

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT OF OVIA NORTH - EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF  
EDO STATE**

**BY**

**OGHENEVOKE FAITH ARUSURAE**

**EDU2101973**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**DECEMBER 2025.**

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**A RESEARCH WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION, FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
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A BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (B.Ed.) DEGREE IN ADULT AND  
CONTINUING  
EDUCATION**

**DECEMBER 2025.**

## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned certify that this research work was carried out by **OGHENEVOKE FAITH ARUSURAE** with the matriculation number **EDU2101973** of the Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City and approve of it as adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) Degree in Adult and Continuing Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

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**Prof (Prince) F.E.O. Omoruyi (FCAI).**  
Project Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

.....  
**Dr. Mrs. Lara Akerele.**  
Project Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

.....  
**Dr. Mrs. Adesuwa Oimage.**  
Head of Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to the Almighty God who saw me throughout the process and gave me the strength and privilege to complete this research work and also to my parents Mr and Mrs Arusurue who supported me through my university education.

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This researcher's profound gratitude goes to Almighty God that saw me through, preserved and protected me throughout my stay in the University of Benin and for his mercies, favour and blessing bestowed on me in the course of my study.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explored women's contribution to socio-economic development of Ovia North - East Local Government Area of Edo State. It explores how women has made impactful contributions to the development of Ovia North-East. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study as five (5) research questions were raised to guide the investigation and the population of the study consisted of women residing in Ovia North-East Local Government Area while a total of one hundred (100) respondents were randomly selected as the sample size. A structured questionnaire titled Contribution of Women to The Socio-Economic Development Questionnaire (CWSEDQ) was used to collect data from respondents. The research instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Adult and Continuing Education. Data collected were statistically analyzed using frequency counts, simple percentage, mean scores and standard deviations. The results were presented in tables showing respondent's responses and the decisions made based on the established decision rule.

The findings revealed that women contribute significantly to socio-economic development, particularly in agriculture, small-scale enterprises, community development, family welfare, and local trade. The study further showed that women's economic activities have a strong positive impact on household income and poverty reduction, as

their involvement in business, cooperatives, and entrepreneurial ventures improves financial stability and living standards. Furthermore, women's education was shown to be a major determinant of their socio-economic contribution, as educated women demonstrated higher participation, better decision-making, and stronger engagement in leadership and community development.

Based on these findings, the study recommends improving women's access to education, addressing cultural barriers through awareness campaigns among others. These measures are essential for enhancing women's contributions to sustainable socio-economic development in Ovia North-East.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to the Study**

Women's contribution in the socio-economic development-oriented activity is not a novelty. Women has been known to be very instrumental in the development of their various communities over the years. This is very true since they are believed to produce more than half of the total world food supply. Ajayi (1989), alluded to this fact when he noted that: women constitute more than 50 per cent of a country's population, Nigeria not an exception, and women play multiple roles in a nation. As mothers, they bring up the young ones, thereby assuring a country's survival and continuity. Women has been very effective in their contribution to community development initiatives, promoting social cohesion, contributing to healthcare delivery by serving as caregivers, nurses and medical professionals. Women particularly have played very crucial role in the home by ensuring the survival of the family and their immediate communities.

Women plays a very important role in social and economic development globally. In family units down to national economies, their contributions are very significant and widespread in different areas such as business, education, industry, healthcare, commerce, and agriculture. Women contribute directly through labor and entrepreneurship, and

indirectly through their vital roles in family welfare and community support. By participating in the economy, they not only increase household income but also fuels national productivity, particularly at the grassroot level.

Promoting women's empowerment and assuring gender equality have increasingly become a crucial element for sustainable development. Research show that women tend to reinvest up to 90 per cent of their earnings into their families, resulting in better health care for children, enhanced educational outcomes, and stronger human development. Furthermore, women's participation in small scale business boost local economic growth, improves business returns, and fosters long-term community development.

In Nigeria, women in development gained tremendous boost with the introduction of the better life for rural women programme inaugurated and launched by Mrs Maryam Babangida in September 1987. This led to the increase in public and government awareness of the positive role women could play in the development of their immediate environment. The programme also gave impetus to the initiative and development of other programme designed at accelerating women's involvement in the development process.

The National Commission for Women both at the federal and state levels was also established in 1989. This was geared towards ensuring that women in development become a remarkable features of economic development planning in the country. The service of activities that followed eventually concluded into the conveyance of the national conference of women held in Beijing in 1995. At this conference the problems of women were seriously addressed and a number of strategies were proposed for accelerating women's full integration into economic development process worldwide.

Today in Nigeria, a number of policies and programmes has been initiated aimed at enhancing women's participation in development activities.

Akujiro (1989), is of the opinion that most of these programmes particularly the FSP has pull the Nigeria women out of their traditional place in the kitchen and has become a proper partner with her male counterpart in the nation's progress.

Women's contribution in the socio-economic development-oriented activities is not novelty. Women have been known to be very instrumental in the development of their various communities. Adebayo (1989) affirms that women have played a great role in our history as actors in economic, social, political and ideological processes. Women have exercised real power in government, have been great leaders or otherwise great women. Africa women in pre-colonial Africa played a role in public life which was

unknown to and undreamed of by their women have always enjoyed economic and political rights and have never been regarded as chattels as their counterparts in the west and during the struggle for political independence. Women made vital contributions to independence movement in many parts of the country.

In contemporary time, men are alleged to have taken over entirely the more lucrative employment as a result of the introduction of modern technology in which traditionally women were more engaged in it. Besides empirical evidence revealed that there is no country where women are equally integrated into the economics of their country or into decision making machinery. To Deraki (1975), styles of economic organization, patterns of training and social mobility in contemporary societies tends to displace women from traditional occupation or roles as well as excluding them from enjoying their shares of development.

Socio-economic development is a very important key to any problem of change in the socio-economic sphere. Its significance is aptly expressed by Stemplowski (2001) who states that the concept of development functions as both of product of optimistic vision and an articulation of social interest and a tool of analysis. Socio-economic development embraces change taking place in the social sphere mostly of an economic nature.

Economic development embraces changes taking place in the social sphere mostly of an economic nature. Even though economic aspects come to the force in the research on change in the economy (a study of economic phenomenon and process). They cannot be isolated from social aspects. Hence, a more apt term for the change and development is “change and socio-economic development “. Combining the two aspect throughout history, the central role of women in society has ensured the stability, progress and long-term development of nations. It is argued that government appears to ignore women’s contribution to the development of the economy even in the informal sector which depends heavily on men. Arguing in favor of women in economic development, Jubril (1988) opines that women are catalyst for development activities particularly in developing countries but are not given much opportunities to participate in economic development activities. Women occupy a very significant and decisive place in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Nigeria. Their importance is manifest both in modern and traditional sectors not only as house wives and mothers in society but also by their contribution to the quality of everyday living.

In the context of Ovia North-East, Edo State, women have constantly played a very important roles in shaping both the social and economic fabric of the region. Through their contribution in agriculture, business, trade and community leadership, they

have continued to influence household stability and local economic growth. This research seeks to explore the extent of these contributions and how women serve as vital agents in the socio-economic development of their communities.

