

**CORRELATES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT
IN EKOSODIN COMMUNITY, EDO STATE**

BY

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BENIN CITY.**

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**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCES
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CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned, certify that this research work was carried out by GRACE OSAJIE ENDURANCE with Matriculation Number SSC1810094 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Sciences Degree B.Sc (Hons) in Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

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DECLARATION

I, **GRACE OSAJIE ENDURANCE** testify that this dissertation is my original work and has not been presented wholly or partially for the award of degree elsewhere. I am ready to take responsibility for the thesis.

Sign _____

Date. _____

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty God, my Mum and Dad who have all made it possible for me to complete my BSC Program. I return glory and honour to God Almighty for seeing me through, protecting, and guiding me.

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First and foremost, I give special thanks to Almighty God for his mercy, favour, grace and love which continues to shine in my life. The journey that led to this chapter of my life would not have been possible without the help of God who built the tenacity to overcome challenges I encountered during this chapter. I return all the glory to him and may his name be praised forever.

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Above all, Honour, Adoration, Majesty and praise be unto the Lord God the author and finisher of our faith. Amen.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the correlates of community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community, Edo states. The objective of the study was to determine the correlation that exists between community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community; ascertain the empowerment initiatives available for women in Ekosodin community; ascertain the impact of governmental community activities in the empowerment of the women with community development in Ekosodin community and to ascertain the factors that may militate against women's full empowerment and participation in community development processes in Ekosodin community. The cross sectional research design was adopted for this study. 381 copies of questionnaire were distributed to 381 respondents in respondents in Ekosodin community, Edo state. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentages and mean, with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0. The empirical result revealed that women empowerment enables women in the community to control their economic and social aspect of life and that empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities. The study recommends that the women should be given the opportunity to be fully involved in the development planning process right from the grassroots or community to the national levels and that skill acquisition for women should be a recurring decimal for women in the communities.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the Study

Women's empowerment and community development are two important concepts for developing countries. Women empowerment is the absence of barriers to the actualization of natural dreams of women patriarchal (Njoku & Mbah, 2021) . It means levelling of the playing field such that men do not have undue advantage in their quest to utilize the human potential in business, politics or other social platforms above women. In Nigeria, there are obvious infringements on women rights and opportunities. In the continued infringement, the state is not guiltless in that in most societies the state is run by men, and it is run for men (Heywood, 2007). This systemic, institutionalized and pervasive method of subordination reflects the evident reality that within and beyond the household level, power is generally dominated by men. Falola, (2015) opined that at the home front and at the community level, women are not as docile or powerless, they are strong, able and dependable helping hands and their important contributions in the home-front have spillover effect on their immediate environ and the community as a whole. This fact is acknowledged by most development scholars who agree that women playing a central role in development (Todaro & Smith, 2011). But sadly enough, their contribution to community development is seriously underestimated, and thus, its social recognition is limited in local traditional communities, because she is involved in farming and trading which enables them raise substantial income that is instrumental in maintaining her home. It is through this medium that most women are able to gain respect and recognition in the community. Some women that have some degree of family support have been able to assert themselves responsibly in economics and

politics, albeit, their disempowerment is still significant because socio-cultural practices still impede healthy household practices (UNICEF, 2013). In Nigerian those unhealthy practices reflect sometimes subtly and at other times, overtly in the denial of rights and discrimination against women. Specifically, one of such practice is that women are in most communities excluded from sharing of inheritance.

According to Urhibo and Orhero (2023), a large proportion of women in Nigeria are barred from owning land by laws of inheritance. This restriction is further strengthened by the fact that economic, social and cultural rights are not actionable in the court of law (NCAA, 2006) in Nigeria. Contrastingly however, the true quest for sustained community development cannot be disconnected from the need to empower women of some sort-be it economic, social or political (Stevens, 2010). Quintessentially, sustainable development seeks to create sustainable improvements in the quality of life of all people, while also maximizing the net benefits of economic development subject to maintaining the stock of all environmental and natural resource assets over time (Jhingan, 2012). Most often, this empowerment appears in the form recognition of rights and entitlements through different forms of legislation, or through granting certain financial and economic concessions or even facilitating access to a range of resources and position (IDEA, 2000) to women, especially those in rural communities. This is necessitated by the fact that most communities in Nigeria are rural in nature with abhorring, limited infrastructures and opportunity. This situation accounts for the shift in male population to the urban areas leaving the women in the rural areas. The search for better living conditions is responsible for the high number of women over men in most rural communities in Nigeria. The bias development focus towards urban centers combined with the spate in rural-urban migration

by the men to the cities in search of greener pasture has meant that most women are left behind to tend to farms in poor conditions.

According to Akpomuvie (2018), the ability to confront entrenched patriarchal politics in the home, workplace or society against women is dependent on increasing their voice, agency and participation. It is believed that it is through agency (Markhalm, 2013) that women can improve and enhance their abilities to perform all functions required of a dominant section of a society to be accepted (Shenoy, 2015) and respected. Political and socioeconomic challenges in developing countries have encouraged rural communities to develop strategies to improve their status, social functions, and standard of living. A strong appreciation for women's empowerment will contribute significantly to Nigeria's rural development. According to Akpomuvie (2018), women in particular engage in activities that facilitate the process of community development in an attempt to address their community problems. Obeta (2019) pointed out that if women folk are properly empowered, adequate management of community development projects will be ensured. Obeta (2019) also noted that rural change cannot be effective unless rural women's activities and contributions to rural development, community project management, food availability, and household well-being are recognized. Women's empowerment entails improving the political, economic, and social conditions of rural women. Thus, rural women's empowerment entails the transformation of patriarchal society through a process of collective organization, conscientization, and enlightenment, and thus requires rural women to take collective action to reject patriarchal (Njoku & Mbah, 2021). According to Agbalajobi, (2010) submitted that throughout recorded history in all parts of the world, women have been subjected to domination by men and this domination has been the result of persisting cultural stereotype, abuse of religious and traditional practices, patriarchal societal structures in economic, political

and social power dominated by men and the role women have historically played as followers of male political leaders. Agbalajobi, (2010) further stated that “this form of discrimination is not simply an African or Nigerian phenomenon but a global one”. Despite the unfriendly disposition of the society to women, the position of women in the society remains a very important one.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

One problem facing the Nigerian communities is the deprivation of women’s right to participate in their full capacity in religious, economic, political social activities just like their male counterparts. This hinders their ability to operate in their capacity in development project in the local government, like every other local (rural) area. Another major source of problem is the men controlling the affairs of their families, prevents or sanctions their wives from participating or partaking in some activities of women from the local government. Another source of problem is lack of finance. This affects the organizational structure of men as a result of the fact that majority of the women are house wives who depend on their husbands. There is need for the women to finance themselves independently so as to stand a better chance to assist in their homes and also in the society. Also incompetence in management and control of women organization by their executive hinders their development and efforts. At times some women leaders seem to antagonize one another when working together towards achieving a set goal. Child bearing also affects women in participating in other activities. The problem of community development in Nigeria is a serious concern to Nigerians and the international community. Omweri (2015) similarly found out that women play a very important role in community development projects implementation once empowered. However, she realized that most women did not have proper education, these women lacked better knowledge on technology and information, and the women did not have ownership to property and rights to decisions making;

negatively influencing their influence on projects implementation. Arthur (2014) argued that there is a need of the government and other agencies to come up with mechanisms of empowering women; thus a need for such a study. This study therefore was carried out with the aim of examining the Correlates of community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community, Edo state

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the correlates of community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community, Edo state. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the correlation that exists between community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community.
2. To ascertain the empowerment initiatives available for women in Ekosodin community
3. To identify the areas have women participated most in the economic, political and educational development processes in Ekosodin community
4. To ascertain the impact of governmental community activities in the empowerment of the women with community development in Ekosodin community.
5. To ascertain the factors that may militate against women's full empowerment and participation in community development processes in Ekosodin community.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions are to guide this study:

1. What is the correlation that exists between community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community?
2. What are the empowerment initiatives available for women in Ekosodin community?

