

**IMPACT OF WOMEN EDUCATION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN  
NIGERIA**

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**BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.SC.) HONOURS DEGREE IN SOCIAL  
WORK.**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project was carried out by SAMUEL RUTH of the Department of Social Work in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science Degree (B.SC.) in Social Work, University of Benin, Benin City.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God almighty the giver of life for his faithfulness towards this achievement and for making it a reality. And to my lovely husband, Mr. Endurance Enadeghe, whose guidance and support has been the source of my strength.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

All thanks to my Heavenly Father, for making this work a success. I am forever indebted to God for his faithfulness. I am profoundly indebted to my project supervisor, Mr. IKUABE DOMINIC whose invaluable insights, corrections has contributed greatly and aided the success of this project work.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my parents Mr and Mrs Samuel for their unfailing support.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the impact of women education on sustainable development in Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study, five (5) research questions were raised and answered. A sample size of 100 respondents was used for the study. The data collected was analyzed using frequency count and simple percentage.*

*The study revealed that women's education serves as a fundamental driver of sustainable national development. Educated women were found to play crucial roles in boosting economic productivity through entrepreneurship, formal employment, and innovation. It was concluded that women's education significantly enhances social and political development by promoting health awareness, family well-being, and active participation in governance.*

*The study recommended among others that government should allocate more resources to improve access to quality education for women, particularly in rural and underserved communities. This includes building schools, providing learning materials, and ensuring affordable or free education at all levels.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Education is universally recognized as a vital instrument for social, economic, and political transformation. Nwile (2022) asserted that the education of women plays a critical role in national development because it enhances individual capabilities and promotes inclusive growth. In Nigeria, the role of women in fostering development has become increasingly evident; however, the educational gap between men and women remains a serious concern. In many parts of the country, particularly the North, cultural, religious, and economic barriers continue to hinder girls' access to education. The consequences of this educational imbalance are far-reaching, as uneducated women are less likely to contribute productively to national progress. Women's exclusion from education negatively impacts family health, civic participation, and economic stability. Therefore, prioritizing women's education is essential for achieving sustainable development in Nigeria.

Women education has a multi-dimensional impact on sustainable development and national prosperity. Dambo and Kayii (2022) observed that educated women contribute significantly to the socio-economic growth of their communities by participating in economic activities and assuming leadership roles. When women receive formal education, they become empowered to make informed decisions about health,

nutrition, and family welfare, which supports human development. This empowerment translates into lower infant mortality rates, improved child health, and increased school attendance for future generations. Moreover, literate women are more likely to break cycles of poverty, challenge harmful traditional practices, and demand accountability from public institutions. Despite this, millions of Nigerian women remain out of school, especially in rural areas where access to education is severely limited. Bridging this gap is crucial for a sustainable and inclusive development framework in Nigeria.

Several international and national policies have underscored the importance of promoting women's education as a foundation for achieving sustainable development. Bassetti et al. (2020) emphasised that Nigeria's endorsement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 4 and 5, highlights the need for gender equality and quality education for all. These goals stress that gender parity in education is essential to ending poverty, promoting health, and ensuring environmental sustainability. However, the practical implementation of such policies in Nigeria faces numerous setbacks, including weak institutions, poor funding, and inadequate infrastructure. The lack of political will and social support often results in policies that are poorly executed or abandoned. Until there is a committed effort to translate policy into action, the potential of women's education to contribute meaningfully to national development will remain underutilized.

Beyond economic development, women's education significantly influences environmental consciousness, governance, and health-related behaviours. Deekor and Ekwems (2022) highlighted that educated women are more inclined to adopt sustainable agricultural methods, utilise clean energy, and participate in civic decision-making. These behaviours directly support sustainable development by enhancing environmental protection, promoting health awareness, and strengthening democratic governance. In addition, when women are educated, they are better positioned to advocate for policy reforms and community development projects. Such participation fosters transparency, accountability, and inclusive governance. Unfortunately, issues such as child marriage, gender-based violence, and school-related gender abuse continue to limit female educational participation across various regions in Nigeria. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that combines legislative reform, community sensitisation, and targeted investment in female education.

The marginalisation of women in education reinforces systemic gender inequality and obstructs sustainable development initiatives. Ineye-Briggs (2023) argued that educational exclusion reduces women's access to employment opportunities, credit facilities, and leadership roles, thus limiting their economic contributions. An educated female workforce is essential for a thriving economy as it introduces new perspectives, increases productivity, and drives innovation. Women with access to education are also more likely to become entrepreneurs, support local economies, and contribute to national income through tax generation. However, structural inequalities—such as discriminatory

land ownership laws, gender pay gaps, and unequal access to vocational training—persistently undermine women's progress.

Educated women also exhibit stronger autonomy in making decisions concerning their reproductive health, family life, and economic choices. Mushtaq and Khan (2022) maintained that women with formal education are more likely to seek antenatal care, delay early marriage, and space childbirth—practices that lead to healthier families and better life outcomes. Additionally, educated women are often key advocates for their children's education, breaking the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy. These behaviours not only promote household stability but also contribute to building a more educated and productive population. In Nigeria, regional and socio-economic disparities still significantly affect girls' access to secondary and tertiary education, particularly among the poor and in conflict-affected areas.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In contemporary Nigerian society, the pursuit of sustainable development has remained a critical national agenda. However, the persistent under-education and marginalisation of women significantly threaten this goal (Hussain et al., 2021). Despite various national and international efforts aimed at promoting gender equality through education, many Nigerian women, especially in rural areas, still lack access to formal schooling. Cultural norms, poverty, early marriage, and religious beliefs continue to prevent millions of girls and women from acquiring the education necessary to contribute

meaningfully to national development. This persistent exclusion not only limits women's personal growth and empowerment but also restricts their ability to participate in economic, environmental, and political processes that drive sustainable development. Without adequately educating the female population, Nigeria risks missing out on the full benefits of an inclusive and sustainable growth trajectory.

