ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN ONA-ARA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE

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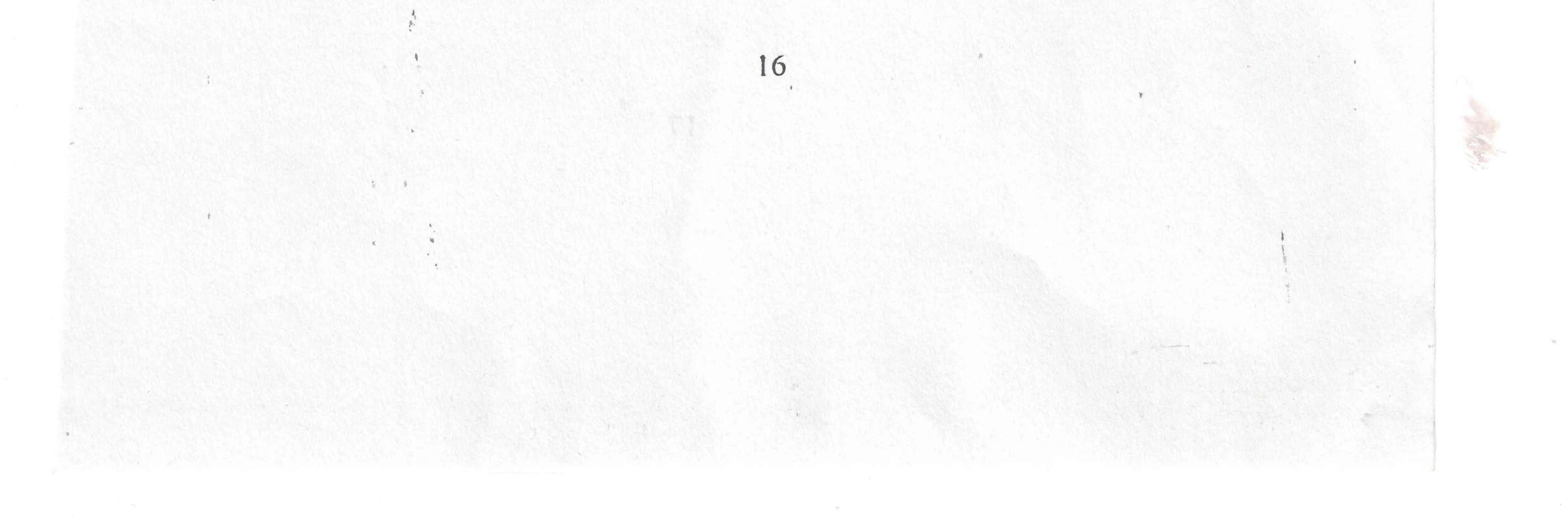
Abstract

This study investigated the roles of Community Women and Development (COWAD) to women's development, participation in their programmes, constraints to such participation and indicators of respondents' (participants) derived benefits, using 80 selected COWAD members. The findings indicate that COWAD contributes to women development in the areas of providing improved agricultural machinery, income generating activities, skill development and adult literacy. The major constraint to participation is inadequate fund, but level of participation in COWAD's activities and respondents age are the highest indicators of benefits derived from COWAD's activities. Assistance to COWAD should, therefore, be in the area of funding, while COWAD itself should focus more of its activities on people's felt needs.

1.0 Introduction

The contribution of the rural areas is very important to the development of the nation as a whole as majority of the people in the country reside in the rural areas. According to Oyedeji (1982), women constitute the majority of this group in Nigeria as well as in many developing countries. They represent about two-thirds of the agricultural labour force in rural areas that provide about 70% of the nations agricultural labour production. Unfortunately, however, the contribution of women were not adequately recognised because they were assumed to be unpaid family labour or helpers to their husbands. They, therefore, remained marginalised members of the society. Government's efforts at developing the rural areas have recently focused on women development to effectively harness their potentials. However, government's inability to provide adequate services and framework for the development of the nation due to economic recession has brought about the prominence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Akinyele 1996). He defined NGOs as association with legal status, financially independent of government, which are actively engaged in political, social, economic and cultural transformation of society. The essence of each association is, therefore, to mobilize people for self reliance and national development. They are multifarious and multi-purpose organisations formed wth or from the initiative of the people. They support a wide range of activities in such areas as health, education, household food security, nutrition and women development, among others. One of these NGOs that supports women development is the Community Women and Development (COWAD)

