges faced by women leaders which affect the women as a

Figure 3: Participation in governance affects community development positively

whole within the market economy. The greatest of this is the lack of toilets/latrines for faeces/ urine disposal. This was said to have a negative effect on their market duration and sales. It also litters the environment rendering it dirty. Other challenges are irregular payment of civil servant salary which affects the cash flow within the market economy. Others are; lack of Job for youths, poor electricity supply, poor drainage facilities and poor road construction.

yes
96%

Source: By the author from field work, 2009.

Table 6: Problems within the marketing sector that requires urgent attention.

Problems within the marketing sector	Frequency	Percentages
Street drainage	25	26.0
Poor Roads construction	15	15.6
Poor Electricity supply Job creation	90	93.8
Micro credit delivery	92	95.8
Irregular payment of salaries within the civil service	85	88.5
	90	93.8
Toilet/latrines		
	96	100

Source: By the author from field work, 2009.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined gender leadership dynamics in Ekiti state.

The study revealed that majority of the traditional women leaders in Ekiti state are young, matured, married but with low educational status. They have large family size and large number of dependents. They are installed by the kings of their towns and hold meetings at regular intervals at the village, Local government, State and National levels. Issues discussed during such meetings are basically women empowerment and welfare, marketing strategies, women's projects, community development as well as health matters. The Iyaloja's and Iyalaje's belong to all reigning government party and participate in governance through visitation, negotiations, invitation, and group contact. They perform all the traditional roles assigned to them effectively and at the same time romance with reigning/ruling government to perform political functions.

Benefits derived from governance include provision of stall shops, credit facilities, school buildings

construction and renovations as well as health facilities and infrastructures. Major challenges faced by them include inadequate electricity supply, pipe borne water, youth unemployment and credit facilities not revolving among members.

Based on the above, it is recommended that since the position is a life long one, women to be installed should be well educated as this will greatly affect their co-ordinating abilities. A large percentage of the respondents have a large family size despite the campaign and education on family planning, there is need to derive positive measures of ensuring compliance so as to ensure a manageable family size by the next generation of women leaders. More emphasis should be placed on vocational training for women empowerment rather than having a large number engaged in business enterprise with low capital investment. The training programme should be backed up with the provision of essential facilities for take off and supported with adequate credit facilities. The credit facilities extended to womenfolk in business should be increased as well as revolving for continuity. For the sustainability of any economy, regular power supply is germane; hence efforts should be made to ensure regular electricity supply to all villages and towns in Ekiti state. Mobile toilets should be introduced to all market locations in the towns and villages to ease marketing activities as well as maintaining a neat and disease free environment. Most of the community projects embarked upon in Ekiti State are not effective because they are not community-driven. For instance nearly all the villages had boreholes but because the community participation in the project is nil, affects their sustainability. Bottom up and participatory approach should be employed in community programmes for sustainability. Youth employment should be a priority in government agenda as this will have a cumulative effect on women's life and productivity.

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