The consequences of women's limited access to education are evident in various sectors of the Nigerian economy and society. Illiteracy among women has been linked to high maternal and child mortality rates, low productivity, environmental degradation, and poor family health outcomes (Ineye-Briggs & Okwu, 2023). Furthermore, the absence of educated women in leadership and decision-making roles has resulted in policies and programmes that often fail to address the unique needs and perspectives of half of the population. Inadequate investment in female education also perpetuates poverty, as uneducated women have fewer opportunities for gainful employment or entrepreneurship. More so, as Nigeria strives to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goals 4 and 5, the exclusion of women from education directly hampers progress. The researcher is therefore concerned about the continued neglect of women's education and seeks to investigate the impact of women education on sustainable development in Nigeria.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. In what ways does access to education empower women to contribute to economic growth and development?
2. To what extent does women education contribute to poverty reduction and improved living standards in communities?
3. What role does women education play in promoting health awareness and family well-being?
4. How has women education impacted political participation and leadership roles among women?
5. What are the major barriers to women's access to quality education in Nigeria?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to examine the impact of women education on sustainable development in Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study are:

1. To find out how access to education empower women to contribute to economic growth and development;
2. To ascertain the extent women education contribute to poverty reduction and improved living standards in communities;

3. To examine the role women education play in promoting health awareness and family well-being;
4. To determine how women education impacted political participation and leadership roles among women;
5. To highlight some of the major barriers to women's access to quality education in Nigeria.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study is focused on examining the impact of women's education on sustainable development in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. The research will explore how access to education among women contributes to key aspects of sustainable development such as economic growth, health, poverty reduction, and political participation. The study is geographically limited to Oredo Local Government Area, and the participants will consist of women who are residents of the area.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study will be of great importance to Nigerian women, particularly those in rural and underserved communities. By examining the impact of women's education on sustainable development, the research will help enlighten women on the value of acquiring education and how it contributes to individual empowerment and societal

progress. It will also encourage families and communities to support female education, thereby reducing cultural and social barriers that hinder women's access to learning.

The study will also benefit the Nigerian government by providing critical insights into the role of gender-inclusive education in national development. It will offer evidence-based data that can inform the formulation of effective policies aimed at promoting women's education as a tool for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These findings will help reinforce the need for more investments in girl-child education, especially in regions where access is still limited, and gender disparity is high.

Policymakers and development planners will find the study useful as it will highlight key areas where strategic interventions are needed to promote gender equality through education. The research will serve as a reliable guide in drafting education policies and development frameworks that prioritise women's involvement in decision-making, leadership, and economic participation. This will, in turn, foster balanced development across all sectors. Informed policy actions based on the study can help close the educational gap between males and females and promote equitable resource distribution.

Educational institutions and stakeholders in the academic sector will also benefit from this research. The study will help universities, colleges, and schools identify the challenges women face in accessing education and offer recommendations on how to address them. Educators and curriculum developers can use the findings to design

inclusive and gender-sensitive learning environments that support the retention and success of female students. It will also guide the development of educational programmes that link women's education to real-life developmental outcomes in society.

This study will be relevant to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society groups, and international development partners. These stakeholders can use the research findings to design and implement community-based programmes that promote girl-child education and women's empowerment. It will also support advocacy campaigns aimed at reducing gender inequality and increasing awareness about the developmental benefits of educating women.

## **1.7 Clarification of Key Concepts**

The following terms were clarified in the study:

**Women Education:** This refers to the formal and informal educational opportunities made available to females, enabling them to acquire knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed for personal development and active participation in societal progress.

**Sustainable Development:** A development process that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, often focusing on economic growth, environmental protection, and social inclusion.

**Gender Equality:** The state in which individuals of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, particularly in terms of access to education, employment, and participation in decision-making processes.

**Empowerment:** The process through which individuals, especially women, gain the ability, confidence, and authority to make decisions, control resources, and positively influence their personal lives and communities.

## **1.8 Research Approach**

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the impact of women education on sustainable development in Nigeria. The approach enables the researcher to gather numerical data through structured questionnaires, which will be administered to a sample population comprising women. The data collected will be analysed statistically to identify patterns, relationships, and trends that reveal how women's educational attainment contributes to various aspects of sustainable development such as economic growth, poverty reduction, and political participation. This method ensures objectivity, reliability, and generalisability of the findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Preamble**

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of related literature on the impact of women's education on sustainable development in Nigeria. It begins with an overview of the concept of women's education, highlighting its significance as a foundational element in driving societal progress. The review further explores how increased access to education empowers women to contribute meaningfully to economic growth and national development. It also discusses the critical role of women's education in reducing poverty and enhancing the living standards of families and communities. Moreover, the chapter examines how educational attainment among women promotes health awareness, improves family well-being, and encourages responsible parenting. Additionally, the review delves into the influence of women's education on political participation, leadership roles, and decision-making processes. Finally, the chapter addresses key barriers hindering women's access to quality education in Nigeria, including socio-cultural, economic, and institutional constraints.

#### **2.1 Overview of Women Education**

Women education in Nigeria refers to the inclusive process of equipping women and girls with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that promote their development and enable them to contribute meaningfully to national progress. Nuhu (2023) asserted that

this concept encompasses all forms of learning—formal, informal and non-formal—that enhance women’s intellectual, social and economic capabilities. In Nigeria, women education is not just about literacy but also includes empowering women to make informed decisions about their health, careers, families and communities. This education allows women to participate fully in political, economic and social spheres, contributing to poverty alleviation and societal transformation. Despite historical setbacks caused by cultural and religious biases, increasing awareness and governmental interventions have strengthened support for female education. When women are educated, entire communities benefit and cycles of poverty and inequality are disrupted through knowledge transfer and active civic engagement (Adeola, 2021).

The concept of women education in Nigeria is firmly rooted in the broader goal of promoting gender equality and dismantling societal structures that perpetuate discrimination. Ibrahim (2021) noted that education plays a vital role in enabling women to understand their rights, voice their opinions and assert themselves in traditionally male-dominated sectors. In the Nigerian context, women education also includes equipping girls and women with the confidence and ability to participate in governance, social activism and decision-making processes. This extends beyond academics to life skills, reproductive health education and civic orientation. Increasing girls' access to education leads to lower maternal mortality rates, delayed marriages and better child health indicators. Moreover, women who are educated are more likely to educate their own children, thus fostering a cycle of generational empowerment (Okonkwo, 2022).