COWAD has the mandate of improving the socio-economic conditions of the less privileged women in rural and semi-urban areas, and to promote their general welfare and development. COWAD was established in 1982 to meet the educational and training needs of rural women. Areas covered by COWAD's activities include health, child care, food crop production, processing and utilisation, education and training, credit provision and skills development for income generation. Governments have not effectively funded rural development programmes as a result of the economic recession globally. This situation encouraged the NGOs to supplement governments' developmental efforts. It is, therefore, necessary that the activities of NGOs like COWAD are appraised to determine the



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effectiveness of their developmental efforts. This is because rural women are playing important roles in rural development by virtue of their contributions to rural labour force (Adekanye, 1981). In addition, there is the need for empirical data to substantiate the roles of NGOs in women's development in the rural areas. It is against this background that this study investigated the following objectives.

2.0 Objectives

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The objectives of the study are to:

identify the demographic characteristics (age, gender and educational level) of the respondents;

- investigate the various activities carried out by COWAD;
- Identify the important needs of COWAD members;

- assess the level of participation in COWAD activities; 4.
- determine benefits derived from COWAD activities; and 5.
- examine the constraints to members participation in COWAD activities. 6.

3.0 Methodology

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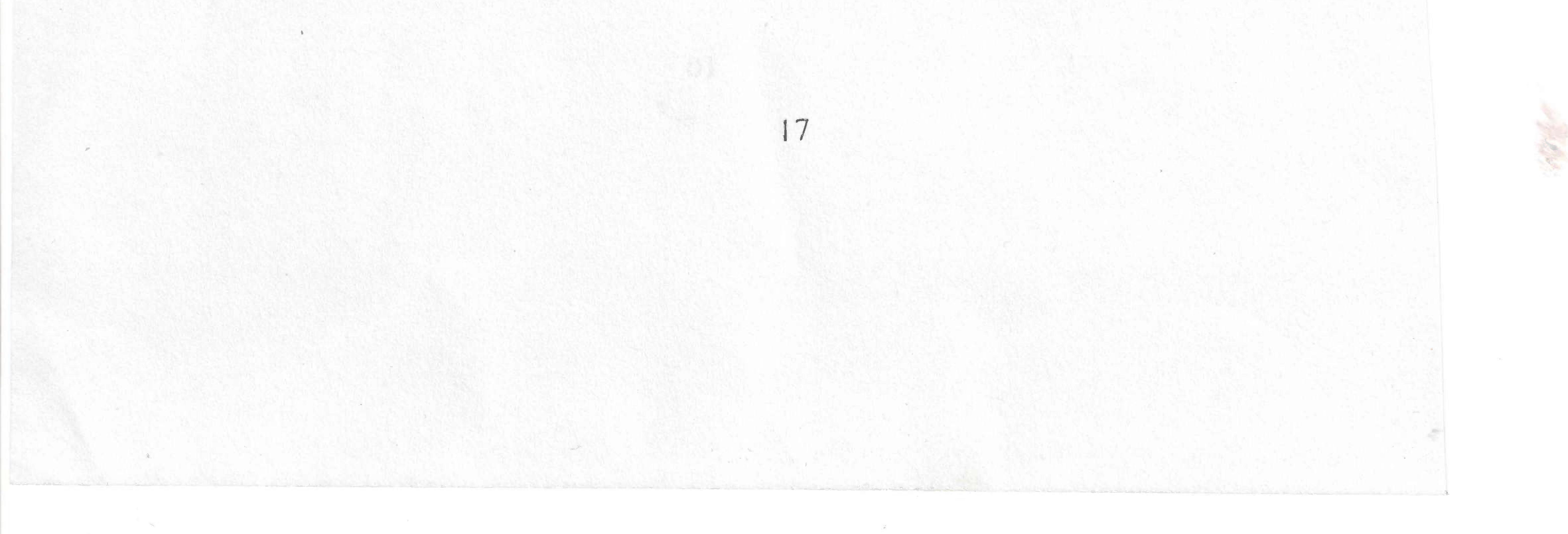
COWAD groups operate in all local government areas in Oyo and Osun states. For the purpose of this study, Ona-Ara Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo state was purposively selected because of its apparent features of rurality. Four hundred women are registered with COWAD. From this population, systematic sampling method was used to select 80 respondents (i.e. 20% for the study). The first person was chosen while every 5th person on the list was selected giving 80 respondents in all. A pretested questionnaire was used to gather information from the selected COWAD beneficiaries. Statistical tools like frequency counts, percentages and multiple regression were used for data analysis. Variables for the study are measured thus:

Important needs of COWAD members: Respondents were asked to indicate their important needs. The options given include: Good roads, farm inputs, processing machines, income generating activities, mass literacy activities and potable water supply.

Level of participation: Participation in development project ascortained the level of individual participation in COWAD activities as determined by asking each respondent which of the following aspects of COWAD activities they actually took part.

> Attend meetings

- Office holders of work
- Monetary contribution
- Physical execution of work
- Monetary contribution and physical execution of work
- Did not participate in any activity. W.



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Benefits derived from COWAD activities: Respondent were asked to indicate the areas in which they have benefited in COWAD activities from the list of the following areas:

- Expansion of business activilles;
- Increased participation in solf holp projects
- Provision of farm inputs;

- Enjoyed credit facilities;
- Improved food crop processing;
- Marketing of farm product
 - Improved farming activities;
- Participation in adult literacy programmes;
- Maintenance of better sanitation at home;
- Improved nutritional education
- Storage of farm products.

A rospondent scores one point for every area she dorives benefit. A respondent's score is thus the aggrogate of her scores in all the areas. The minimum score was () (zero) while the maximum was 11.

Factors that predict benefits derived was mensured with the use of regression analysis. That is regrossion was used to isolate factors that prodict bonefils dorived from COWAD activities. Constraints to mombers' participation in COWAD activilles. Respondents were asked to indicate the major constraints faced in COWAD activitios. The option given include:

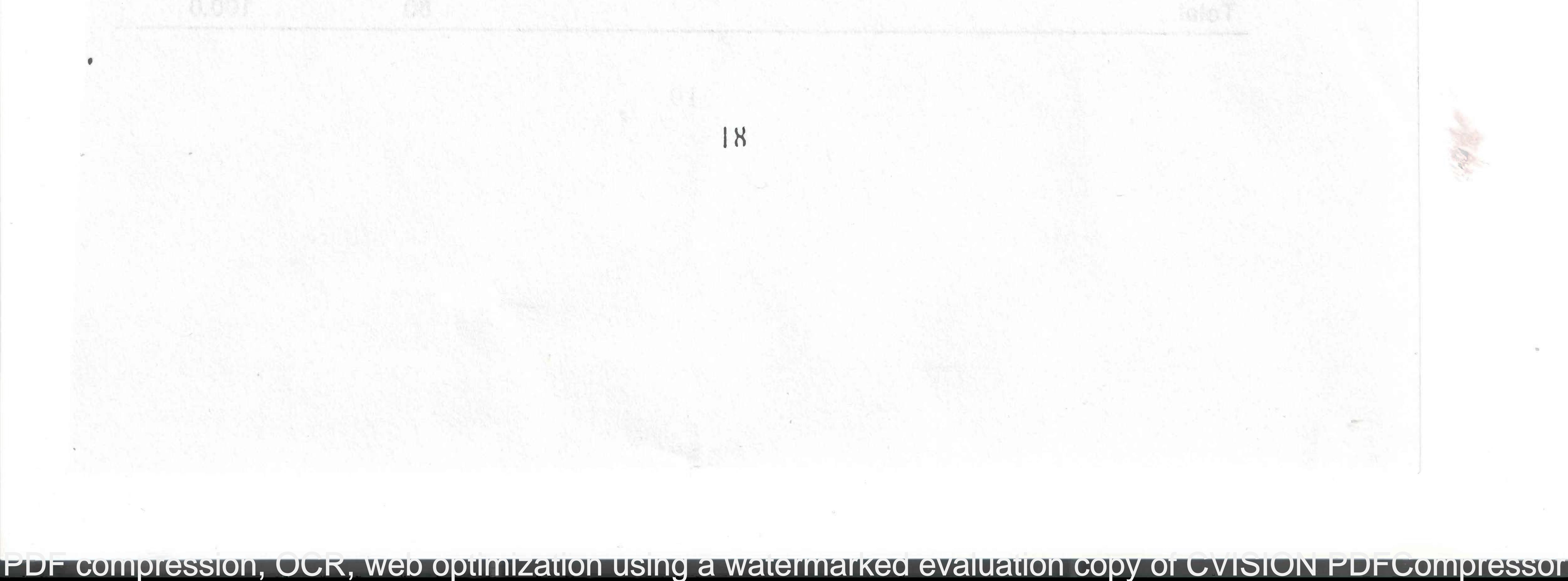
Inadoquato lund а. Inability to pay levios D. Lack of technical expertise C. Marketing of products Conflict of time used on projects with other activities е.