### **Statement of The Problem**

The basic of this study is that women in the rural areas and in the nations generally are still looked down upon by their male counterparts in the decision-making process of the nation. The process of socio-economic development needs a society that is well educated.

Women education has been of utmost concern in Nigeria. Women's education will help to encourages women's participation in economic programmes thereby leading to a socio-economic development of the society. Women's participation in development have been limited and very discriminative till today. The plight of women has always been the one in which they are only seen as traditionally belonging to the home, her husband and children, this have to be looked into for change.

To be economically empowered, it needs women to be provided with enough skills through education to enable them to engage in income generating activities that will

enable them to have access to independent income. UNESCO (2005) stated that approximately 60 percent of women in Nigeria are living in poverty condition and this does not anchor well for their socio-economic development. It is therefore to this reason this study is being undertaken by the researcher to examine the contribution of women to the socio-economic development in Ovia-North LGA of Edo State.

### **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the significant contribution of women to the socio-economic development of Ovia North East?
2. Does cultural and social norms influence women's participation in socio-economic development in Ovia North East?
3. How does women's economic activities impact household income and poverty reduction in Ovia North East?
4. To what extent does women's education impact the contribution of women to socio-economic development in Ovia North East?
5. What are the challenges that limits women's contribution to socio-economic development

## **Purpose of The Study**

The objective of the study is therefore:

1. To examine different ways women contribute to the socio-economic development in Ovia North-East local government area.
2. To access the impact of women's contribution on household and community wellbeing in Ovia North East.
3. To determine the various economic activities women engage in and their impact on socio-economic development.
4. To determine the role of women in socio-economic development of Ovia North-East local government area of Edo State with a view of identifying the problem and suggesting possible solution.
5. To investigate the role of education in promoting women's socio -economic contribution in Ovia North East.

## **Significance of The Study**

The findings of this study can contribute to the improvement of household as well as community wellbeing by emphasizing the importance of women's economic activities and social roles. By recognizing the value of women's contribution, the study can empower women to take on more active role in socio-economic development and decision-making processes.

The study's findings can highlight the importance of education and skill development for women, promoting initiatives that support women's empowerment and socio-economic development. It can also promote community engagement and participation in initiatives aimed at promoting women's socio-economic development.

The study highlights women's crucial role in socio-economic development, promoting their empowerment and recognition in the community. By acknowledging their contribution, women can gain more support for their economic and social endeavors.

### **Scope of The Study**

The study is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the contribution of women to socio-economic development in Ovia North East. The study focuses on women residing in Ovia North East including those engaged in various economic activities and

social roles to investigate their impact on the socio-economic development in Ovia North East.

The study explores the social roles women play in their families and communities including their contribution to household wellbeing and community development. The study also examines the various economic activities women engage in such as agriculture, trade and entrepreneurship.

Women in Ovia North East will benefit from increased recognition of their contribution, leading to greater empowerment in participation in decision making processes. The communities will also benefit from more inclusive development that recognizes the importance of women's contributions.

### **Limitation of The Study**

In the course of conducting this research, the problems encountered were inadequate finance which will impact the depth of the study, limited time frame for data collection and biased information which can impact the study's findings.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined here in the context in which they have been used in this study:

1. **Women:** In the contest of this study, it refers to the married, divorced, widowed adult females including unmarried adult females.
2. **Socio-economy:** It combines social and economic dimensions to examine how factors such as income, education, cultural norms, and social behavior influence as it concerns the area under the study.
3. **Development:** It is the act of growing or causing something to grow. It is an event constituting a new stage in changing situation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter deals with the review of literature on issues relating to women and their contribution to socio-economic development in Ovia North-East local government area. The review in this section is discussed under the following sub-headings;

- . Women Contributions to Social Development
- . Women Contribution to Economic Development
- . Women in Agriculture
- . Impact of Women Education in the Contribution to Socio-Economic Development
- . Challenges of Women in Their Contribution to Socio-Economic Development
- . Summary of Reviewed Literature

#### **Women Contribution to Socio Development**

Women play a crucial role in global civil society and policy development by advocating for social justice, human rights, and sustainable development. Their participation enhances the inclusivity and effectiveness of policy-making processes, as evidenced by the United Nations' recognition of women's contributions through initiatives like the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which emphasizes gender equality as a fundamental goal. Research shows that countries with higher female representation in decision-making positions tend to have more comprehensive policies addressing issues such as health, education, and environmental sustainability, demonstrating that women's involvement leads to more equitable and effective governance

Traditionally, the Nigerian woman is synonymous with the home and its care, she is generally considered incapable of handling challenging responsibilities. Carlis and Eagle (cited in Imogie; 2009) argued that it is generally alleged that women are not as competent as their male counterparts to hold leadership positions. However, in more recent times women advocates have challenged the stereotype depicting women as passive dependents and even inferior to men (Hamra, 2008). Moreover, these traditional beliefs are with greater responsibilities like their men folk.

Women have always played an important role in society, whether it be in families, raising children, health, education, gender equality, healthcare and community development, women have been natural leaders in social work practice. Women have led numerous initiatives that tackle social issues, including the empowerment of oppressed communities by working at the grassroots level and advocacy for policy change that have a direct impact on people's lives. Regardless of the obstacles they face, women persist with determination in shaping a better world for themselves and generations to come. Their effort focuses on striving to promote gender equality, ending violence against women and building a community that embraces all people irrespective of their gender, disability or other needs.

The social role of women in recent time has undergone significant changes and transformation driven by evolving socio-cultural norms, economic shifts and technological advancement. Historically, women's primary social role was often centered around domestic duties such as managing the household responsibilities, caring for children and prioritizing their well-being as well as supporting elderly parents and extended family members. On the other hand, the traditional man is the head of the family, the one who is responsible for the maintenance of the house and who, through strength and determination, defends it against danger. Traditionally, the man occupies the

roles related to leadership e.g manager. However, recent decade, profound social transformation has driven significant transformation in the roles of women and men.

Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, higher percentage of women can be observed in the labor market. Moreover, women have entered into male-dominated roles e.g leadership roles, including in politics. Since 1965, the proportion of women who have majored in business, medicine, and law has risen significantly (Austin et al.,2002). Women are actively participating in the labor market and making outstanding contributions to the economy. Women are now more likely than men to have a college degree and starting their own business at a record rate. Women also hold leadership position in business, government and other organization.

Today, the medium female share of the global workforce is 45.5 percent. Women's formal and informal labor can transform a community from a relatively autonomous society to a participant in the national economy. Despite significance challenges, women's small businesses in developing communities not only can be an extended family's life line, but can form a networked economic foundation for future generations. The role of women in the urban and rural workforce has expanded exponentially in recent decades.