Women education in Nigeria is increasingly being shaped by the need to prepare women for the demands of the modern global economy, particularly through digital literacy and vocational training. Musa (2022) argued that modern women education must include skills such as ICT proficiency, financial literacy and entrepreneurship to ensure economic independence. In many parts of Nigeria, NGOs and government agencies are integrating digital tools and innovation hubs to bridge the gender digital divide. Female students are now encouraged to venture into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields through targeted scholarships and mentorship programmes. The meaning of women education has therefore expanded from academic pursuit alone to include readiness for digital entrepreneurship and global competitiveness. This evolution aligns with Nigeria's aspiration to develop a diversified economy and reduce gender-based income gaps. Thus, modern women education plays a transformative role in economic sustainability (Eze, 2023).

Cultural understanding is crucial in shaping the meaning and acceptance of women education in Nigeria. Abiola (2023) pointed out that although some traditional beliefs still discourage female education, efforts are being made to harmonise cultural values with educational advancement. In many communities, religious and traditional leaders are being engaged in sensitisation programmes aimed at reshaping public perception. The concept of women education is thus being redefined to respect cultural identities while promoting progress. Community-based advocacy now focuses on the long-term benefits of educating girls such as reduced early marriages, enhanced

household incomes and better child-rearing practices. Furthermore, integrating indigenous knowledge into school curricula has made education more relatable for girls in rural areas. Education is no longer seen as a threat to culture but as a means to preserve and enhance it through informed participation. Such cultural inclusivity strengthens the foundation of female education (Udo, 2021).

Women education in Nigeria goes beyond classroom learning to embrace empowerment, societal development and intergenerational progress. Olayemi (2022) emphasised that educating a woman means educating a family as women often become the primary transmitters of knowledge and values to children. This education must address barriers such as gender-based violence, poverty and harmful traditional practices that hinder female academic achievement. Governmental and non-governmental bodies are therefore working to provide safe learning environments, scholarships and school feeding programmes to improve enrolment and retention of girls. Women education also contributes to peacebuilding, national unity and improved governance by fostering informed and active citizens. It prepares women for leadership, innovation and global engagement. Hence, understanding women education in Nigeria requires acknowledging its role in fostering a more just, equitable and prosperous society. It remains central to national transformation (Adegoke, 2023).

### **2.1.1 Access to Education and Women's Contribution to Economic Growth and Development**

Access to education plays a crucial role in enhancing women's capacity to contribute effectively to economic growth and national development. Wamako and Udom (2023) asserted that when women receive formal education, they acquire essential skills, competencies, and confidence that enable them to function productively within the workforce. These skills prepare them for employment opportunities in sectors such as finance, agriculture, health, and education, thereby increasing their economic value. Educated women are better positioned to make informed financial decisions, invest in small enterprises, and contribute to household income and national GDP. In addition, their participation in the labour force widens the tax base and reduces economic dependency. Consequently, nations with higher female education rates experience inclusive and accelerated economic development due to broader participation and utilisation of human capital (Echebiri, 2022).

Educational access strengthens women's ability to become successful entrepreneurs, which significantly contributes to economic development in Nigeria. Musa (2021) highlighted that education empowers women with financial literacy, management skills, and innovative thinking essential for launching and sustaining profitable businesses. With a solid educational background, women can easily identify market opportunities, write business plans, apply for loans, and utilise digital platforms for growth. Educated female entrepreneurs often outperform their uneducated counterparts in

areas such as customer service, financial planning, and innovation. Their businesses also create jobs, especially in underdeveloped communities, and contribute to wealth distribution and economic stability. Moreover, female-led businesses are more likely to invest in community development, thus creating a ripple effect of economic improvement. Education not only transforms individual lives but also strengthens grassroots economies and national development (Okon & Abang, 2023).

Formal education improves women's chances of securing gainful employment in skilled and high-paying professions, thus advancing economic development. Zubairu and Okoro (2022) posited that women who complete secondary and tertiary education are better qualified for roles in professional fields like banking, medicine, engineering, and public administration. These positions provide higher salaries, job security, and career progression, empowering women financially. With greater earning potential, women can invest in savings, real estate, and start-up ventures, which stimulates economic growth. Additionally, an inclusive workforce that incorporates women's talents enhances innovation and productivity at both organisational and national levels. Gender diversity in the labour force drives economic competitiveness and bridges the income gap, resulting in a more balanced and sustainable economy. Thus, access to education ensures that women are no longer marginalised but fully integrated into the economic framework of society (Idoko, 2021).

Beyond employment and entrepreneurship, access to education prepares women to contribute to scientific innovation, technological advancement, and national planning. Lawal and Eze (2020) observed that educated women increasingly participate in research, industrial innovation, and digital transformation efforts that are central to Nigeria's economic progress. Education enables women to engage in high-level decision-making, policy formulation, and knowledge production across sectors. Their contributions enrich the quality of ideas and practices necessary for sustainable development. Additionally, women's involvement in innovation-oriented fields helps diversify the economy and lessen over-reliance on traditional sectors like oil. This shift is vital in positioning Nigeria within the global economy. Educated women also lead in community-based development projects that have economic impact, especially in rural areas. By enabling women to operate in knowledge-driven sectors, education expands the nation's intellectual and productive capacity (Bamidele, 2023).

Access to education allows women to benefit from global economic opportunities through digital work, cross-border business, and remote employment. Salami and Okeke (2021) affirmed that women with ICT and academic qualifications can explore income-generating avenues such as freelance writing, digital marketing, virtual assistance, and e-commerce. These platforms enable them to earn foreign exchange and introduce new business models that enhance domestic productivity. Education ensures that women can compete in international markets, access funding, and build networks beyond their immediate environment. Moreover, their global economic engagement improves

Nigeria's economic profile and increases national export services. Educated women are also more likely to engage in international collaborations, contributing ideas and innovations to global industries. Hence, when women are educated, their contributions go beyond local economies, reinforcing national integration into the global economic system (Urhieme, 2022).