3.0 Rosults and Discussions

d.

3.1 Demographic characteristics

About half of the respondents (46%) are between 20-33 years, with the remaining 54% within the age bracket of 34-47 years. The data further show that about 70% of COWAD members could be regarded as young and energetic because they are between 20 and 40 years old. All the respondents are female, reflecting the nature of membership of COWAD. Almost all of them (92.5%) are married with only few (7.5%) being single. Furthermore, only 20% have no formal education, while the remaining 80% have one form of education or the other. Very few (2.5%) have adult literacy certificate. It is expected that this fairly high level of education will aid their participation in COWAD activities. May be that is why most members (84%) generally agree that they derive one form of benefit or the other from COWAD's activities. Concerning various COWAD members activities, slightly less than half of the respondents (40.5%), engage in farming and trading while 30% engage in only farming. Fifteen percent are teachers and 11.9% are solely traders.



Identified needs of COWAD members in the study area range from income generating activities, (50%) to potable water, (2.5%) Table 1.

Table 1

Important Needs of COWAD Members

Percentage
8.8
20.0
6.2
50.0
12.5
2.5
100.0

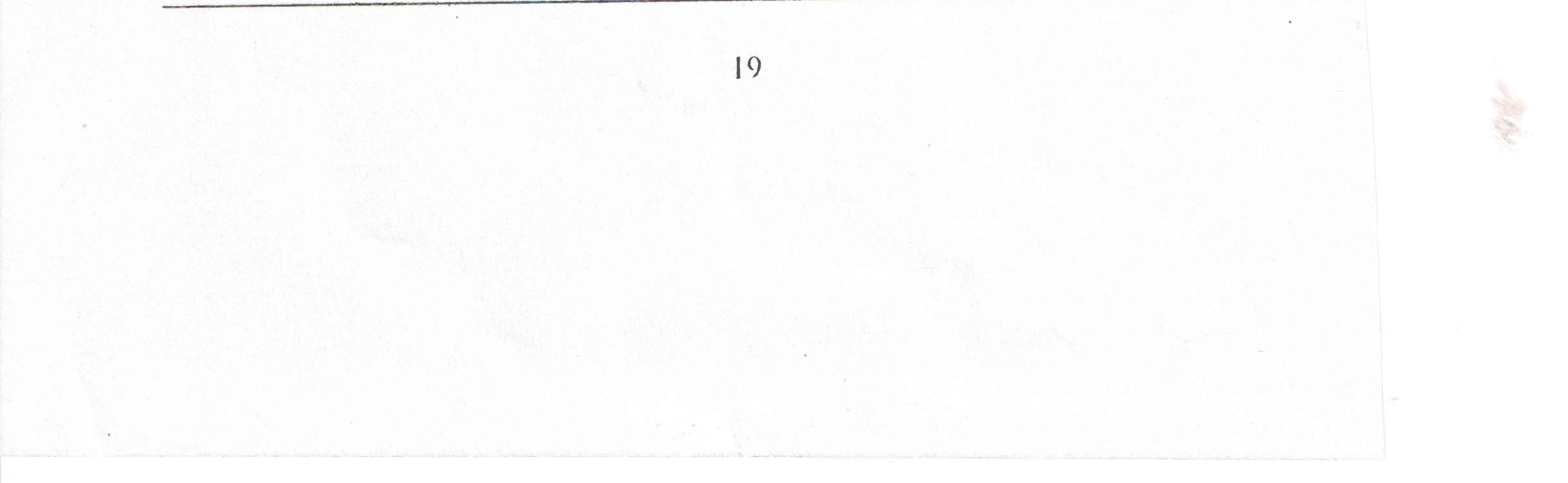
3.2 COWAD's activities and members level of participation