3. In what areas have women participated most in the economic, political and educational development processes in Ekosodin community?
4. What is the impact of governmental community activities in the empowerment of the women with community development in Ekosodin community?
5. What are the factors that may militate against women's full empowerment and participation in community development processes in Ekosodin community?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will examine community development and women empowerment. The study on women empowerment is meant to have both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this study will add to the body of knowledge on the levels of women's empowerment at the local and community levels. It will throw more light on the existing literature with regard to the role of empowerment on women's participation in developmental processes and the factors that limit women's empowerment and participation in development processes. It will be of great help to students and researchers who may want to investigate issues relating to women. Practically, this work will produce data, which will enhance the understanding of major factors that hinder women empowerment and participation in developmental processes and the best strategies for eliminating the constraints.

Also, for the rural community these women belong to, the study will improve on the awareness of individuals and groups to not limit the activities of these women but to help them in articulating their positions, situations and demands. This will in turn improve the standard of living, enhance rural community resources and add to national development and a successive continuation of human race. Finally, this research will be a contribution to the body of literature

in the area of community development and women empowerment, thereby serving as a guide for future research in the subject area.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study will examine the correlates of community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community. The study will be carried out in Ekosodin community, Edo state

1.7 Definitions of Terms

Community: A social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government and often have a common cultural and historical heritage.

Development: The gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced, stronger.

This is also defined as skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being.

Empowerment: To give someone the power to do something. To give somebody more control over their own life or the situation they are in.

Women: It is the plural of woman. It is defined as an adult female human being. Women all over the world constitute a gender group.

Economic empowerment: This entails women's access to and control over the means of making a living on sustainable and long term basis and receiving the material benefits of this access and control which leads to economic independence.

Educational empowerment: Educational empowerment entails women's opportunity to acquire literacy skills, ideas and knowledge which will help in liberating their minds and improving their socio-economic and political statuses. This is achieved through access to media, adult literacy programmes, workshops and awareness campaigns.

Women Empowerment: This is a process whereby women are provided with both material and nonmaterial assets to enable them to engage in activities that aim at reducing their powerlessness which was created by their membership of a marginalized group. These activities include income generating activities, educational activities, and political activities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is concerned with the review of relevant literature on the correlates of community development and women empowerment. A number of studies and theories have provided reviews on community development and women empowerment, some of which are examined in this study

2.1 The Concept of Women Empowerment

The definition of empowerment might vary depending on the situation and context to which it is applied. While attempting to explain empowerment, terms like self-reliance, self-power, influence over one's own decisions, potential, self-rule, and a long list of others may come to mind. It has been discovered that these terms are deeply ingrained in the belief system (Omorogiuwa, 2020). People get more control over their life at the same time that they gain more freedom of choice (Caley, 2007). The ability to sort out and solve issues is a crucial collective skill for an underprivileged person that helps them overcome the challenges of having little financial resources and social marginalization (Muluka, 2012). Empowerment aims to combat marginalization and oppression; it may be understood as a process of enhancing personal or political power so that people can take action to better their lives (Gutierrez, 1990). The term "capacity building" can mean different things to different people. Capacity development thus refers to "the process of enhancing local communities' ability to "create, implement, and maintain institutional and operational infrastructures and procedures that are meaningful" (Groot & Molen, 2000). Throughout human history, rural women's empowerment has been a central concern and endeavor in countries all over the world. This issue has recently become more

pressing than ever. Empowerment is described as a multifaceted, multidimensional, and multilayered concept (Vaid & Kumar, 2015). Mandal (2015), on the other hand, defined empowerment as a multidimensional concept and approach that encompasses the construction of social relations in a specific cultural context. Each dimension of empowerment is described in terms of psychological, cultural, social, economic, organizational, political, and institutional aspects. The concept of women's empowerment was first introduced at the International Women's Conference in Nairobi in 1985. Thus, empowerment is more than a concept that can be defined using some universally accepted parameter. It is not something that could be given to those who we believe is in need in the form of a capsule. Empowerment is a process that includes the following components: equal access to opportunities for utilizing society's resources, prohibition of gender discrimination in thought and practice, freedom from violence, economic independence, participation in all decision-making bodies, and freedom of choice in personal matters. As a result, empowerment is defined as the result of a person's financially, socially, and emotionally strong status; it leads to happiness and satisfaction among a group of people" (Goel & Sah, 2015). This backs up Okpoko's (2000) assertion, cited in Obetta (2009), that "empowerment implies that the person or group of people being empowered has hitherto lacked power or authority due to circumstances, either by denial or fault. Moving from a position of powerlessness to one of power or authority is thus defined as empowerment. Women's empowerment is defined as a process in which women gain a greater share of control over resources – material, human, and intellectual resources such as knowledge, information, and ideas, as well as financial resources such as money, access to money, and control over decision-making in the home, community, society, and nation (Vaid & Kumar, 2015). Mandal (2015) defines women empowerment as the distribution of social power and control of resources in

favor of women, particularly rural women. Women's empowerment is defined as creating an environment in which women can make independent decisions about their personal development while also shining as equals in society (Khati 2015). According to Enenuo, 2001, as cited in Obett, (2009), women empowerment entails the improvement of women's political, economic, and social conditions. According to Maitra (2015), women empowerment entails certain basic factors such as women's sense of worth; their right to control their own lives, both within and outside the family premises; and their ability to influence the direction of social change in order to create a just social and economic order at regional, national, and international levels." In the context of this study, we define women's empowerment as a process by which women take ownership and control of their lives through the articulation of their own aspirations and change strategies, as well as the expansion of choice as women's are closely linked to their socially defined gender roles, responsibilities, and social structure.

2.1.2 Community Development

Some psychologists refer to community development as a collective entity since it combines two words and so depends on how people interact and a planned action (Carey, 2011). To better handle change, communities undergo a process known as “community development,” in which members of the community work together to enhance the economic and social conditions of their area (Omorogiuwa, 2018). From the layman’s perspective, the distinction between community work and community development work is that in the former, initiatives such as the establishment of a young mothers’ club are set up to promote a sense of community. Yet, in developmental work, the initiatives or projects set up are done so for community development goals. A bore hole project is an example of this. This is so as providing clean water is intended to raise community health standards (Muluka, 2012). It would be misleading to suggest that

“community development” can be reduced to a single concept; instead, for the purposes of this study, “community development work” and “community work with the youth” will be understood to refer to the collaborative efforts of social workers, youth workers, and facilitators to improve their local communities. So, it is necessary for the community as a whole to implement long-term projects and programs that make it possible to build social infrastructures and improve people’s everyday lives (Muluka, 2012).