### **2.1.2 The Role of Women's Education in Poverty Reduction and Improved Living Standards**

Women's education plays a transformative role in reducing poverty and enhancing living standards, particularly in marginalised communities. Usman and Udoji (2021) affirmed that when women have access to education, they gain the literacy, skills, and confidence necessary to secure better employment or start small businesses. This financial empowerment enables them to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Educated women often break away from generational poverty by contributing more meaningfully to household income. With increased earnings, they can afford better housing, nutrition, healthcare, and other necessities. Furthermore, educated women are more likely to diversify income sources, invest wisely, and avoid exploitative labour. Their capacity to make informed financial choices also reduces dependence on unstable

or seasonal income streams. Thus, by equipping women with education, societies build stronger, more resilient families and communities (Salihu, 2023).

Education enhances women's economic decision-making abilities, which is vital for improving living standards at the family level. Mustapha (2022) observed that women who receive formal education are better at budgeting, saving, and managing household expenditures efficiently. These skills lead to wise resource allocation, enabling families to prioritise essentials such as quality food, decent shelter, clean water, and education for their children. Additionally, educated women are more likely to engage in long-term planning, such as saving for emergencies or investing in income-generating assets. In rural settings, educated women adopt modern agricultural practices or trade methods, resulting in increased productivity and higher earnings. This shift leads to improved food security and access to healthcare. Women with education are also more capable of joining cooperative societies and other support groups that enhance their economic strength and social networks (Dokunbor, 2024).

Educated women are more proactive in pursuing economic opportunities and leveraging available support systems for poverty alleviation. Ibrinke (2020) highlighted that women with formal education are more likely to explore microcredit programmes, skill acquisition initiatives, and business development grants. These platforms, although available to the public, are often inaccessible to uneducated women due to illiteracy or lack of awareness. Through education, women gain exposure to vital information and the

self-confidence required to participate in these initiatives. Their participation allows them to expand income streams, boost their productivity, and achieve greater financial independence. Moreover, educated women often act as agents of change in their communities, encouraging others to embrace similar opportunities. This creates a ripple effect, improving community-wide living standards. Their voices are also more recognised in community planning and decision-making processes, further contributing to development (Ayobami, 2023).

The long-term impact of women's education on poverty reduction is most evident in its influence on future generations. Saheed and Okunpa (2022) noted that educated women tend to prioritise the education and wellbeing of their children, creating a stable environment that promotes long-term development. These mothers support their children academically, emotionally, and socially, resulting in better school outcomes and improved life chances. When a woman is educated, her children are more likely to break out of the poverty cycle and ascend the socio-economic ladder. Moreover, such women often advocate for better schooling and healthcare infrastructure, which benefits the wider community. Their efforts contribute to reducing child mortality, improving family nutrition, and increasing school attendance rates. These outcomes all point to the fact that educating women is one of the most sustainable strategies to eradicate poverty and build prosperous societies over time (Tersoo, 2024).

Women's education also contributes to social mobility, enabling women to access better economic opportunities and lead more secure lives. Chigbuzor (2023) argued that educated women are no longer limited to low-paying, informal jobs but can enter sectors such as education, healthcare, public service, banking, and entrepreneurship. These sectors offer stable incomes, job security, and career growth, all of which significantly improve living standards. As more women rise economically, they inspire others within their communities to pursue education, creating a cycle of empowerment. Educated women also use their platforms to advocate for inclusive economic policies and gender-responsive development strategies. Moreover, they tend to make informed decisions regarding family planning, career development, and community involvement, which enhances their quality of life. Ultimately, women's education expands life choices, increases household prosperity, and reduces systemic poverty in Nigerian society (Onoyase, 2021).

### **2.1.3 Role Women Education Play in Promoting Health Awareness and Family Well-Being**

Women's education plays a pivotal role in enhancing health awareness among families and communities. Ezeaku (2021) asserted that educated women are more likely to possess accurate knowledge about hygiene, nutrition, reproductive health, and disease prevention. Such knowledge enables them to make informed decisions that significantly improve household health conditions. They are better equipped to understand and apply health guidelines, ranging from child immunisation schedules to preventive measures

against diseases like malaria and diarrhoea. Educated women are also more confident in engaging with healthcare professionals, asking the right questions, and following medical advice appropriately. Additionally, they serve as role models in their communities by spreading accurate health information and challenging harmful traditional health practices. Their influence helps promote a culture of health-conscious living, benefiting not just their immediate families but also the larger community (Nwachukwu, 2023).

Maternal health and safe childbirth practices are also significantly enhanced by women's education. Zulum and Ibrahim (2020) posited that educated women are more likely to attend antenatal clinics regularly and follow professional advice throughout their pregnancy. They are more aware of the signs of pregnancy complications and know when to seek medical help, which reduces the risk of maternal and infant mortality. Furthermore, education equips women with knowledge about nutrition during pregnancy, birth preparedness, and postnatal care for both mother and child. Educated mothers are also more inclined to use modern family planning methods, helping them space their children properly and reduce health risks associated with closely spaced births. This contributes to better physical recovery and emotional stability. Through education, women become empowered to take control of their reproductive health and ensure safe delivery experiences for themselves and better health outcomes for their babies (Danladi, 2022).

Another crucial contribution of women's education is its impact on household nutrition and food security. Bakare (2023) noted that educated women have improved knowledge of balanced diets, food safety, and healthy feeding practices. This helps them make better food choices, ensuring their families receive the right nutrients at every stage of life. Such women are also more skilled in managing limited food resources and avoiding waste. They understand the nutritional needs of infants, children, and the elderly, and take deliberate actions to prevent malnutrition and its associated diseases. Additionally, educated mothers are more open to trying fortified foods, supplements, or healthier alternatives, even within local contexts. Their awareness extends to recognising symptoms of deficiencies such as anaemia or stunted growth in children. Overall, women's education strengthens the nutritional foundation of the family, making it more resilient to food-related health challenges (Ezeji, 2021).

Women's education is essential in promoting mental and emotional well-being within the family. Umaru (2022) stated that educated women are more likely to understand mental health issues and respond to emotional needs in constructive ways. They learn communication, conflict resolution, and stress management skills, which help build strong family relationships. Such women are more observant of psychological symptoms in children or spouses and are less likely to ignore or misinterpret them. They can also access and trust professional mental health services, which helps reduce stigma and facilitates early intervention. Educated women provide emotional support systems that promote resilience and psychological stability among family members. Their

schooling often instils values of empathy, patience, and self-awareness, which play an important role in maintaining household harmony. Consequently, education does not only shape the intellect but also nurtures emotionally healthy homes and stronger family bonds (Faisasi & Adigun, 2023).