COWAD activities respondents participate include farmers' small Loan (10%), improved agricultural machinery (35%), adult literacy (7.8%), income generating activities (30%) construction of bore-holes (2%), skills development (8%) and supply of farm inputs (5%). Their other activities account for the 3% (Olujide, 1994). It can thus be seen that COWAD activities satisfy the felt needs of its members in the study area. Almost all the respondents (97.5%) participate in COWAD's various activities. Majority of the members (62%) are involved in both monetary contribution and physical execution of work (Table 2).

Table 2

Respondents Level of Participation in COWAD's Activities

	Level of participation	Frequency	Percentage
	Attend meeting	10	12.50
	Committee membership	5	6.25
	Office holders	3	3.75
HI.		5	6.25
iv.	Monetary contribution	5	6.25
V.	Physical execution of work		62.5
vi.	Monetary contribution and physical execution of work	50	
vii.	Did not participate in any activity	L	2.5
Total		80	100.0



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From the foregoing it could be said that respondents' level of participation in COWAD activities is generally high. COWAD mobilisation strategies (their objectives) and the relevance of their activities may be responsible for this. Benefits derived from COWAD activities show that it is high for 40% of the respondents, average for 25%, but low for 35% (Table 3).

Table 3

Benefits Derivoid from COWAD's Activitios

B	enefits-derive	efits-derived scores Frequency			Percentage	
0-3 (Low)				28	35.0	
4-7 (Average)				20	25.0	
8-11 (High)				32	40.0	
Total				80	100.0	

In this study, the level of benefits derived by COWAD beneficiaries is perceived to be varied. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that COWAD's activities benefits members as more than 60% rate the benefits as average and above.

3.3 Constraints to members' anticipation in COWAD's activities

.

The major constraint to members participation in COWAD's activities is inadequate fund (62.5%) as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Constraints to Members' Participation in COWAD's Activities

Constraints	Froquoncy	Percentage
Inadequate fund	50	62.50
Inability to pay levies		12.50
Lack of technical expertise		6.25
Marketing of the product		6.25
Conflict of time used on projects with other activitios		12.50
Total	ne medine menunieren e e elle prista de la remite prese de proposition de la contesta	100.0

the respondents. This is important because under normal condition, COWAD programmes should be

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carefully arranged to avoid conflict with members' personal activities.

3.4 Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors of benefits derived from COWAD activities

Benefits derived from COWAD activities is a symbol of the level of development of the participating women. Seven variables that predict benefits derived from COWAD activities with their predicting capabilities are as shown in Table 5. The highest predictor is level of participation (B=9.24), with all the variables jointly predicting up to 59% of the variation in benefits derived from COWAD's activities (R² = 0.59).

Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors benefits Derived from COWARD's Activities

Explanatory variable		Beta values S.E Beta		T-Score	Sig. T	
Age		0.93	0.11	5.54	0.59*	
Marital status		-0.17	0.03	-4.7	0.71*	
Education		2.95	0.08	4.08	1.08*	
Occupation		0.59	0.04	3.37	0.1*	
Members identified N	leeds	-1.06	0.07	8.86	0.38*	
COWAD's Activities		3.61	0.04	4.12	0.62*	
Level of participation		9.24	0.03	3.77	1.21*	
Constant		41.12				

2 $R^2 = 0.59$ F value = 3.2* Significant

4.0 Conclusion

This paper analysed the contributions of Community Women and Development (COWAD) to women's development. The areas in which COWAD has contributed to women development in order of importance are: improved agricultural machinery, income generating activities, small loans, skills development, adult literacy, supply of farm inputs and construction of boreholes. Constraints to participation in their activities include: inadequate fund, time conflict and inability to pay levies. With COWAD contribution in the above areas of women development, there is the need for enhanced funding of its activities in order to make the impact sustainable. Benefits derived by participants are reflections of their level of participation, age, education and COWAD activities. As most of COWAD's activities satisfy the felt needs of participants, efforts should be made to make all the activities relevant to their felt needs. This will aid participation in such programmes and subsequently, its sustainability.



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