2.1.3 Emancipation and participation in community development

Emancipation is the process of granting someone freedom and rights while participation refers to taking part in an activity, involvement refers to taking part in something else in processes and activities aimed at empowering communities. An individual can get active in bringing about long-lasting change in their community in a variety of ways in which instruments and initiatives can be used to promote involvement, which will give people a sense of freedom (Carey, 2011). Youth involvement is essential improving the wellbeing of young people, prior to the 1980s, there was little interest in involving the younger generation in society’s decision-making processes (Muluka, 2012). However, after the United Nation (UN) convention guaranteed children’s rights to participation in decision-making processes, there was a significant increase in the young people’s involvement in public services decision-making (Fitzsimons et al., 2011).

2.2 Empowerment and Capacity Building

The definition of empowerment might vary depending on the situation and context to which it is applied. While attempting to explain empowerment, terms like self-reliance, self-power, influence over one’s own decisions, potential, self-rule, and a long list of others may come to mind. It has been discovered that these terms are deeply ingrained in the belief system (Omorogiuwa, 2020). People get more control over their life at the same time that they gain more

freedom of choice (Caley, 2007). The ability to sort out and solve issues is a crucial collective skill for an underprivileged person that helps them overcome the challenges of having little financial resources and social marginalization (Muluka, 2012).

In conclusion, empowerment aims to combat marginalization and oppression; it may be understood as a process of enhancing personal or political power so that people can take action to better their lives (Gutierrez, 1990, p. 149). The term “capacity building” can mean different things to different people. Capacity development thus refers to “the process of enhancing local communities’ ability to “create, implement, and maintain institutional and operational infrastructures and procedures that are meaningful” (Groot & Molen, 2000, p. 20).

2.2.2 Decision Making Capacity by Women and Community Development Projects

Women (2017) has indicated that one major component of women empowerment is the ability to make independent decisions in relation to education, politics and economic development. An empowered woman has the ability to make much more better decisions in relation to economic development than men just due to one basic concept; women live in the community and spend much of their times in managing the homes that make up the community. In South Africa and India women have the opportunities of developing their communities. They have achieved this by identifying the urgent community development projects that must be implemented, the time frames of these projects, their urgency, the amount of resources required (labor, financial and time resources), and the location/cite of these projects, the first beneficiaries and many more. Development ideas that are developed by women normally touch on the local community since women spend over 92% of their times in the homesteads with their beloved ones or children; making them better people who understand what the community needs in terms of development (UNICEF, 2017). Women in Africa if given a chance can make effective decisions on the type,

nature, time site and kind of development projects implementation (SIDA, 2016). Women have the ability of deciding on the best models of integration in implementing community development projects and they know the best projects that should be given priorities in the community (Murunga, 2017). Women are the ones who ensure proper implementation of much of the county run projects like the ECDE since they prepare the kids for elementary education, they make decisions on the types of ECDE centers the kids should attend, women decide on where and when they want the ECDE centres be run, they make major decisions on community health projects implementation, community markets, community water projects and many more (World Bank, 2016). Women are very active when given a chance with full knowledge of what happens in the local homesteads (UNDP, 2015).

2.2.3 Peace Building Capacity and its Influences on Community Development Projects

A number of studies have shown that sustainable development enshrined in the sustainable development goals is impossible without women's empowerment and gender equality. Consequently, it is asserted that gender equality is both a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable development (Alvarez and Lopez, 2013). It is also affirmed that gender disparity is prevalent across the cultures of the world and that without serious steps to tackle it, sustainable development cannot be achieved. Therefore, one can understand from such explanations that without the equal inclusion of women in all areas of development initiatives, all the above-mentioned components of sustainable development cannot be achieved. UN Women (2014) has indicated that during community conflicts women and children are the most vulnerable people who suffer the most and when projects fail to be implemented in the community, they are the most affected too. Women in communities are the first people to call their husbands and other close people to calm and compromise situation or come up with

solutions to conflicts so that the children and the community at large should not suffer (OECD, 2016). For projects to achieve their objectives there must be peace and security at the same time. Conflicts in communities push people away from the development agenda, they destroy and stall the already outlaid community development projects, and make people shift their initial development plans into immediate conflicts resolution. Due to these negative associations of conflicts and economic development through community development projects implementation; women are the most affected gender since the women consume much of the services of community development projects like the water and sanitation projects, community food security projects, jousting and many other projects (FDRE, 2016). Women in Africa play a very significant role in economic development given a chance. Women not only make peace when things get worse but act as agents of peace between their husbands and neighbors. Women have the ability to identify the volatile points in the community; women have the power to think beyond their present lives and think of their kids and the society in general. This makes them the first people to pray for happiness, peace and reconciliation in the community (UNDP, 2015). Women therefore play a very important role in reconciliation initiation in communities, peace crusading, peace negotiation etc., entire countries can raise themselves out of poverty more quickly. Sum-up: Empowering women is a pathway for achieving all of the development goals in the countries as contained in the various treaties. An extra year of education boosts a girl's future wages by 10 to 20 percent, while an extra year of secondary school boosts them by 15 to 25 per cent. Therefore, based on the few concepts from the above reports, it can be deduced that one empowered woman contributes significantly to the wealth of a nation over 15% on average as compared to a man. Wealth and asset creation is a simple concept in community projects implementation and execution. It basically involves the ability of individuals to generate various

resources that are required for projects success. The concept includes that ability of a given gender to provide three capital resources of a project that include: time resources for the project implementation till it is at the position of sustaining itself, the ability of an individual to provide the labour capital resources required, the financial resources always consumed by projects and to some extent some other resources like land (AsDB, 2010).

2.3 Women Discrimination and Underdevelopment

It is pertinent to consider some aspects of the global marginalization of women's status based on United Nations (UN) 2008 documentation cited in Agrawal (2015). Among the findings are:

Agriculture: Women produce roughly half of the world's food, but they have little land, have difficulty obtaining credit, the agricultural activities generally expected of women are labor-intensive, and rural women generally do not benefit from new technologies. Their wages are generally lower because it is assumed that women's labor is less efficient than men's. Women do not have equal rights to land ownership, particularly in developing countries where women do the majority of the food production, processing, storage, and preparation. Women perform three-quarters of all agricultural work in Africa. They play vital roles in the production of food for the household, in post-harvest activities, in livestock husbandry and in marketing of farm produce (Ohwofasa et al., 2013).

2.4 Dimensions of Empowerment for Rural Women

Education Empowerment

Educate a man, and you educate one person; educate a woman, and you educate the entire nation, wrote Mahatma Gandhi. This thought is more relevant today than ever before. Women today receive the best education possible; gone are the days when even going to school was a struggle. Although urban women have many advantages, their rural counterparts continue to struggle. Her

main issues are still a lack of education and a lack of support (Bhonde, 2015). According to Singh (2015), women's empowerment must begin with their participation in various spheres of life. In this regard, education is a significant impediment. Rural women must be educated about their rights and privileges in a modern society in order to be empowered. It is education which can bring about awareness in them related to their social status, injustice and differentiation meted out to them. Education will provide rural women with a sense of belonging in society. According to Mandal (2015), empowerment of rural women through education will result in: (1) self-esteem and self-confidence of women, (2) a positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to society, polity, and economy, (3) ability to think critically, (4) decision-making abilities and action through collective process, (5) choices in areas such as education, employment, and health, (6) equal participation in development process, and (7) knowledge and skill for economic independence and (8) access to legal literary and information relating to their rights. Furthermore, Adebukola, 2001, as cited in Obetta (2009), stated that when a woman is professionally empowered, she will use her empowerment in a positive way, and being a mistress in her profession, she will not be deprived of the right to practice in order to benefit the nation. To Obetta (2009), a mother's level of education has a positive effect not only on the development of her children, but also on their health, education, mortality, and pre-school cognitive ability.

Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment, as a layperson understands it, is the process of making an individual economically self-sufficient by providing him or her with some type of vocational training. It also entails instilling in them the ability to make economic decisions affecting the family and the community as a whole. Economic empowerment of rural women, according to Agarwalla (2015), means making rural women capable of participating in various economic activities so that they

can earn money and become economically strong." Women cannot participate in decision-making in the family, community, or nation without economic empowerment. Women's status in society is inextricably linked to their socioeconomic circumstances. According to Okojie (1999), as cited by Obeta (2009), the most effective way to reduce poverty is to expand the opportunities through which the poor can do more for themselves – economically, the task is to help the poor (rural women) gain their rightful access to productive resources and appropriate knowledge for their use. It necessitates addressing inequalities in the distribution of productive assets directly, namely by redistributing land and consciously relocating finance to meet the needs of poor borrowers, particularly rural women. Economic empowerment is essential for breaking the cycle of gender inequality. In order to economically empower rural women, it is necessary to address women's limited access to economic resources as well as their inability to make economic decisions that will improve their well-being and that of their families. It should be noted that when rural women participate in production activities, poverty decreases and economic growth increases, both of which benefit society as a whole. On the other hand, if rural women are not economically empowered, it has a significant negative impact on their children's education and health.

Socio-Cultural Empowerment

Obeta (2009) quotes the United Nations as saying; socio-cultural empowerment requires that equality be built into all forms of human resource development from birth onwards. It is a direct challenge to patriarchy, which is prevalent in most societies." Rural women are educated on social benefits such as awareness of existing social problems in society, good recognition and image in the family and community, role in making important family decisions, plan and promote better education for their children, and care for the health of the elderly and children, to

name a few. Rural women's social empowerment allows them to serve the community by fighting for basic social amenities and welfare needs such as safe drinking water, street light, public sanitation and chance to help the weaker people like disable and the aged. As a result, "social and cultural empowerment of rural women through the removal of oppressive social structures will restore the dignity of womanhood and enhance self-image; such a situation will undoubtedly breed mutual respect and love between the sexes and result in happier families" (Okeke, 1995 cited in Obetta, 2009).

Political Empowerment

Superiority and dominance are reinforced by political and legal structures. Men typically hold the majority of political power. Village councils have traditionally been made up entirely of men. Men and women rarely sit together in most rural communities to discuss village issues. Women leaders are only invited when women's issues are being discussed. This has progressed to the present day, when few women hold elective or appointive positions in most countries' governments. Obetta (2009) cites Okojie (1999). Therefore, the empowerment of women as political and community leaders at the grassroots, national, and international levels is an essential foundation for advancing all women's issues. Political empowerment is essential for rural women seeking a voice in global economic affairs; even at the household level, women should be involved in family decision-making (Sadda, 1995 cited in Obetta, 2009).

2.5 Women Empowerment and Community Development

The development of a country is a choice made by its people, who live in either urban or rural areas. Individuals shape society and determine its progress and performance. In terms of economic, political, and social development, urban and rural areas are two sides of the same coin. While the urban sector has seen phenomenal growth and development as a result of Nigeria's

post-independence industrialization, the rural sector has seen little corporate growth. Any country's economic and sociopolitical development is heavily reliant on the development of rural areas and the standard of living of its rural population. Rural women are an important part of society (Agwarwalla, 2015). No society can develop and prosper unless its women are economically and socially empowered. According to Mandal (2015), empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation. Women's empowerment ensures the stability of society. Rural women's empowerment is critical because their ideas and value systems will lead to the development of a good family, community, society, and, ultimately, a good nation. She went on to say that women's empowerment and equal participation in all spheres of society are fundamental for achieving equality, peace, and development (Mandal, 2015). Women's empowerment is now more than ever linked to rural development. In Nigeria, institutions and individuals promoting rural development see women's empowerment as a strategic development that can hasten the rural development process (Obianigwe, 1999; Ugwu, 2003; Obetta, 2009; Ering et al., 2014; Ayevbuomwan, Popoola & Adeoti, 2016). In accordance with the contention that women constitute more than half of the world's human resources and are critical to a society's economic and social well-being, development cannot be fully realized without their participation; Mrs. Mariam Babangida introduced the Better Life for Rural Women program in 1986. The goal was to change the fortunes of rural poor women and improve their well-being, while also sustaining the economy through their activities. During Mariam Abacha's administration, the Better Life for Rural Women program was renamed Family Support Programme, but the aims and concerns remained the same. Despite good intentions and resources invested in the program, it proved to be a colossal failure. This situation created an urgent need to integrate the country's rural areas into the mainstream of national development.

The program served the needs of wealthy urban women rather than the rural women for whom it was intended. It evolved into "Better Life for Urban Women. Recognizing the importance of fully participating in community development, rural women have formed self-help groups (SHFs). It is a role they have chosen to help shape their future. In 1988, the Ezinne Women Self-Help Association of Ohom-Orba in Enugu state provided portable drinking water for the entire Ohom community," for example (Obetta, 2009). Obetta (2009) concludes that once the empowerment of community members (particularly women) is enhanced, the government and donor agencies will cease to see themselves as providers and will instead act as facilitators. Agrawal (2015) posits that rural development symbolizes rural industrialization. Rural industrialization is the most effective way to address the twin problems of rural women's unemployment and poverty. The development of rural industrialization is hampered by major challenges such as a lack of credit, the use of obsolete technology, machinery, and equipment, and insufficient infrastructural facilities. Solving these issues is critical for developing rural industries in any country, particularly Nigeria.

The socioeconomic challenges in third-world countries have encouraged various rural communities to develop strategies to improve their socioeconomic conditions. According to Ojukwu (2013), as cited in Akpomuvie (2018), women in particular engage in activities that facilitate the process of rural development in an attempt to address their community problems. He stated that traditionally, there was a perception that rural development was a male activity, but the history of development efforts in most developing countries has shown that rural development has always existed with women leading the way. Furthermore, according to Akpomuvie (2018), prior to the development of formal social welfare systems in West Africa, women voluntary organizations played extensive roles in caring for the sick, poor, and disabled

in Nigeria. They went on to describe how women's organizations such as Umuade and the married wife associations of various village groups in Nigeria's eastern region organized various activities for the welfare of members of their natal and marital homes, in addition to raising funds for rural development. Ojukwu (2013), as cited in Akpomuvie (2018; Ekele, Zubiaru, Ayorinde, & Abdulwaheed, 2018), explained that the reason why women in Igboland in Nigeria hold 'August Meetings' every year was to enhance women's contribution to rural community development. In fact, the gatherings provide women with opportunities to become stakeholders in their rural community projects, ensuring their trust in the community and its activities.