Women's education leads to improved health-seeking behaviour and long-term family wellness. Emesi (2021) affirmed that educated women are more likely to value preventive healthcare practices, such as regular medical check-ups, vaccinations, and early treatment of illnesses. They encourage their children and partners to adopt these habits, ensuring a proactive approach to health. Educated women are more aware of the dangers of self-medication and traditional treatments that lack scientific validation. They also understand chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma, and hypertension, and are more capable of managing them at home. This level of health literacy enables them to coordinate proper treatment regimens and follow through on medical advice. Beyond treatment, they promote healthy lifestyles through physical activity, cleanliness, and avoidance of harmful practices. As a result, educated women create a strong foundation for a lifetime of wellness in their families and communities (Kikelomo, 2022).

#### **2.1.4 Impact of Women's Education on Political Participation and Leadership**

Women's education plays a crucial role in boosting political participation and leadership among women in Nigeria. Salami (2023) asserted that when women are educated, they become more aware of their civil rights and are better equipped to

participate meaningfully in political processes. Education enhances their confidence, public speaking ability, and understanding of electoral systems, enabling them to vote, campaign, and contest in elections. In recent years, more Nigerian women have become politically active as a result of civic and academic education programmes. This shift also disrupts long-standing patriarchal norms that previously silenced women in public affairs. Education not only helps women break barriers but also empowers them to advocate for others, mentor young females, and support inclusive policy-making. Hence, women's education is a key driver of gender-sensitive political transformation and democratic representation (Okoh, 2021).

Educated women contribute significantly to political leadership, offering a wealth of knowledge, vision, and accountability. Hadiza (2022) argued that when women receive quality education, they acquire critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills that are vital for effective leadership. In political offices, educated women promote transparency, inclusivity, and gender-responsive policies. Education also enables women to engage constructively in debates, formulate sound policies, and lead with credibility. In Nigeria, many high-ranking female politicians, such as ministers and legislators, attribute their success to their educational background. Their competence and effectiveness in governance have inspired more women to pursue education and political careers. Ultimately, education remains an indispensable tool in preparing women for leadership roles in politics and in advocating for equitable governance in society (Tajudeen & Abdullahi, 2020).

Education equips women with awareness of their rights and the legal instruments available to protect and promote female political participation. Diodemise (2021) maintained that educated women are more likely to understand constitutional provisions and gender equity laws that support their inclusion in politics. This awareness fuels their advocacy and participation in party politics, electoral processes, and leadership development programmes. In Nigeria, female politicians with formal education are more likely to champion gender equality policies and mobilise grassroots women for political action. Furthermore, education strengthens women's voices in decision-making spaces, helping them to challenge discriminatory practices. It fosters a generation of female leaders who are informed, assertive, and capable of demanding change. Through education, Nigerian women gain the knowledge and courage required to challenge political exclusion and contribute meaningfully to national development (Irhikefe, 2022).

Women's education is also vital for preparing them to function successfully in political spaces traditionally dominated by men. Bosun (2023) highlighted that educated women have stronger self-esteem, broader perspectives, and better organisational skills, which enable them to lead effectively. In Nigerian politics, many women still face resistance rooted in cultural and patriarchal ideologies. However, education provides the confidence and strategic knowledge to confront these challenges and assert themselves. Educated women are better able to form alliances, network with peers, and navigate complex political terrains. From student leadership to national assemblies, formal education acts as a ladder that bridges gender inequality in political participation. Over

the years, women who started their leadership journeys through school-based organisations have moved on to occupy important governmental roles across Nigeria. Thus, education provides the skills and foundation necessary for thriving in leadership (Gambo, 2021).

The broader impact of women's education on political leadership is seen in the nature of policies women introduce and champion. Nwifiru and Uduak (2022) observed that female leaders with sound education tend to advocate for policies that promote health, education, poverty reduction, and child welfare. These women also push for inclusive governance that addresses the needs of marginalised groups. In Nigeria, several educated women in government have introduced reforms that positively affect women and children, demonstrating that their educational background shapes policy direction. Moreover, education enhances accountability, as educated leaders understand the principles of good governance and ethical leadership. This results in a more inclusive and progressive society. Ultimately, when women are educated, they become agents of change, capable of transforming not only political institutions but also the lives of those they serve (Afolayan, 2020).

### **2.1.5 Barriers to Women's Access to Quality Education in Nigeria**

One of the most persistent barriers to women's access to quality education in Nigeria is cultural and religious beliefs that reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations. Haruna (2023) asserted that in several northern and rural communities,

societal norms and religious ideologies discourage the formal education of girls, often encouraging early marriage and domestic training instead. These traditions assign women primarily reproductive and homemaking roles, viewing education as unnecessary or even harmful to their moral standing. Parents may perceive educated girls as less marriageable, making them reluctant to send their daughters to school. The insistence on cultural honour and family reputation creates internal pressure that hinders girls from aspiring to academic success. These factors collectively contribute to high dropout rates among female students, widening the gender education gap across Nigeria (Yahaya, 2021).

Poverty and economic inequality form another significant barrier to women's access to quality education in Nigeria. Maduku (2021) noted that many low-income households prioritize boys' education when resources are scarce, believing males are more likely to provide economic returns. Girls are often kept at home to assist with domestic tasks or engage in petty trading to support family income. These economic responsibilities affect school attendance and concentration, especially for adolescent girls. Furthermore, the inability to afford school fees, uniforms, learning materials, and sanitary supplies compounds the challenges female students face. Some girls engage in transactional relationships to meet these needs, exposing them to exploitation and increasing dropout rates. Families also hesitate to invest in girls' education due to the perception that their future husbands will benefit more from it. Consequently, economic hardship continues to limit girls' access to quality education across many regions (Itoko & Udoma, 2022).