The theme for International Women’s Day 2019 “Think equal, build smart, innovate for change” was chosen to identify innovative ways to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women accelerating the 2030 Agenda, building momentum for the effective implementation of the new U.N. Sustainable Development Goal. Of course, women’s opportunity still lags behind those of men worldwide but, the historic and current role of women is indisputable. “When women are empowered and can claim their rights and access to land, leadership, opportunities and choice, economies grow food, security is enhanced and prospects are improved for current and future generations.”- Michelle Bachelet, Under- Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women.

Women are the primary caregiver of children and elderly in the country. International studies demonstrate that when the economy and political organization of a society change, women take the lead in helping the family adjust to new realities and changes. They are likely to be the prime initiator of outside assistance, and play an important role in facilitating changes in family life. Contribution in community-based development projects improves women’s socio-economic status, raises their self-esteem and ensures their well-being within the household

Women contribution to social development are numerous and significant. Role of women in the society has been of vital importance due to their nurturing and care-taking nature. But now time has evolved and woman are considered as one of the key assets in the society. Women contribution have played a significant role in the society. Historically, women are known to be oppressed, repressed, neglected and degraded but this changed nowadays as the women's role are seen to be positive and beneficial. Women has undergone major shifts in roles they previously played as housewives to the professional roles of Doctors, Political leaders, Entrepreneur etc. This shift has generated enormous social changes in the society for the benefit of the society and human beings.

### **Women Contribution to Economic Development**

That women constitute an important resource in development which cannot be over emphasized. It has been acknowledged that no country can aspire to achieve its full potentials unless all of its resources both male and female are mobilized to participate fully in the development process (Obansa, 2003 and Obansanjo, 2006). For democracy to make meaningful impact in Nigeria, there must be appreciable number of women in top decision-making positions. In recognition of the above argument the National Economic

Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) seeks to fully integrate women in development by enhancing women's capabilities to participate in economic, social, political and cultural life of the country by using affirmative actions to ensure that women represents at least 30 percent of the work force and implement the position of UN convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, include women's concerns and angle in all policies and programmes promote access to more finance and other poverty alleviation strategies with a view to reduce poverty amongst women(National Planning Commission 2005).

Promoting women's economic right is very important for economic development as it comprises advancing series of women's economic right including sexual and reproductive right, access to education property ownership and freedom from violence all of which have a great impact to the promotion of women's contribution to economic development. National machineries have been put in place within 51 countries around Africa with authorization to promote full incorporation of women into economic development and to prevent discrimination against women on ground of gender. A number of strategies have been employed aimed at mobilizing women to participate fully and actively in development activities.

“Women play a key role in supporting their households and communities in achieving food and nutrition security, and livelihood and overall well-being”-UN Womenwatch Organization.

In Nigeria, we have witnessed the establishment of women’s affairs commission and the ministry for women and social development. The national commission for women affairs is aimed at raising the status of Nigerian women in economic, social and political activities and assists them to participate fully in the country’s national development process. In view of the recognition of the role of women in development, a number of women association and organization have developed to press for more participation by women in development process, this has also had the effect of promoting non-governmental organization to participate in women development activities.

Studies have shown all over the world that women’s involvement and integration into development process has progress steadily. Women’s role in societal development today manifest in the various contribution they have made and are still making to the growth of their families and their countries in general. Still on the progress made by women in development Ajayi (1989), reports that women have been commended on their roles in agriculture as their impact has always been felt. Women also play a part in running of the community as the primary labor force, on the farm they constitute the economic life-wire

of the community, society and nation, producing food that is used in feeding the nation. Women's participation in agriculture increases immensely with improvement on their financial status and consequently their standard of living.

### **Women in Agriculture**

Agriculture may be defined as production that relies essentially on the growth and nurturing of plants and animals especially for food usually with lands as an important input. Women farmers must be acquainted with modern method of farming and agricultural practices which will improve the yield, production and output leading towards economic growth and development of herself, society and that of the nations at large. Farming in the other way round is growing crop or keeping animals by people for food and raw materials. Farming is a part of agriculture; it is the total process through which the farmer carryout its agricultural practices.

Women plays a significant role in agriculture and the world over. About 70% of the agricultural workers, 80% of food producers and 10% of those who process basic food stuffs are women and they also undertake 60% to 90% of the rural marketing thus making up more than two-third of the workforce in agricultural production (FAO, 1985) According to FOA (Food and Agriculture Organization), while the proportion of the

labor force working in agriculture decline over the 1990's, the proportion of some region such as Africa, almost half of the labor force are women.

In Nigeria, particularly in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, women perform all sort of domestic tasks as well as carrying out their duties in their various working place thereby bringing about socio-economic development in the community as home makers, they are not left out in contributing substantially to the country's economy as food producers, processors and sellers. In Africa, three quarter of the agricultural work is done by women. Women contribute much of the labor for men's cultivation of cash crops particularly as the male working population migrate to urban centers in search of better job opportunity and satisfaction. Efforts are to be made in training women to operate farming equipment and the use of modern practical farming methods, food industries and in skills such as those that would enable them set up economic projects likely to yield additional revenue.

In west Africa, up to 80% of the labor force in all trade are women. Yet the role of women in these activities is so important that the economy has remained obscure for long because women have seldom played any major roles in political activities or decision-making processes. Despite the fact that women produce more of the food in Ovia North-East and even in the developing world, they also remain more malnourished than most

men are. In every societies, women do the majority of work in agriculture, at the global level, men in the community still own lands, control women's labor and make agricultural decisions in patriarchal social system.

Agriculture is the seventh largest employer of women. However, in about 38% of women (of all family worker in agriculture) are engaged in agriculture. According to FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), the rapid modernization of agriculture and the introduction of new technology such as those that characterized the green revolution have benefited the wealthy more than the poor and men more than women. This premises are also supported by the International Labor Organization which has found that new techniques in agriculture particularly by those involving commercialization often shift economic control, employment and profit from women to men.

There is a socially constructed relations between men and women in an organization elements of existing farming system worldwide and a determining factor of ongoing agricultural restructuring. Current trends in agricultural market liberalization and in the re-organization of farm work as well as the rise of environmental and sustainable concerns are redefining the links between gender and development. The proportion of women in agricultural production activities ranges from 20 to 70%, their involvement is increasing in many developing countries particularly with the development of export-

oriented irrigated farming which is associated with a growing demand for female labor including migrant workers. Whereas, these dynamics have in some ways brought benefits. In general, the largest proportion of women worldwide continues to face deteriorating health and work conditions, limited access to education and control over natural resources, insecure employment and low income. This situation is due to variety of factors including the growing competition on agricultural markets to variety of factors including the growing competition on agricultural markets which increase the demand for flexible and cheap labor, growing pressure on and conflicts over natural resources in favor of large enterprise. Despite progress made in national and international policies since the first world conference on women in 1975, urgent actions is still necessary to implement gender and social equity in agricultural knowledge, science and technology, policies and practices, if we are to better address gender issues as integral to development process such actions include strengthening the capacity of public institutions and NGO'S to improve the knowledge of women's changing forms of involvement in farm and other activities in agricultural knowledge, science and technology and access, ownership and control legal measures, appropriate credit schemes, support for women's income generating activities and the re-enforcement of women's organizations and networks are needed.