2.5.2 Women Empowerment and Sustainable Development

The relationship between women empowerment and sustainable development is better understood and appreciated if it reduces poverty, inequality, unemployment, and deprivation that limit human choices. Development that facilitates the elimination of these challenges by inclusively improving the quality of life as a result of improved income, employment and public welfare (Bazyar, 2015:40) is desirable. In some circles, it held that attaining this end is a function of growth of the economy which diffuses automatically across all segment of the society. The emerging consensus however is that growth alone is a rather blunt tool for enhancing inclusive improvement in people's lives (Kakwani, et. al., 2004). Growth does not equate with development but growth is central to the development process. Sustained development cannot occur in the absence of economic growth (Perkins, et. al., 2001). This means that economic growth is work in progress while development is an established state of being reflected in the widespread improvement in the welfare of the population. Economic growth is not a sufficient condition for improving mass living standards (Perkins, et. al., 2001). Economic growth captures the changes in average income, or gross national product (Perkins, et. al., 2001). The distinction

between development and growth relates to the nature and causes of change. That is, growth involves not only more output derived from greater amounts of input but also greater efficiency, i.e., an increase in output per unit of input, while development goes beyond this to imply changes in the composition of output and in the allocation of inputs by sectors. Equally to, growth connotes expansion of the system in one or more dimensions out a change in its structure, and development encompasses the innovative process leading to the structural transformation of the whole social system (Jhingan, 2011).

Development conception has continued to evolve; and so, trying to follow through with those changing definitions will take our attention away from the primary purpose of this paper. That notwithstanding, the summary observation on development by Todaro and Smith, (2011) is sufficient to shed light on the meaning of the concept. In this regard, they see development as both a reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combination of social, economic, and institutional processes secured the means for obtaining a better life for generality of the citizenry. Through those processes capsuled in development the state is able to: i) increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection; ii) raise levels living, including, in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education, and greater attention to cultural and human values; and iii) expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and the nation. All these combine not only to enhance material wellbeing but also to generate greater individual (men and women equally) and national self-esteem (Todaro and Smith, 2011). The consistent push to improve these frontiers for the benefit of the all is the premise for sustainable development. Although some progress is being made on the issue of empowerment, yet, there are still significant gaps in the areas of health, education, and freedom which accounts for women

poor wellbeing. Wellbeing for women can be improved through governments' and the public concerted effort to confront negative social trends such as income disparities, rising unemployment and a persistent gender gap (Hosein, 2014) that are pointed against women. While these are of the essence, improving the status of women relative to men, however, is likely to depend more on vigorous social, political and legal efforts than on economic development (Perkins, et. al, 2001). Fundamentally, weak state of those three are at the root of disempowerment; strengthening and enforcing them translates to empowerment of the woman as her capacity to live the humane life is not compromised. Empowerment for women also draws attention to the need to enforce the rights of women that have been denied them as a result of cultural, institutional, behavioural and attitudinal (Hosein, 2014:67) practices that see no need to fix gender relations (Liebowitz and Zwingel, 2014). It is for this reason that in the development circle, focus and efforts have shifted significantly towards the attempts to build into the development paradigm such notions as social identity and human capital identity that is threatened by psychological, social, and cultural values which need development to turn these threats into opportunities (Bazyar, 2015) for women in the community. At the national level, pushing this opportunity frontiers open for women to access is a function of improving economic growth and equity, social development, conserving natural resources and the environment (Hosein, 2014) by the government and the people.

Women empowerment indicates the transformation of economic, social, psychology, political and legal circumstances of women (Arum, 2010). The issue of women empowerment should not only be limited within the context of social sustainability (Bazyar, 2015) which in turn is rooted in the broader framework of development discuss but should encompass the political. Arguing along this line Stevens, (2010:7) observed that sustainable development is a political concept

because it is about good governance, which will be hard to achieve until we get closer to gender parity. At the individual, community and national levels, education is at the very foundation of women empowerment and development. Education improves work opportunity for women, educated women want their children to be educated, they are receptive of information and better ideas, and their education improves their status, bargaining power, and independence of women by encouraging and enabling them to make their own choices (Thirlwall, 2003:299). This role of education has spill-over effect on the other sections of the society by enhancing the application of knowledge, offsetting diminishing returns on capital (Thirlwall, 2003:252) and poverty reduction.

2.6 Obstacles to Effective Participation of Women in Community Development in Nigeria

There are many obstacles that affect the efforts of women in development. Some of these obstacles as observed by (Ijere, 1992) are as follows:

Male perception of women's role.

As a result of the traditional social system, more than any other thing, which has given men more recognition and status than women, the work and place of the latter are regulated to the background. As a result many planners, who are mostly men, take the submerged with and subordinated to those of the men. In other cases, the roles are considered of little consequence to be worth the attention.

The question of status

The pervasive influence of the status of women is seen through their lack of ownership of such item as land, financial resources and buildings. As a consequence they lack consummate power, influence and responsibility which in turn force them to maintain "appropriate behavior in the

home and public". As long as it is made difficult by custom for women to own or inherit land, and acquire independent wealth or buildings, their status will be subservient to that of men.

Institutional constraints.

Women also suffer from institutional constraints as a result of lack of equal access to education with the men. It was observed that only 16 percent of the adult females in Nigeria rural sector are literate. The higher level of illiteracy of their communication ability and deprived of their benefits.

Non consultative of women.

In most cases women are not consulted at the planning stage of development communities" places, roads, civic centers or maternity homes are hardly considered necessary to ask women's view as to their likes and dislikes. Rather, the men assume what their wives would have to say and proceed with the plan. When the decision has been taken, the women are brought in to implement, especially when the going gets difficult.

Lack of initiative.

While it is easy to blame society and men for the problems of women, it must be emphasized that the women themselves share in some of their problems, In fact, they help to create them. For example, most women will refuse to exert themselves or to demonstrate that they can achieve anything. Some are satisfied with their husband's position or achievements. They often say, "It depends on my husband". In this way women abdicated their responsibilities and rights to the men. In election they would rather vote for the men than themselves or other women. At meetings, the women sit clustered in a corner far away from men. As long as these tendencies and practices persist, women cannot be brought to play their expected role in rural development

2.6. Review of Relevant Theories

2.6.1 Liberal Feminism

This is an individualistic form of feminist theory which primarily focuses on women's ability to show and maintain their equality through own actions and choices. Liberal feminists argue that our society holds the false belief that women are by nature less intellectually and physically incapable than men, it tends to discriminate against women in the academy, the forum, and the market place. Liberal feminists believe that "female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women's entrance to success in the so called public world". And they work hard to emphasize the equality of men and women through political and legal reform. Historically the first element in the liberal feminist argument is the claim for gender equality. This claim was first politically articulated in the declaration of sentiments drafted at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848 with the express purpose of independence to include women. It opens with the revisionist line "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal", changes the list of grievances to focus on women's state, and concludes with a call for women to do whatever is required to gain equal rights with men. In its arguments, the declaration of sentiments let the women's movement lay claims to the intellectual discourses of the enlightenment, the American and French revolutions, and the abolitionist movement. It claims for women the rights accorded to all human beings, under natural law, on the basis of the human capacity for reason and moral agency, asserted that laws which denied women their right to happiness were "contrary to the great precept of nature and of no ... authority"; and called for change in law and customs to allow women to assume their equal place in society.