Insecurity and armed conflict have increasingly disrupted women's educational access in various parts of Nigeria, particularly in the North. Mohammed (2022) explained that insurgent attacks on schools, especially by Boko Haram, have created fear and uncertainty, discouraging parents from enrolling their daughters in school. Girls have been specifically targeted in kidnappings and violence, making education a life-threatening endeavour. This insecurity forces schools to shut down or relocate, affecting learning continuity for female students. Teachers, especially female staff, often abandon their posts in unsafe zones, leaving girls without essential mentorship. The psychological trauma of conflict further reduces motivation and school participation among girls. In communities affected by violence, displaced girls face additional barriers such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of support systems. Until security challenges are effectively addressed, thousands of girls will continue to suffer disrupted or terminated education (Edigue, 2023).

A major but under-discussed challenge to women's access to education is the lack of gender-sensitive school infrastructure. Umeh (2020) highlighted that many schools across Nigeria lack separate toilets, changing rooms, and adequate sanitary facilities for female students, especially in rural areas. Girls often miss school during menstruation due to embarrassment, discomfort, and lack of privacy, which over time impacts their academic performance. Without safe transportation, long distances to school also expose girls to harassment and discourage attendance. Inadequate classroom seating, overcrowding, and poor ventilation make learning environments physically unfriendly for

girls. This physical discomfort, combined with subtle gender discrimination by some teachers or peers, diminishes girls' confidence and interest in education. Addressing these infrastructural inadequacies is essential for fostering an inclusive and empowering learning environment for girls. Until these are resolved, achieving gender parity in education remains a difficult goal in Nigeria (Sodiq & Okon, 2023).

The gap between education policy and implementation is another critical barrier hindering girls' access to quality education in Nigeria. Uwadiae (2021) argued that while the government has adopted gender-friendly policies—such as universal basic education and girl-child initiatives—effective implementation is often compromised by poor funding and corruption. Education budgets are not always equitably distributed or appropriately utilised, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, political will to monitor and evaluate gender-focused programmes is weak, and many girls are unaware of their rights to free education. The absence of female role models in leadership and teaching positions also reduces girls' motivation and vision for future possibilities. Lack of community involvement in policy execution creates further disconnect. For these policies to succeed, consistent enforcement, community engagement, and transparent accountability must be prioritised (Sowunmi & Adegbe, 2022).

## **2.2 Review of Empirical Studies**

Akinola and Okoh (2019) investigated the relationship between women's educational attainment and community-level sustainable development initiatives in

Kwara State, Nigeria. The study surveyed 250 women across five local government areas using stratified random sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires focused on literacy levels, participation in community development, and household decision-making. Statistical analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation and linear regression models. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between women's education and active involvement in sustainability projects, such as water sanitation, environmental conservation, and family planning. Educated women were more likely to initiate and support environmentally conscious practices in their communities. The study recommended intensified investment in female literacy and adult education programmes as a catalyst for sustainable development at the grassroots level.

Chukwu and Ibrahim (2020) conducted a study on how women's education affects economic sustainability in rural parts of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design and purposively sampled 180 educated and uneducated women involved in petty trade and farming. Data were gathered through interviews and a structured questionnaire, and analysed using descriptive statistics and t-tests. Results showed that women with at least secondary education demonstrated higher business success, financial literacy, and reinvestment in local economies, compared to their less-educated counterparts. The study concluded that women's education enhances economic resilience and sustainability, especially in marginalised communities. It recommended government policies that link women's education with entrepreneurship funding and skill development.

Eze and Bello (2021) explored the influence of girl-child education on environmental sustainability in Imo State, using a cross-sectional survey approach. The sample consisted of 220 women aged between 18 and 45, selected through multistage sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires focusing on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to environmental issues. The researchers used chi-square tests and ANOVA to analyse the data. The study found that women who had received formal education were more likely to engage in environmentally sustainable behaviours such as proper waste disposal, tree planting, and water conservation. In contrast, less-educated women lacked awareness of these practices. The authors recommended environmental education as a component of women's formal education to foster grassroots-level environmental responsibility.

Olatunji and Musa (2022) examined the role of female education in promoting social sustainability in Lagos State. The study employed a correlational design, with a sample of 300 women selected through systematic random sampling across three urban local government areas. Questionnaires and focus group discussions were used to gather data, which were analysed using Spearman's correlation and thematic content analysis. Findings indicated that women with tertiary education were more likely to advocate for gender equality, inclusive education, and civic engagement, all of which are key to social sustainability. The study emphasised the transformative role of education in fostering tolerant, equitable, and socially cohesive communities. It recommended the expansion of women's access to higher education as a driver of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Abdullahi and Uche (2023) assessed how women's education contributes to health-related aspects of sustainable development in Bauchi State. A total of 160 women were sampled using cluster sampling from both rural and semi-urban areas. The researchers used a combination of health records review and semi-structured interviews to collect data. Statistical analyses included logistic regression to determine relationships between education levels and maternal/child health outcomes. The study revealed that educated women had better health-seeking behaviours, utilised antenatal care more consistently, and practised better child nutrition methods. The researchers concluded that women's education significantly enhances health outcomes and reduces mortality rates, which aligns with the health dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They urged policymakers to integrate women's education into broader health interventions.

Adebisi and Nnaji (2024) investigated the contribution of women's education to political and institutional sustainability in Edo and Delta States. The study utilised a comparative case study design, involving 200 women in leadership roles in community-based organisations and local government councils. Data were obtained through questionnaires and in-depth interviews and analysed using descriptive statistics and narrative analysis. Findings showed that educated women were more likely to participate in local governance, influence policy-making, and advocate for transparency and accountability in institutional processes. The research highlighted the crucial link between education and women's empowerment in sustaining democratic institutions. The

study recommended increased scholarships and leadership training opportunities for women to enhance their participation in governance and policy discourse.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted for the study is the Human Capital Theory propounded by Gary Becker in 1964. Human Capital Theory views education as a crucial investment that enhances individuals' productivity and potential to contribute to national development. It posits that skills and knowledge acquired through education function as forms of capital, yielding returns in the form of increased income, improved well-being, and economic growth. This theory is particularly relevant when assessing the role of women's education in fostering sustainable development. Nigeria's socio-economic challenges—ranging from poverty and gender inequality to low productivity—are all areas where improvements in women's educational attainment could have transformative impacts. Yet, many women and girls still face significant barriers to accessing quality education. By applying Human Capital Theory, researchers and policymakers can better understand the long-term value of investing in women's education to unlock their economic potential and build a more sustainable and inclusive society.