A number of other changes will strengthen women's contribution to agricultural production and sustainability. These includes; support from public services and investment in rural areas in other to improve women's living and working conditions giving priority to technological development policies targeting far women's needs and recognizing their knowledge, skills and experience in the production of food and accessing the negative effects and risks of farming practices and technology.

In other to contribute effectively to an increase in the level of production and productivity, it is necessary to provide a support to those women's organization and farmers who promote new conceptual and development programmes and who contributes to the implementation of new ideas by women with a view to diversifying income generating activities and the provision of other services in rural areas. It is extremely important to recognize the role that women play and the contribution that they make in networks and co-operatives, giving them greater political and financial support and involving them in the training and conducting development programmes that enhance women's role in agriculture.

### **Impact of Women Education in The Contribution to Socio-Economic Development**

Women often hold a low status as women are often marginalized and denied the access to educational opportunities as most of them are denied education by their parent because of their gender while others who attend school are unable to complete their education before acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge that would be have empowered them enter into skilled labor and hence improve their socio-economic contribution to their community. Historically, women's education in Nigeria has been given low attention in many communities and the perception of women's inferior status has limited the access to socio-economic opportunities, hence making them vulnerable to male dominance and limiting their participation and contribution to community development.

The socio-economic impact of women education constitutes a significant area of research within international development. Increase in the amount of women education in regions tends to correlate with high levels of development. Some of these effects are related to the economic development. Omowunmi (2001) states that women education increases the income of women and leads to growth in the GDP. Other effects are related to social development. Okpoko (2010) views that education of women is critical to development and make them invaluable assets to their families, communities, nation and the entire world education helps in critical thinking among women towards proper

decision making in her environment and the society at large. Also, through education, women are equipped with skills for economic, political and socio development. Educating women leads to a number of social benefits including many related to women empowerment. Both individuals and countries benefit from women's education and individuals who invest in this education receive a net momentary gain over the course of their lifetime. Recent study in human development has established a strong link between women's education and international development. International development is an academic discipline concerned with the social and economic progress in impoverished regions. In particular, researchers seek to determine what factor explain differences in rate of development. Women's education is one of the major explanatory variables behind the rate of social and economic development (Barton & Hamilton, 2007), and has been shown to have a positive correlation with both (Agaor & Siabi-Mensah, 2003).

According to Harry Patrinos lead education economist at World Bank "the profitability of education, according to estimates of private rate of return is indisputable, universal and global (Frederich,2003). The principle holds particularly for women, who can expect a 1.2% higher return than men on the resources they invest in education (Field, 2009). Providing one extra year of education to girls increases their wages by 10-20%.

This increase is 5% more than the corresponding returns on providing a boy with an extra year of schooling (Feinstein, 2002).

Ide (2001), reported that girls are underrepresented in schooling, meaning that investment aimed specifically at educating women should produce bigger dividends. Although investment in women's education is not present everywhere, David Dollar and Roberta Gatti have presented findings that show that this decision, along with other failures to invest in women are not "an efficient economic choice for developing countries" and that "countries that under-invest grow more slowly". Looking holistically at the opportunity cost of not investing in girls, the total missed GDP growth is between 1.2% and 1.5%. When looking at different regions, it is estimated that 0.4-0.9% of the difference in GDP growth is accounted for solely by differences in the gender gap in education (Stromquist, 1999). The effect of the educational gender gap is more pronounced when a country is only moderately poor. Thus, the incentive to invest in women education goes up as a country moves out of extreme poverty (Stromquist, 1995).

In addition to total economic growth, women's education also increases the equitability of the distribution of wealth in a society. Increased women's education is important for achieving this as it targets the impoverished women, a particularly disadvantaged group. There is also evidence that lower gender display disparity in

educational attainment for a developing country correlates with lower overall income disparity within society (Rogers, 2005).

Women's education leads to a significant social development. Some of the most notable social benefits include decreased fertility rate and lower infant mortality rate, and lower maternal mortality rates (NBS,2010). Closing the gender gap in education also increases gender equality, which is considered important both in itself and because it ensures equal rights and opportunities for people regardless of gender. Women's education has cognitive benefit for women as well. Improved cognitive abilities increase the quality of life for women and also lead to other benefits. One example of this is the fact that educated women are better able to make decisions related to health, both for themselves and their children. Cognitive abilities also translate to increased political participation among women. Educated women are most likely to engage in civic participation and attend political meetings, and there are several instances in which educated women in the developing world were able to secure benefits for themselves through political movements. Evidence also points to an increased likelihood of democratic governance in countries with well-educated women (Schuller; Preston; Hammond; Brassett-Grundy & Bynner, 2004)

There are also benefits relating to the women's role in the household. Educated women have been found to experience less domestic violence, regardless of other social status indications like employment status (Baseline, 2001). Women with an education are also more involved in the decision-making process of the family and report making decision over a given period of time. In particular, these benefits extend to economic decisions. Besides these intrinsic values of increasing a woman's agency, having women play a more active role in the family also brings about social benefits for the family members. In a household where the mother is educated, children and especially girls are more likely to attend school. There are also a number of other benefits associated with having an educated mother over an educated father, including higher survival rate and better nutrition (Falusi; Madukwue; Opeke & Edem, 2005)

### **Challenges of Women in their Contribution to Socio-Economic Development**

One of the issues that has continued to dominate national discussion since return to democratic governance in Nigeria is the low level of women inclusion in socio-economic activities in the society. This development has continued to underpinned the verse majority of women from contributing to national development. It must be noted that, the development of any society rest solely on the equal participation of all citizens irrespective of gender. This is because every individual man or women is blessed with

innate potentials which can be harness towards the development of the society. However, despite evidence that women in position of responsibilities are hardworking and possess potentials that are necessary to develop and sustain the socio-economic and governance, their inclusion in the socio-economic, political and cultural life of the society has not been fully noticed, most especially in the developing nations Nigeria inclusive. It has been observed that women inclusion in Nigerian socio economic and political landscape is largely noticeable at the level of voting and latent support for men during electioneering (Arowolo and Aluko, 2010) A recent United Nations Report concluded that socio-economic development of nations is related to the inclusion and empowerment of the women populace. Any society that relegate and restrict women from socio-economic, political and cultural life of the society will remain stagnant and retrogressive (Egwu, 2020).

Empirically, it has been proven that the numerical strength of women outnumber the population of men globally. Yet this large population is denied socio-economic, political and cultural inclusion irrespective of their potentials. As the socio-economic, cultural and political exclusion of women continue, scholars have associated the underdevelopment in Nigeria and other development countries to the lack of genuine commitment to women inclusion in the national development plans, hence, the country is not progressing as

expected like the developed countries where women are given equal opportunities to explore (Egwu, 2014). According to Orucha (2018), the progress and development plans of any society must be women inclusive. This is because the women represent a tool for positive change in the society. This however depends on how they are mobilized, treated and giving opportunities to actualize and minimize their potentials.