2.6.2 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is based on two emotionally central beliefs. That women are of absolute positive value as men, a belief asserted against what they claim to be the universal devaluing of women and that women are everywhere oppressed, violently oppressed by system of patriarchy (Bunch, 1987). Radical feminists see in every institution and in society's most basic stratification arrangements heterosexuality, class, caste, race, ethnicity, age and gender systems of domination and subordination, the most fundamental structure of which is the system is the system of patriarchy. Not only is patriarchy historically the first structure of domination and submission, it continues as the most pervasive and enduring system of inequality, the basic societal model of domination (Lerner, 1986). Through participation in patriarchy, men learn how to hold other human beings in contempt, to see them as nonhuman, and to control them. Within patriarchy, men see and women learn what subordination looks like. Patriarchy creates guilt and repression, sadism and masochism, manipulation and deception, all of which drive men and women to other forms of tyranny. Patriarchy, to radical feminist is the least noticed yet most significant structure of social inequality. Central to this analysis is the image of patriarchy as violence practiced by men and by male dominated organizations against women. Violence may not always take the form of overt physical cruelty. It can be hidden in more complex practices of exploitation and control: in standards of fashion and beauty; in tyrannical ideals of motherhood, monogamy, chastity and heterosexuality; in sexual harassment in the workplace; in the practices of gynecology, obstetrics and psychotherapy; and in unpaid household drudgery underpaid wage work (Mackinnon, 1979). Violence exists whenever one group controls in its own interests the life chances, environments, actions and perceptions of another groups as men do to women. A theoretical evaluation of radical feminism should note that it incorporates arguments made by

both socialist and psychoanalytical feminists about the reasons for women's subordination yet moves beyond those theories. Radical feminists, moreover, have done significant research to support their thesis that patriarchy ultimately rest on the practice against women. They have a reasonable thought perhaps incomplete program for change. They may however, be faulted for their exclusive focus on patriarchy, a focus that simplifies the realistic of social organization and social inequality.

2.6.3 Socio Cultural Determinants

Culture is the sum total of all that human societies has accumulated over the years of their existence. It includes their non-materials aspects like mode of dressing; these are socially transmitted from generation to generation through the process of socialization (Aina, 1998). The school of thoughts came into being as a result of the failure of the biological theories to explain the social position of women in society. This approach attempts to locate the differences between male and female within the framework of culturally defined system. (Sherry, 1974) Observed that women's status all over the world is that of a second class citizen. She notes that, the explanation for this is that women are at times identified with something that every culture devalues and or defines as being of lower order of ranking. She observed further that, those societies arrogate gender differential to nature and postulate that this was possible because the reproductive functions of a woman, her social role and resistant structure place her close to nature rather than culture. Ironically the more scholars have tried to explain the difference between men and women, the more it becomes clear that the difference is at best tenuous. Usually, what one feel is that, the same culture which creates roles and imposes them on sexes is also responsible for widespread beliefs which undermine the role of women. One very important

consequence of male dominated and the existence of a super-flow whose identity is only discernible in being the wife, sister or daughter of some hypothetical man.

2.6.4 Marxist Approach

In theoretical terms, Karl Marx prepared the ground for debate of women's issues. His theory is based in economic determination, especially; he argued that the ownership and control of means of forces of production have exerted the most significant influence on societal satisfaction system. Marxian approach to gender stratification centers, on the extent to which women's access to the control of the forces of production determines their relative position in the society. The approach adopted by the Marxian school is borrowed from the works of Engels (1968). This focuses on the role played by familiar structure and to the extent to which women participate in social production. Thus, Engel argues that a nuclear family is based on the supremacy of the man, its expressed aim is the begetting of children of undisputed paternity, this paternity being required in order that those children may in due time inherit their father's wealth. For this variant of Marxian theory, therefore, women's oppression is traceable to class domination which will be ended when the proletariat takes up their destiny in their hands and overthrow the bourgeois and end the exploitation of man by man. They argue further that women are vital ingredients to the survival of capitalism because they produce the labor force and maintain "stable home" which inevitably feeds the capitalist system with labor force. The existence of the family makes it possible for super exploitation of all women. Men are seen as the breadwinner of the family. It is also women's labor that is most advantage to capitalism because it is the married women who do by nature in existing farming system have to bear the total cost of production, (Bevaky, 1987). Because women could be paid less than men, the employers have been able to be using them to depress the value of labor force.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Socio-cultural approach

Socio-cultural approach is the best approach to adopt as my theoretical framework, because it is the culture of the people that placed women as weaker vessels, and sees them as less important when decisions need to be taken for the growth of communities and even in their household, and this belief moves from generation to generation. This cultural approach deals with tradition, beliefs, values, norms and practices system of the people living in the same society. As explained in the socio-cultural perspective, culture and its beliefs and practice of a particular people and society has been the major drawback for women as regards to their participation in developing their communities and also been empowered. The socio-cultural viewpoint of women, beings with the assumptions that human behavior and conduct are largely directed and determined by culture that is learned recipes for behaviors shared by members of a society.

2.8 Empirical Review

Bashir and Zafar (2017) examined women empowerment through community development programs in Balochistan. The study includes interviews and field studies with the women beneficiaries of NGOs to know the impacts of a community development program named, "women empowerment in Muslim context- gender, poverty and democratization from the inside out". Focusing on two key questions, how women achieved empowerment through this project, which can identify the forces that obstruct them and those that support their empowerment. On the other hand, how they made autonomous decisions to challenge or transform power relations that impede gender equality. Community Development is an approach to bring about changes in whole community. These changes are actually planned at development of the community. It

involves all people, particularly of the areas in the development activities. Community development can provide opportunities to local people to improve the socio-economic condition and also use the existing resources in better way. Community development programs should be ready to meet changing needs of the target population to make them really independent after the completion of the program.

Njoku and Mbah (2021), analyzed the factors influencing female empowerment and its benefits in community development in Imo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to describe the socio-economic characteristic of the respondents, examine the constraints to female empowerment, and ascertain the ways of female empowerment and factors influencing female empowerment. Multi stage random sampling technique was used in selecting 120 respondents for the study. Data for the study obtained were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Result showed that the major constraints to female empowerment were: poor access to productive resources ($\bar{x} = 2.8$), lack of quality education ($\bar{x} = 2.77$) and poor political representation ($\bar{x} = 2.74$) while the major ways of female empowerment were providing training (3.25), providing opportunities (3.02), mentoring (2.83) and decision making positions. The study concluded that female empowerment improves health care and well-being of families and communities. The study therefore recommends that communities should be mobilized to support victims of gender based violence provide platforms for female girls and women's voice to be heard.

Abdulkadir and Johnbosco (2018) examined the influence women empowerment on the implementation of community development projects in marginalized regions in Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive case study design. The total target population of the study comprised of 47,425 respondents. The total sample population was 392 respondents. The main tool of

primary data collection was the use of a questionnaire. The received questionnaires were sorted to check for completeness and relevance in the study. Quantitative analysis was employed both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data was then presented by use of frequency tables representing the means, standard deviations, and percentages. The relationship between the variables (hypothesis) was tested by use of the chi-square formula. From the results: over 95% of the respondents who made the majority supported the idea that labour providence capacity by women influences the implementation of community development projects. Over 80% of the respondents who made the majority supported the idea that decision making capacity by women influences the implementation of community development projects. Over 70% of the respondents who made the majority supported the idea that asset creation capacity by women influences the implementation of community development projects. Over 95% of the respondents who made the majority supported the idea that peace building capacity by women influences the implementation of community development projects. The researcher recommended that: Women should be considered as either skilled or non-skilled employees at all the steps of the project cycle; should also be involved in all the levels of projects decision making irrespective of their education background or any other socio-cultural classification factor; women also should be allowed to have rights and access to both communal and individual properties: Finally, women should be involved in all the strategies that are aimed at creating peace, resolving conflicts and ensuring reconciliation.