Human Capital Theory asserts that education increases individual efficiency, resulting in higher productivity in the workplace and improved capacity for innovation. In Nigeria, educated women are more likely to enter the formal economy, contribute to small- and medium-scale enterprises, and enhance agricultural practices, particularly in

rural communities. This promotes sustainable development by boosting household incomes, reducing poverty, and increasing community resilience. Furthermore, educated women often have greater access to information on health, finance, and technology, all of which enable them to make informed decisions that benefit their families and society. When women participate fully in the labour force, national productivity rises, contributing to economic diversification and stability. These outcomes align with Human Capital Theory, which emphasises the economic returns of educational investment. Therefore, women's education is not just a social necessity but an economic imperative for achieving Nigeria's development goals and long-term sustainability.

The theory hold out that the benefits of women's education extend beyond the individual to subsequent generations. Educated women typically marry later, have fewer children, and are more likely to provide better health care, nutrition, and education for their families. In Nigeria, such improvements contribute to reduced child mortality, higher school enrolment rates, and improved maternal health—key indicators of sustainable development. Additionally, educated mothers are better equipped to engage with healthcare systems and access family planning services, leading to healthier families and controlled population growth. This intergenerational transfer of human capital helps break the cycle of poverty and promotes more equitable and sustainable communities. Therefore, Human Capital Theory provides a framework for understanding how educating women not only enhances their personal well-being but also leads to broader

socio-economic progress. It establishes education as a foundation for nurturing capable future citizens and achieving long-term development goals.

Human Capital Theory also supports the notion that women's education strengthens civic participation and governance structures. In Nigeria, educated women are more likely to be involved in political decision-making, community leadership, and advocacy for social justice and gender equality. They are better positioned to demand accountability, participate in elections, and influence local and national policies. Such civic engagement is vital for building institutions that are transparent, inclusive, and development-oriented. Moreover, education enhances women's confidence and communication skills, enabling them to challenge harmful traditional norms and promote societal change. Human Capital Theory validates the idea that these social capabilities—though less tangible—are crucial components of national development. Educated women contribute to peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and intergenerational dialogue, all of which are critical to sustainable development. Hence, investing in women's education leads to stronger, more participatory democracies and well-governed societies.

The theory is relevant to the study as it help provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the central role of women's education in promoting sustainable development. It reveals how education functions as an investment with far-reaching benefits—economic, social, political, and intergenerational. In Nigeria, empowering women through education equips them with the tools to contribute

meaningfully to all sectors of society, thereby improving national productivity, reducing inequality, and fostering community well-being. These outcomes directly support the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to education, gender equality, poverty reduction, and economic growth. Importantly, Human Capital Theory challenges governments, institutions, and policymakers to prioritise educational reforms that eliminate gender disparities and increase access for women and girls. To build a prosperous and sustainable Nigeria, women's education must not be viewed as a luxury or privilege but as an essential investment in the nation's future.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Preamble**

This chapter presents in detail the methods adopted for carrying out the study, serving as a guide to ensure that the research objectives are properly achieved. It begins with an explanation of the research design, which provides the overall blueprint for addressing the research questions and achieving the stated objectives. The chapter further outlines the study population, the criteria for inclusion, as well as the sample size considered adequate for the investigation. The sampling technique employed for the selection of participants is also explained to justify the representativeness of the study sample. In addition, the research instrument utilised is discussed alongside the procedures adopted to establish its reliability and validity, thereby ensuring accuracy and credibility of the data collected. Both primary and secondary sources of data are identified, and the chapter concludes with the methods of data analysis employed to interpret and present the findings effectively.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is a widely used methodological approach in social and educational research that aims to systematically gather data from a population or sample to describe the characteristics, behaviours, attitudes, or opinions of the respondents. Unlike

experimental designs that manipulate variables to establish cause-and-effect relationships, the descriptive survey is primarily concerned with presenting a factual and detailed account of a situation as it naturally occurs (Nworgu, 2015). It employs structured tools such as questionnaires, interviews, and checklists to collect information that is later analysed to identify patterns, frequencies, and trends. This design provides a snapshot of the existing state of affairs without altering the research environment, which makes it particularly useful in studying large populations. Researchers rely on it to make informed generalisations about groups and to guide decision-making in education, business, health, and governance.

The main strength of descriptive survey research design lies in its ability to provide comprehensive and reliable quantitative or qualitative information within a relatively short time frame. By adopting this approach, researchers can obtain insights into prevailing conditions, social issues, or organisational practices without needing to manipulate study variables or apply complex experimental controls. Furthermore, it facilitates the collection of diverse perspectives from a broad sample, thereby enhancing the representativeness and external validity of the findings (Orodho, 2003). The descriptive survey design is also instrumental in identifying relationships among variables and in highlighting areas for further research. For example, in educational settings, it can reveal patterns in students' learning behaviours, teachers' instructional practices, or administrators' decision-making processes. Its ability to capture real-life phenomena accurately makes it an indispensable tool for policymakers, practitioners, and

researchers across multiple disciplines. In the context of this study, the design is considered highly suitable because it allows the researcher to explore in depth the relationship between women's education and sustainable development in Nigeria, capturing perspectives that are both authentic and context-specific.

### **3.2 Population of the Study**

The population of the study refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, events, or elements that possess common characteristics relevant to a research investigation. It represents the full set from which a researcher intends to draw conclusions, whether the focus is on people, institutions, documents, or other units of analysis (Creswell, 2014). The population is defined by specific parameters such as location, time, and attributes that align with the objectives of the study, ensuring that the findings are contextually meaningful.

The population of this study consisted of respondents drawn from four (4) distinct communities within Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, namely Urubi, Ikpema, Ibiwe, and Uzebu. These communities were carefully selected to provide a representative cross-section of the local government, ensuring that the study captures the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the area. According to available data from the National Population Census (NPC, 2025), Oredo Local Government Area has an estimated population of 404,218 residents. This large and heterogeneous population provides a rich base from which to draw respondents, thereby enhancing the reliability of

the study. By focusing on specific communities within this broader population, the study seeks to generate findings that are not only reflective of the local government as a whole but also attentive to the unique characteristics of each selected community.