The persistent underrepresentation of women in Nigeria's socio-economic landscape has remained a pressing concern since the country's transition to democracy. This development has continued to hinder the vast majority of women from contributing to national development. Equal participation of all citizens, irrespective of gender, is crucial for the development of any society. This is because every individual, regardless of gender, possesses unique talents and abilities that can be leveraged for societal development.

Despite the pronounced commitment of the international community such as the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for African's Development (NEPAD) to gender equality and to the bridging the gender gap in the society, reinforced by the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action, the world most especially third world countries, have not made any significant efforts towards women inclusion, especially in politics (UNDP Report, 2015). Women experience little capacity building and enabling environment to

actively and effectively participate in the socio-economic, political and cultural sphere of the society. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance/IDEA (2003) notes that the society is not fair in terms of gender equity to women as they continue to be excluded in the socio-economic and political decision-making process. Even when they are recognized, they are given a token and still being addressed as those who need welfare assistance rather than actors in the decision-making process.

However, scholars have stressed the role of gender norms and cultural practices as well as patriarchy structural of African society and financial constraints and other emerging issues as barriers to women inclusivity in Nigeria. (Olurode, 2013; Okoronkwo-Chukwu, 2013; Pogason, 2013). The patriarchal posture in Nigeria and other African society sets the parameters for women's structurally unequal position in families and markets by condoning gender-differential terms in inheritance rights and legal adulthood, by tacitly condoning domestic and sexual violence and sanctioning differential wages for equal or comparable work (Makama, 2013).

Salaam (2003) opined that, for centuries, culture, tradition and religion have dictated men and women relationship and entrenched men domination into the structure of the society at all levels of leadership. This justifies the exclusion of women in education, economy, labor market, politics, business, family, domestic matters and inheritance.

Studies have shown that women exclusion has continued to impacted productivity growth and the pace of human development negatively (International Labor Organization/ILO 2017).

Women's inclusion and effective participation in the socio-economic and political activities of the society including provision of decent work are critical to inclusive and sustainable socio-economic growth and development (United Nations Organization/UNO, 2015). While women account for half of the total population, they remain an underused resource, constituting less than a third of the actual workforce (Lagarde 2013).

UN (2016) report shows that, 700 million fewer women than men of working age were in paid employment, and even when they are paid, they tend to work in jobs with relatively low earnings, poor working conditions and limited career prospects compare to their men counterpart. There is therefore the need to continue to challenge all the barriers to women inclusion in all aspect of the society. This is because implementing policies that remove or reduce these barriers and create a level playing field and give women the opportunity to develop their potential to participate in the socio-economic life of the society more visibly. Women inclusion in the socio-economic life of the society is not only promoting growth and development, but it also diversifies the economies, reduces income inequality, mitigates demographic shifts, and contributes to financial

sector stability (Gonzales, et al 2015; Kochhar, et al 2017; International Monetary Fund /IMF, 2018).

Adetola (2018) argues that women must be part of major development processes in any society because of their numerical strength, industriousness, and enterprising abilities and are good managers. Therefore, any national development equation without women will not be completely meaningful and thorough. According to Ebosele (2014) it is therefore a historical misfit and disservice for any country to ignore its women population in its development efforts. Barriers to Nigerian's women social inclusion and their persistence failure at attaining the pinnacle of participation in decision-making process are continuously being interrogated in order to provide solutions. This paper is therefore set to analyze the barriers to women inclusivity in Nigeria with a view to come up with practical recommended strategies for inclusion in Nigeria.

Discrimination against women and gender inequality is a well- recognized cause of women social exclusion in Nigeria. Nigeria is ranks 118 out of 134 countries in the gender equality index (World Bank, 2018). Women in Nigeria are confronted with a range of formal and informal barriers to social inclusion. These barriers arise from a combination of restricted access to employment, education, health services, legal rights

and public participation, and gendered social norms that position women and girls as wives and caretakers while men and boys are breadwinners and decision makers.

According to Chukwuemeka and Eze (2011) Nigerian women are relegated to the background economically, and this is directly associated with poverty. Culturally, women do not own property both in their fathers and husbands' house when they are married. Politically, due to huge financial demand, women do not involve in politics because they are poverty stricken. The patriarchal posture of Nigeria society does not allow many women into politics no matter how brilliant and skillful they are because they depend on the advice and support of their husband. They are created as helpers to men and so must act on instruction and by permission. Anything short of that is an insubordination and unacceptable despite western education and exposure.

### **Summary of Reviewed Literature**

The review of related literature established that women constitute an indispensable force in the socio-economic development of their communities and the nation at large. Scholars consistently emphasize that women contribute meaningfully to economic and social advancement through their participation in agriculture, education, entrepreneurship, and community leadership. However, despite these contributions, existing studies reveal that women's roles and achievements remain under-documented and insufficiently

recognized, particularly in developing regions such as Ovia North-East Local Government Area.

The reviewed studies further revealed that women's participation in economic development extends beyond traditional domestic responsibilities. Women are actively involved in productive ventures such as trading, small-scale industries, and leadership positions within their communities. Their participation contributes to increased household income, poverty reduction, and enhanced community welfare. Empirical findings also indicate that women's economic empowerment promotes sustainable economic growth and social stability. Nonetheless, most literature highlights that women still face several constraints, including inadequate access to credit facilities, limited ownership of productive assets such as land, and minimal representation in decision-making structures. These constraints have continued to hinder the maximization of their economic potential.

In the area of agriculture, reviewed studies identified that women play a crucial role in the production, processing, and distribution of food crops. Women constitute a significant proportion of the rural agricultural workforce and contribute substantially to ensuring food security for their families and communities. However, the literature also revealed that women farmers often operate under disadvantaged conditions due to limited access to agricultural inputs, extension services, and modern farming technologies. These

limitations consequently reduce their productivity and overall contribution to the agricultural sector.

Furthermore, the review established that women's education is a key determinant of their socio-economic engagement. Educated women tend to exhibit higher levels of participation in economic, political, and community activities. Education enhances women's self-confidence, entrepreneurial capacity, and leadership competence, thereby improving their socio-economic standing. Studies have shown that education among women not only contributes to household welfare but also promotes equitable wealth distribution and improved living standards. However, the persistence of gender disparities in educational access continues to impede the full realization of women's potential in socio-economic development, particularly in rural communities.