Urhibo and Orhero (2023) looked at the relationship and impact of rural women empowerment and rural development in Nigeria's south-south geopolitical zone. A cross-sectional research design was used, and data was gathered through a survey of 750 people using a non-probability sampling technique. 476 of the 750 questionnaires distributed were retrieved and analyzed.

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyze data collected using percentages, Pearson product moment correlation, and linear regression analysis. The study's findings revealed a significant relationship between rural women empowerment and rural development in Nigeria's south-south geopolitical zone. The study also found that rural women empowerment has a positive and statistically significant impact on rural development in Nigeria's south-south geopolitical zone. Based on these findings, the study suggests, among other things, that government empowerment policies should always take the female gender into account for necessary upliftment, as this will help to improve their status and rural development in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodology relevant to this research. It contains the research design, the population and sampling techniques, the operationalization and measurement of variables, the research instrument, validity of research instrument, sources of data and method of data analyses.

3.1 Research Design

According to Selltitz, Wrighttsman and Cook (1976), Research design is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. The cross sectional research design will basically be adopted for this study. This design is adopted and considered appropriate because it facilitates the collection of original data from the respondent.

3.2 Population of the study

The population is the totality of the objects or elements being studied and to which the conclusions or generalization of our results will apply. Sampling is the choosing of part of the population in such a way that the part is a representative of the whole, so that judgment about the whole are deduced from the part (Sellitz, 1997). The study was conducted across ekosodin, Edo State, Nigeria. Ekosodin community is in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State. It shares boundary with Uniben Back gate. Ekosodin community has an estimated population of 7000 as estimated by 2006 census by National Population Commission (Rawlings & Seghosime, 2022). This population was projected by 543.2% using geometric method to year 2022 to be 45,000 people (Rawlings & Seghosime, 2022)

3.3 Sample size and sampling technique

For the purpose of this study, Simple Random Sampling will be used. In the Simple random sampling method, each unit included in the sample has equal chance of inclusion in the sample. A total number of three hundred and eighty-three (383) respondents were used for the study.

$$\text{Sample size} = (Z\text{-score})^2 * p*(1-p) / (\text{margin of error})^2$$

Z-score = 1.96 for confidence level 95%

P=45000

Margin of error =0.5

Sample size= 381

3.4 Instrument of Data collection

Questionnaires will serve as the main data collection instrument that will be used in the study. The prepared questionnaire accompanied with letter of introduction was sent to the assigned respondents to be completed and returned to the researcher. The respondents were asked not to give their names in order to increase the chance of obtaining correct information.

3.5 Method of data collection

The questionnaire will be distributed personally to the respondents. The respondents should be able to answer the questions honestly after administering the questionnaires to them. The researcher will also guide the respondents with regards to filling questionnaires. The respondents were informed that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

3.6 Validity of Instrument

The questionnaire used for this study was thoroughly scrutinized by the supervisor for clarity, precision and comprehension. Both the preliminary test and the main research results will be similar especially in the pattern of response from respondents to fundamental questions relating to the research study under consideration.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected or generated from the questionnaire will be analyzed using the simple percentages, mean via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Data Presentation

This chapter presents the presentation and analyses of data collected as well as the interpretation and the discussion of results of the study. The first section is based on the demographic presentations and analyses via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The major task of the objective of the exercise is to answer the research questions stated in chapter one of the study. The relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable were analyzed and then the discussions of findings were made.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The retrieved questionnaires containing the information gotten from the respondents was analyzed and interpreted using percentages

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Returned	374	98.2
Unreturned	7	1.8
Total	381	100

Source: Field work, 2023

381 copies of questionnaire were distributed to respondents. 374 copies was completed and returned, representing 98.2% of the total administered questionnaires.

SESSION A

Section A: Biodata

This section shows the variables of respondents in respect of demography such as gender, age, marital status and highest education obtained.

Table 4.2 Demographic Information on Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	110	29.4
Female	264	70.6
Total	374	100.0
Age		
below 18 years	51	13.6
18-25 years	96	25.7
25-30 years	160	42.78
Above 30 years	67	17.9
Total	374	100.0
Marital status		
Single	169	45.2
Married	201	53.7
Divorce	4	1.1
Total	374	100.0
Educational Qualification		
Primary	3	.8
Secondary	18	4.8
OND/NCE/Diploma	172	46.0
HND/B.Sc./B. A	166	44.4
Postgraduate	15	4.0
Total	374	100.0
Religion		
Christian	326	87.2
Muslim	46	12.4
Others	2	0.5
Total	374	100.0

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, 2023

Table 4.2 shows that out of a total of 374 respondents, 110 are male while 264 are female. In terms of age, out of a total of 374 respondents, 51 of the respondents are between below 18 years, 96 of the total respondents are within the age bracket of 18-25 years, 160 of the total respondents are within the age bracket of 25-30 years, while 67 of the total respondents are above 30 years. In terms of marital status, out of a total of 374 respondents, 169 of the total respondents are single, 201 of the total respondents are married while 4 are divorced. In terms of educational qualification, out of a total of 374 respondents, 3 are primary school holders, 18 are SSCE holders, 172 are OND/NCE/Diploma holders, while 166 are HND/B.Sc./B.A holders while 15 of the respondents are postgraduates. In terms of religion, 326 of the total respondents are Christians, 46 are Muslims while 2 belongs to other religion

4.3 Data Presentation and Analyses according to the Research Objectives

Research Question 1: What is the correlation that exists between community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community?

Table 4.3: Shows the Frequency Distribution of Respondents with the Above Statement

S/N	Descriptive Statistics				
	Questions	N	Total score	Mean	Decision
5.	women empowerment enables women the community control their economic and social aspect of life	374	1578.28	4.22	Positive
6.	Women empowerment enables women in communities gain control over life and issues related to them	374	1522.18	4.07	Positive
7	Empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities and countries.	374	1533.4	4.1	Positive
8.	Greater gender equality also enhances economic efficiency and improves other development outcomes	374	1582.02	4.23	Positive
	Grand Mean			4.155	Positive

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, (2023)

The result in table 4.3 above shows that most of the respondents gave positive response to the itemized items in table 4.3. Majority of the respondents agreed that women empowerment enables women the community control their economic and social aspect of life; that women empowerment enables women in communities gain control over life and issues related to them; that empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities; and that greater gender equality also enhances economic efficiency and improves other development outcomes

Research Question 2: What are the empowerment initiatives available for women in Ekosodin community?

Table 4.4: Shows the Frequency Distribution of Respondents with the Above Statement

S/N	Descriptive Statistics				
	Questions	N	Total score	Mean	Decision
9.	Support girls and women in crisis, protecting girls and women are good empowerment initiatives	374	1731.62	4.63	Positive
10.	Training, education, counseling, empowering women and girls will help to end cycles of gender-based violence.	374	1810.16	4.84	Positive
11.	Giving women sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources;	374	1507.22	4.03	Positive
12.	Closing the gap in well-being between males and females is as much a part of development as is reducing income poverty.	374	1548.36	4.14	Positive
	Grand Mean			4.41	Positive

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, (2023)

The result in table 4.4 above shows that most of the respondents gave positive response to the itemized items in table 4.4. Majority of the respondents agreed that Support girls and women in crisis, protecting girls and women are good empowerment initiatives; Training, education, counseling, empowering women and girls will help to end cycles of gender-based violence; Giving women sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; Closing the gap in well-being between males and females is as much a part of development as is reducing income poverty.