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that women contribute significantly to economic and social development. However, despite the substantial body of work acknowledging these contributions, there remains a paucity of empirical studies that specifically examine the extent and nature of women's socio-economic contributions within Ovia North-East Local Government Area. This gap underscores the need for the present study, which seeks to investigate the role of women in the socio-economic

development of Ovia North-East, assess the level of their participation, and identify the constraints affecting their effectiveness in contributing to sustainable development.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter is on the procedure that were adopted in data collection for the level of women contribution to socio-economic development in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The strategies adopted in carrying out this study are discussed under the following sub-headings;

- . Research Design
- . Population of the Study
- . Sample and Sampling Techniques
- . Instrumentation
- . Validity of the Instrument
- . Reliability of the Instrument
- . Method of Data Collection
- . Method of Data Analysis

#### **Research Design**

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design was considered suitable because it enables the researcher to gather information or facts about

women's contribution to socio-economic development from respondents drawn from the population. According to Nworgu (2015), survey design is appropriate for studies that seek to describe, explain, and interpret existing conditions in a population. In this context, the design allowed the researcher to investigate how women are contributing to socio-economic development by collecting information from a sample drawn from the population in Ovia North-East Local Government Area. This research design will be used as it allows for the collection of important and relevant fact from the sampled population, given the large population of the targeted women. The survey research design is considered most appropriate for the research because it involves study of people by collecting information or data from a few people and making generalization.

### **Population of The Study**

The population of the study is the group to whom we want to be able to draw conclusions. It is the totality of objects or elements being studied and to which the conclusion reached or generalization of results will apply with regards to this study. The population of the study comprised all women residing in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State as it has both rural and semi-urban communities. According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2006), Ovia North-East has a population of over 150,000 people, so for the purpose of this research, the study focused

on women in selected communities such as Okada, Oluku, and Ekosodin in Ovia North-East local government area.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample of 100 women were selected for the study. The sample size was considered adequate and manageable for meaningful analysis within the available time and resources. The simple random sampling technique was used to select from participants at Okada, Oluku and Ekosodin to ensure fair representation of the study population and minimized bias.

### **Research Instrument**

The major instrument to use for data collection was the structured research questionnaire which was administered to the respondent titled “Contribution of Women to the Socio-Economic Development”. It will be divided into Six (6) sections based on the research question:

Section A: Demographic data of respondent (age, gender, educational level, occupation)

Section B: Significant contribution of women to socio-economic development

Section C: Influence of cultural and social norms on women’s participation

Section D: Impact of women's economic activities on household income

Section E: Extent to which women's education impacts socio-economic development

Section F: Challenges limiting women's contribution to socio economic development

The questionnaire used a multiple-choice which enabled respondents to express the extent of their agreement with each statement.

### **Validity of Research Instrument**

To determine the validity of the instrument, the expert judgement approach is employed. In this regard, drafted copies of the questionnaire were given to two experts in the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Benin City. Their suggestion and correction were used to refine the item. This ensured that the instrument measured the intended variables and aligned with the research objectives.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

Reliability of the instrument was tested using the inferal consistency method. The questionnaire was administered to 20 women in Egor Local Government Area (a neighboring LGA with similar characteristics). After two weeks, the same instrument was

re-administered to the same group. The responses were analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha method, and a reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. This indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the selected respondents using face-to-face methods that helped in clarifying items that appeared difficult and ensured a high return rate. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, and participation was voluntary.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics only since the study was guided by research questions without hypotheses. The following methods were employed Frequency counts and percentages to summarize demographic data Mean scores and standard deviations to answer the research questions and describe respondents' attitudes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter contains detailed presentation of the results from analysis of data obtained in the course of the study and the discussion of the findings that emerged. The presentation of result is done in accordance with the five (5) research question raised for the study. We shall begin by presenting data on the demographic background of respondents.

#### Presentation of Results

Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
18-25	18	18%
26-35	46	46%
36-45	24	24%
46 and above	12	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100	100%

The data in Table 4.1 shows the age distribution of respondents. The data shows that most of the respondents are within the age of 26-35 which conclude 46% of the respondents. 18 respondents representing 18% were in the range of 18-25 years which is the least age bracket of the respondents while 24 respondents representing 24% are in the

age range of 36-45, with 12% of respondents between the age bracket of 46 and above. This means that the majority of the respondents are in the age group of 26-35 years.

Table 4.2: Marital Status of Respondents

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Single	37	37%
Married	43	43%
Widow	16	16%
Divorced	4	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

From Table 4.2 above, it can be seen that 37% of the respondents were single, 43% of the respondents were married, 16% of the respondent were widow while 4% of the respondents were divorced. This implies that majority of the respondents were married.

Table 4.3: Occupation of The Respondents

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Trading	41	41%
Farming	35	35%
Civil servants	14	14%
Artisan	3	3%
Others	7	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.3 shows that most of the respondents are traders which forms 41% of the population, 35% of the respondents are farmers, 14% of the respondents are civil servants, 3% of the respondents are artisans, while 7% of the respondents form the population of those from other occupation different from the ones mentioned above. This implies that majority of the respondents are traders.

**Research Question One: What are the significant contribution of women to socio-economic development.**

Table 4.4: Significant Contribution of Women to Socio-Economic Development.

S/N	ITEM	Frequency		Percentage	
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
1	Women make substantial contributions to agricultural production in Ovia North East	71	29	71%	29%
2	Women play a critical role in the growth and sustainability of small-scale enterprises within the area	85	15	85%	15%
3	Women actively participate in and support community development initiatives in Ovia North East.	92	8	92%	8%
4	Women contribute meaningfully to the enhancement of family welfare and overall living standards	96	4	96%	4%
5	Women’s involvement in local trade has a positive and measurable impact on the local economy	74	26	74%	26%

From the results in Table 4.4, 71% of the entire sample agree to the fact that women make substantial contributions to agricultural production in Ovia North East (that is item one) while 29% disagree with this assertion. From item two, 85% of the entire sample size were in agreement that women play a critical role in the growth and sustainability of small-scale enterprises within the area but 15% disagree with this assertion. From item

three, 92% of the respondents are of the opinion that women actively participate in and support community development initiatives in Ovia North East while 29% of the respondents disagreed. From item four, 96% of the respondents agreed that women contribute meaningfully to the enhancement of family welfare and overall living standards while 4% disagreed with that assertion. From item five, 74% of the respondents agree to the fact that women's involvement in local trade has a positive and measurable impact on the local economy while 26% do not see it as such. Therefore, it can be concluded that women contribute effectively to the socio-economic development.

**Research Question Two: Does cultural and social norms influence women's participation in socio-economic development in Ovia North East?**

Table 4.5: Influence of Cultural and Social Norms on Women’s Participation

S/N	ITEM	Frequency		Percentage	
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
6	Cultural beliefs in Ovia North East limit women’s involvement in economic activities	33	67	33%	67%
7	Traditional gender roles discourage women from taking on leadership positions	66	34	66%	34%
8	Social expectations reduce women’s freedom to participate in community development.	56	44	56%	44%
9	Family restrictions influence women’s ability to engage in income-generating activities	89	11	89%	11%
10	Community attitudes toward women affect their participation in socio-economic development	77	23	77%	23%

From the results in Table 4.5, 33% of the entire population size agree to the fact that cultural beliefs in Ovia North East limit women’s involvement in economic activities while 67% disagree with such assertion. From item 7, 66% of the respondent agreed to the fact that traditional gender roles discourage women from taking on leadership positions while 34% of the respondent disagreed with that assertion. From item 8, 56% of the respondent believes that social expectations reduce women’s freedom to participate in community development. From item 9, 89% of the respondent were in agreement that family restrictions influence women’s ability to engage in income-generating activities but 11% disagreed with that assertion. From item 10, 77% of the respondent are of the

opinion that community attitudes toward women affect their participation in socio-economic development while 23% of the respondents disagreed. Therefore, it can be concluded that cultural and social norms hinders women from contributing effectively to socio-economic development.

**Research Question Three: How does women's economic activities impact household income and poverty reduction in Ovia North East?**

Table 4.6: Impact of Women’s Economic Activities on Household Income

S/N	Items	Frequency		Percentage	
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
11	Women’s participation in business activities contributes to increased household income.	97	3	90%	3%
12	Women’s earnings play a significant role in reducing poverty within their families	89	11	89%	11%
13	Women’s involvement in cooperative societies enhances their financial stability.	79	21	79%	21%
14	Women’s engagement in entrepreneurial activities improves access to food and other basic needs	82	18	82%	18%
15	Women’s income-generating activities contribute to better living conditions for their households	93	7	93%	7%

From the results in Table 4.6, 97% of the respondents agreed to the fact that women’s participation in business activities contributes to increased household income while 3% disagreed with that fact. Meanwhile, item 12 has it that 89% of the entire sample size

agreed to the fact that women's earnings play a significant role in reducing poverty within their families while 11% disagreed to this. Item 13 shows that 79% of the respondents were in agreement that women's involvement in cooperative societies enhances their financial stability but 21% disagreed with the assertion. From item 14, 82% of the respondents are of the opinion that women's engagement in entrepreneurial activities improves access to food and other basic needs while 18% of the respondents disagreed. From item 15, 93% of the respondents believes that women's income-generating activities contribute to better living conditions for their households while 7% disagreed to this assertion. Therefore, it can be concluded that women's economic activities impact household income and reduces poverty.

**Research Question Four: To what extent does women’s education impact the contribution of women to socio-economic development in Ovia North East?**

Table 4.7: Extent to Which Women’s Education Impacts Socio-Economic Contribution

S/N	Items	Frequency		Percentage	
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
16	Educated women are more likely to participate actively in socio economic development	100	-	100%	-
17	Women’s education increases their capacity to access and secure better economic opportunities	77	23	77%	23%
18	Educated women contribute more effectively to community development initiatives	94	6	94%	6%
19	Women’s literacy strengthens decision making within the household	85	15	85%	15%
20	Education enhances women’s confidence and willingness to engage in leadership roles.	89	11	89%	11%

From the results in Table 4.7, all the respondents agreed to the fact that educated women are more likely to participate actively in socio economic development. Meanwhile item 17 has it that 77% of the entire sample size agreed to the fact that women’s education increases their capacity to access and secure better economic opportunities while 23%

disagreed with that fact. Item 18 shows that 94% agreed to the fact that educated women contribute more effectively to community development initiatives while the remaining 6% disagreed with such assertion. From item 19, 85% of the respondents agreed to the fact that women's literacy strengthens decision making within the household while 15% of the respondents disagreed with that assertion. Item 20 shows that 89% of the respondent's views that education enhances women's confidence and willingness to engage in leadership roles while 11% of the respondents disagreed. Therefore, it can be concluded that women's education impacts their contribution to socio-economic development.

**Research Question Five: What are the challenges that limits women’s contribution to socio-economic development?**

Table 4.8: Challenges Limiting Women’s Contribution to Socio-Economic Development

S/N		Frequency		Percentage	
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
21	Limited access to credit facilities reduces women’s ability to participate fully in economic activities.	64	36	64%	34%
22	Women experience discrimination when seeking economic opportunities	56%	44%	56%	44%
23	Low levels of education hinder women’s capacity to contribute meaningfully to development.	79%	21%	79%	21%
24	Domestic responsibilities limit women’s participation in community development	46%	54%	46%	54%
25	Insufficient government support negatively impacts women’s socio-economic advancement	85%	15%	85%	15%

From the results in Table 4.8, 61% of the respondents agreed to the fact that limited access to credit facilities reduces women’s ability to participate fully in economic activities while 36% of the respondents disagreed with that assertion. Item 22 shows that

56% of the respondent's views that women experience discrimination when seeking economic opportunities while 44% of the respondents disagreed. Item 23 has it that 79% of the entire sample size agreed to the fact that low levels of education hinder women's capacity to contribute meaningfully to development while 21% disagreed with that fact. Item 24 shows that 46% agreed to the fact that domestic responsibilities limit women's participation in community development while 54% disagreed, lastly, 85% agreed to the fact that insufficient government support negatively impacts women's socio-economic advancement while 15% disagreed to this assertion. Therefore, it can be concluded that limited access to credit facilities, low level of education and insufficient government support hinders women from contributing effectively to socio-economic development.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results from data collected and analyzed clearly show that women make substantial and multidimensional contributions to socio-economic development. They play active roles in agricultural production, local trade, and the growth of small-scale enterprises. Women also participate meaningfully in community development activities and contribute significantly to the welfare and stability of their households. Agu (2018) states that women are central to agricultural production and rural economic survival in

Nigeria, often serving as the backbone of small-scale farming and trade. Their involvement in these activities demonstrates that women are not only economic actors but also key pillars in community advancement and household well-being. Their economic engagement strengthens family welfare, supports local markets, and enhances community development efforts. Momoh (2013) notes that women are major stakeholders in community development, especially in local mobilization, social support initiatives, and grassroots development efforts.

Data collected on the influence of cultural and social norms on women's participation show that cultural and social norms significantly shape women's level of participation in socio-economic development in Ovia North East. While cultural beliefs may not be universally restrictive, gender-based expectations, traditional household roles, and community attitudes still influence how freely women engage in leadership roles, income-generating activities, and community development programmes. Aina (2012) argues that patriarchal norms and gender expectations in Nigeria continue to restrict women's socio-economic participation and limit their decision-making power. Family expectations, in particular, play a major role in limiting women's economic involvement, demonstrating that socio-cultural structures continue to affect women's autonomy and access to development opportunities.

On the extent to which women impact economic activities on household income, the study reveals that women's economic activities have a strong positive impact on household income, financial stability, and poverty reduction. Women's involvement in business, trade, cooperatives, and other income-generating ventures enhances access to basic needs, improves family welfare, and supports better living conditions. Kabeer (2012) affirms that women's earnings significantly contribute to poverty reduction and household resilience in developing societies. Their financial contributions help cushion families against economic shocks, improve food security, and elevate overall household well-being. Thus, women are essential to poverty reduction efforts in Ovia North East.

In the area of the extent to which women's education impacts socio-economic contribution revealed that women's education greatly enhances their contribution to socio-economic development. Educated women show higher participation in economic activities, possess greater access to opportunities, and contribute more effectively to community development. Education improves their decision-making ability within the household and increases their confidence to engage in leadership and collective development initiatives. UNESCO (2014) states that women's education significantly boosts economic productivity, leadership participation, and community engagement.