Research Question 3: What is the impact of governmental community activities in the empowerment of the women with community development in Ekosodin community?

Table 4.5: Shows the Frequency Distribution of Respondents with the Above Statement

S/N	Descriptive Statistics				
	Questions	N	Total score	Mean	Decision
13.	Governmental activities help in the empowerment of the women community	374	1645.6	4.4	Positive
14.	Empowerment and advocacy are social democratic practices that enable people to overcome barriers and contribute to practice a focus on social justice.	374	1787.72	4.78	Positive
15.	governmental activities ensure the participation of women in community development	374	1690.48	4.52	Positive
16.	Government still needs to do more to ensure women occupy top positions in government	374	1548.36	4.14	Positive
	Grand Mean			4.46	Positive

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, (2023)

The result shows that most of the respondents gave positive response to all items in table 4.5. Therefore, majority of the respondents agreed that governmental activities help in the empowerment of the women community; empowerment and advocacy are social democratic practices that enable people to overcome barriers and contribute to practice a focus on social

justice; governmental activities ensure the participation of women in community development and that government still needs to do more to ensure women occupy top positions in government.

Research Question 4: What are the factors that may militate against women’s full empowerment and participation in community development processes in Ekosodin community?

Table 4.6: Shows the Frequency Distribution of Respondents with the Above Statement

S/N	Descriptive Statistics				
	Questions	N	Total score	Mean	Decision
17	There are Barriers to women's participation in community development	374	1559.58	4.17	Positive
18.	low level of education, motherhood and family responsibilities act as a barrier to women participation community development processes	374	1084.6	2.9	Positive
19.	violence against women and girls, early and forced marriage are barriers to women’s full empowerment	374	1163.14	3.11	Positive
20.	Negative perceptions, lack of time to participate and perceived lack of skills are associated with women poor participation community development processes	374	1282.82	3.43	Positive
	Grand Mean			3.4025	Positive

Source: Researcher’s fieldwork survey, (2023)

The result shows that most of the respondents gave positive response all the items in table 4.6. Therefore, majority of the respondents agreed that there are barriers to women's participation in community development; low level of education, motherhood and family responsibilities act as a barrier to women participation community development processes ; violence against women and girls, early and forced marriage are barriers to women’s full empowerment and that negative perceptions, lack of time to participate and perceived lack of skills are associated with women poor participation community development processes.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The study examined the correlates of community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community, Edo state. The result showed that the respondents agree that women empowerment enables women the community control their economic and social aspect of life; that women empowerment enables women in communities gain control over life and issues related to them; that empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities; and that greater gender equality also enhances economic efficiency and improves other development outcomes.

The result also showed respondents agreed that Support girls and women in crisis, protecting girls and women are good empowerment initiatives; Training, education, counseling, empowering women and girls will help to end cycles of gender-based violence; Giving women sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources and that Closing the gap in well-being between males and females is as much a part of development as is reducing income poverty.

The study reported that agreed that agreed that governmental activities help in the empowerment of the women community; empowerment and advocacy are social democratic practices that enable people to overcome barriers and contribute to practice a focus on social justice; governmental activities ensure the participation of women in community development and that government still needs to do more to ensure women occupy top positions in government.

The study also revealed that the respondents agreed that that there are barriers to women's participation in community development; low level of education, motherhood and family responsibilities act as a barrier to women participation community development processes ; violence against women and girls, early and forced marriage are barriers to women's full

empowerment and that negative perceptions, lack of time to participate and perceived lack of skills are associated with women poor participation community development processes.

This agrees with the finding of Urhibo and Orhero (2023) looked at the relationship and impact of rural women empowerment and rural development in Nigeria. The study's findings revealed a significant relationship between rural women empowerment and rural development in Nigeria's south-south geopolitical zone. The study also found that rural women empowerment has a positive and statistically significant impact on rural development in Nigeria's south-south geopolitical zone. Based on these findings, the study suggests, among other things, that government empowerment policies should always take the female gender into account for necessary uplift, as this will help to improve their status and rural development in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this chapter is to summarize the findings, and present the contribution of the study to knowledge, conclusion, policy recommendation and suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary

The focus of this chapter is to summarize the findings, draw conclusions reached in the study and make recommendations based on research objectives and the overall perspective of the main findings while making suggestions for further studies. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 24.0) was employed to examine the feedbacks from the questionnaires. The study examined the correlates of community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community, Edo state. The objective of the study was to determine the correlation that exists between community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community; ascertain the empowerment initiatives available for women in Ekosodin community; ascertain the impact of governmental community activities in the empowerment of the women with community development in Ekosodin community and to ascertain the factors that may militate against women's full empowerment and participation in community development processes in Ekosodin community. The result showed that the respondents agreed that women empowerment enables women the community control their economic and social aspect of life; that women empowerment enables women in communities gain control over life and issues related to them; that empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities. The study also revealed that training, education, counseling, empowering women and girls will help to end cycles of gender-based violence.

5.2 Conclusion

This study examined the correlates of community development and women empowerment in Ekosodin community, Edo state. A sample of 381 copies of questionnaire was administered randomly to 300 respondents in Ekosodin community. Based on the findings, it was revealed that respondents agreed that that women empowerment enables women the community control their economic and social aspect of life; that women empowerment enables women in communities gain control over life and issues related to them; that empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities. The study also revealed that training, education, counseling, empowering women and girls will help to end cycles of gender-based violence. The study also revealed that there are barriers to women's participation in community development such as low level of education, motherhood and family responsibilities which act as a barrier to women participation community development processes.

5.3 Recommendations

In this regard, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. Government should give special attention to gender issues as a way of making sure that the Nigerian woman truly attains her full potential. Women should be given the opportunity to be fully involved in the development planning process right from the grassroots or community to the national levels. This will help them to discuss their immediate and felt needs which will go a long way help the planners to make policies and initiate programmes that will affect the lives of women.
2. More, needs to be done to help women acquire self-confidence, self-actualization, self-esteem and control over their life's and social relationships, because there is every need for women to be in decision making with men for development goals to be met.

3. Government and other Non-Governmental Organizations alike should provide women in the communities with literacy and academic empowerment programmes that would further educate the women to be self-reliant and assertive.
4. The Government should provide even more assistance for women in the rural areas in order to empower them and give them a sense of belonging.
5. Skill acquisition for women should be a recurring decimal for women in the communities especially for the educationally less developed women
6. Furthermore, there should be follow-up and monitoring of rural women empowerment programmed to ensure that they judiciously utilize incentives and grants provided by the government agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in rural women empowerment
7. Women are encouraged to rise up to expectations and fight against the influence of sociocultural factors militating against their empowerment and the age-long inferior status the society bestows on them.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

1. Similar studied could be conducted on other in parts of state or Nigeria.
2. Also, the study recommends the use of a different methodology and sample size other the one adopted in the work for future research.

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