Thus, education is a major driver of women's empowerment and a critical factor in maximizing their socio-economic contributions.

Finally, in the area of challenges limiting women's contribution to socio-economic development the, study shows that women in Ovia North East face multiple challenges that hinder their full participation in socio-economic development. These challenges include limited access to credit facilities, discrimination in economic spaces, low levels of education, heavy domestic responsibilities, and inadequate government support. Adeleke (2018) shows that domestic responsibilities significantly constrain women's time and participation in community development. These barriers reduce women's economic independence, limit their business growth, restrict mobility, and weaken their ability to participate in development processes. Onwuzuruigbo (2013) stresses that inadequate government support limits women's empowerment and reduces their impact on socio-economic development. Addressing these constraints is essential to unlocking women's full development.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter focuses on summary, conclusion and recommendation

#### **Summary**

The purpose of the study was to explain the contribution of women to socio-economic development in Ovia North East Local Government. In doing this, the following five research question were raised and answered in order to achieve the objectives of the study through the use of structured questionnaire.

1. What are the significant contribution of women to the socio-economic development of Ovia North East?
1. Does cultural and social norms influence women's participation in socio-economic development in Ovia North East?
2. How does women's economic activities impact household income and poverty reduction in Ovia North East?
3. To what extent does women's education impact the contribution of women to socio-economic development in Ovia North East?

4. What are the challenges that limits women's contribution to socio-economic development?

The relevant literature was reviewed in line with the research questions and other concepts. A sample of 100 women were selected. All the questionnaire was administered, retrieved and analyzed using frequency counts, table and simple percentage. And also, survey research design was employed in the study. Data collected was presented and analyzed using frequency counts, table and percentage.

## **Conclusion**

Women are central actors in the socio-economic advancement of Ovia North East, contributing significantly through agricultural production, small-scale enterprises, household welfare support, and community development initiatives. Their roles are diverse and have meaningful impacts on poverty reduction, family well-being, and grassroots development. Although some cultural beliefs may not strongly hinder women, gendered expectations and traditional roles still influence the type and extent of activities women engage in. This underscores the continued relevance of socio-cultural structures in shaping women's economic agency. Through entrepreneurship, trade, business involvement, and participation in cooperative societies, women serve as major

contributors to poverty reduction and financial stability within their families. Their economic engagement supports access to food, education, healthcare, and other essential needs, demonstrating their critical role in family welfare and community resilience.

Despite their significant roles, women in Ovia North East face several structural challenges that limit their full participation in development. These include limited access to credit facilities, gender discrimination, low educational attainment among some women, heavy domestic responsibilities, and inadequate government support. These barriers constrain women's potential and reduce their ability to contribute more fully to socio-economic transformation. Empowering women through education, economic support, policy reforms, and gender-sensitive programmes is essential for promoting sustainable and inclusive development in the region.

## **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings and the conclusion reached from this study, the following recommendations are hereby offered.

. Financial institutions, cooperatives, and government programmes should expand credit opportunities specifically targeted at women. Soft loans, grants, and flexible repayment plans will enable women to start, sustain, and expand their businesses.

. Government and community leaders should promote girl-child education and adult literacy programmes for women. Scholarships, awareness campaigns, and school retention initiatives will increase women's economic opportunities and leadership capacity.

. Government agencies should implement policies that address gender inequality in access to resources, employment, and leadership positions.

. Traditional leaders, religious institutions, and community organizations should advocate for the elimination of harmful cultural norms that restrict women's participation. Sensitization programmes can help reshape attitudes toward gender roles and empower women to take on leadership and economic responsibilities.

. Government at all levels should allocate more resources to women-focused development programmes. These may include agricultural inputs for women farmers, marketing support, vocational training, and subsidies for women-led enterprises.

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**APPENDIX I**

**DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BENIN CITY**

**THE IMPACT OF WOMEN ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF  
Ovia North-East, Edo State**

Dear Respondents,

I am a final-year student of the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin. I am currently conducting a research project on "The Impact of Women on the Socio-Economic Development of Ovia North-East, Edo State".

The purpose of this study is to examine how women contribute to the economic growth and social advancement of their communities within Ovia North-East Local Government Area.

You have been carefully selected as one of the respondents for this study. I kindly request your honest and sincere responses to the attached questionnaire. All information provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used strictly for academic purposes.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

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Faith Arusuræ

Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education

University of Benin

## APPENDIX II

### SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

Please tick (✓) or fill in the correct option.

1. Sex: Female ( ) Male ( )
2. Age: 18-25 ( ) 26-35 ( ) 36-45 ( ) 46 and above ( )
3. Marital Status: Single ( ) Married ( ) Widowed ( ) Divorced ( )
4. Occupation: Trading ( ) Farming ( ) Civil Service ( ) Artisan ( )

Others (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Kindly indicate your response by ticking the option that best represents your answer.**

S/N	ITEMS	AGREE	DISAGREE
	<b>SECTION B: SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>		
1	Women make substantial contributions to agricultural production in Ovia North East.		
2	Women play a critical role in the growth and sustainability of small-scale enterprises within the area.		
3	Women actively participate in and support community development initiatives in Ovia North East.		
4	Women contribute meaningfully to the enhancement of family welfare and overall living standards.		
5	Women's involvement in local trade has a positive and		

	measurable impact on the local economy.		
	<b>SECTION C: INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL AND SOCIAL NORMS ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION</b>		
6	Cultural beliefs in Ovia North East limit women's involvement in economic activities.		
7	Traditional gender roles discourage women from taking on leadership positions.		
8	Social expectations reduce women's freedom to participate in community development.		
9	Family restrictions influence women's ability to engage in income-generating activities.		
10	Community attitudes toward women affect their participation in socio-economic development.		
	<b>SECTION D: IMPACT OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES ON HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>		
11	Women's participation in business activities contributes to increased household income.		
12	Women's earnings play a significant role in reducing poverty within their families.		
13	Women's involvement in cooperative societies enhances their financial stability.		
14	Women's engagement in entrepreneurial activities improves access to food and other basic needs.		
15	Women's income-generating activities contribute to better living conditions for their households.		

<b>S/N</b>	<b>SECTION E: EXTENT TO WHICH WOMEN'S EDUCATION IMPACTS SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>
16	Educated women are more likely to participate actively in socio-economic development.		
17	Women's education increases their capacity to access and secure		

	better economic opportunities.		
18	Educated women contribute more effectively to community development initiatives.		
19	Women's literacy strengthens decision making within the household.		
20	Education enhances women's confidence and willingness to engage in leadership roles.		
	<b>SECTION F: CHALLENGES LIMITING WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>		
21	Limited access to credit facilities reduces women's ability to participate fully in economic activities.		
22	Women experience discrimination when seeking economic opportunities.		
23	Low levels of education hinder women's capacity to contribute meaningfully to development.		
24	Domestic responsibilities restrict women's participation in community development initiatives.		
25	Insufficient government support negatively impacts women's socio-economic advancement.		