### **3.3 Sample Size**

The sample size refers to the specific number of individuals, items, or units selected from the total population of the study to participate in the research. It represents a subset of the population that is carefully chosen to provide data from which conclusions and generalisations can be drawn. Determining an appropriate sample size is crucial, as it affects the reliability and validity of the research findings. A sample that is too small may not adequately represent the population, while an excessively large sample could be unnecessarily costly (Kothari, 2004).

The sample size for this study comprised one hundred (100) respondents carefully drawn from four selected communities within Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. These communities include Urubi, Ikpema, Ibiwe, and Uzebu, each of which has been chosen to ensure broad representation of the population under study. From each of the four communities, twenty-five (25) respondents were selected, thereby making up a total sample size of 100 participants. This distribution is intended to ensure that no community is overrepresented or underrepresented in the study, thus promoting balance and fairness in the data collected. A sample of this size is considered adequate for the study because it provides a manageable number of respondents for effective data

collection, while still offering enough diversity of opinions and experiences to draw meaningful conclusions relevant to the wider population of Oredo Local Government Area. The determination of this sample size was guided by the application of Taro Yamane's formula, as outlined below:

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

N = Population size

1 = Constant

e = margin of error (usually 0.1 for a 90% confidence level)

Thus;

$$= \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

$$= \frac{404,218}{1+404,218(0.1)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{404,218}{1+404,218(0.01)}$$

$$N = \frac{404,218}{1+4,042.18}$$

$$N = \frac{404,218}{5,042.18}$$

4,043.18

N=100

Thus, the calculated sample size is 100 respondents.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

The study adopted the simple random sampling technique in selecting participants from the target population. Simple random sampling is a widely recognised probability sampling method that gives each member of the population an equal and independent chance of being chosen, thereby reducing bias and increasing the representativeness of the sample. In this study, the technique was applied by randomly selecting respondents from each of the four chosen communities within Oredo Local Government Area namely Urubi, Ikpema, Ibiwe, and Uzebu. From each community, twenty-five respondents will be drawn, making up the total sample size of one hundred (100) participants. This approach is considered appropriate because it not only ensures fairness in the selection process but also allows the researcher to obtain a diverse range of views and experiences, which will strengthen the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

### **3.5 Research Instrument**

The major research instrument that was used in the study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to respondents to complete without disclosing their

identities. It was designed to obtain sufficient and relevant information from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into six sections: A, B, C, D, and E.

Section A focused on how access to education empowered women to contribute to economic growth and development. Section B ascertained the extent to which women's education contributed to poverty reduction and improved living standards in communities. Section C examined the role women's education played in promoting health awareness and family well-being. Section D determined how women's education impacted political participation and leadership roles among women. Finally, Section E contained information related to some of the major barriers to women's access to quality education in Nigeria.

### **3.6 Validity of the Instrument**

The questionnaire served as the primary research instrument for this study, and it was subjected to face validation to ensure its suitability for data collection. Face validation was an important step in the research because it helped to determine whether the instrument appeared to measure what it was intended to measure, based on expert judgment. In this study, the constructed questionnaire was carefully designed to capture information relevant to the research objectives, after which it was presented to the project supervisor for review. The supervisor assessed the clarity, organisation, and relevance of the items to confirm the content validity of the instrument. Any suggestions or corrections made during this process were thoroughly incorporated into the final draft of

the questionnaire. This process ensured that the instrument was both reliable and valid before being administered to the respondents.

### **3.7 Reliability of Instrument**

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher conducted a pilot study using a small group of respondents who shared similar characteristics with the target population. The purpose of this preliminary exercise was to test whether the instrument consistently measured what it was designed to measure. Data collected from the pilot study were analysed using the Cronbach's alpha reliability test, a widely recognised statistical tool for determining the internal consistency of research instruments. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or above was regarded as acceptable, signifying that the questionnaire yielded dependable and stable results. If the analysis revealed weaknesses or ambiguities in the instrument, necessary adjustments were made to improve the clarity, accuracy, and coherence of the questions. This process helped ensure that the final version of the questionnaire was both reliable and suitable for full-scale data collection.

### **3.8 Sources of Data**

The primary source of data for this study was the questionnaire, which served as the main instrument for collecting relevant information from respondents. The study adopted the questionnaire method of data collection because it was widely regarded as an effective and efficient means of gathering data from a large number of people within a relatively short period. The questionnaire was carefully designed by the researcher in line

with the objectives of the study to ensure that it captured all the necessary variables. It consisted of structured items aimed at eliciting detailed responses from participants on the impact of women's education on sustainable development in Nigeria. By using this method, the researcher was able to obtain standardised responses, which made the data easier to analyse and compare across the selected communities, thereby enhancing the accuracy of the findings.

### **3.9 Method for Data Collection**

The administration of the research instrument was carried out directly by the researcher to ensure accuracy and efficiency in the process. In this study, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the selected respondents across the four chosen communities in Oredo Local Government Area. This direct administration enabled the researcher to provide necessary clarifications where respondents had difficulty understanding certain items, thereby improving the quality of responses. Furthermore, all completed questionnaires were collected immediately after completion to minimise the risk of loss, delay, or non-return of instruments, which are common challenges in survey research. This approach also enhanced the response rate significantly, as the presence of the researcher during the exercise encouraged respondents to complete the questionnaires promptly and accurately. Overall, this method contributed to obtaining reliable and valid data for the study.

### **3.10 Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected for this study were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which is a powerful and widely recognised software for effective data management, organisation, and analysis. SPSS was particularly suitable for this research because it provided accurate computations and clear outputs that made interpretation easier. In this study, the analysis focused primarily on the use of simple descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and tables to summarise the data in a meaningful way. These statistical tools enabled the researcher to organise the responses obtained from the questionnaire and present them in a format that was easy to understand and interpret. By applying this method of analysis, the study provided a concise and accurate presentation of the findings, ensuring that the research questions were effectively addressed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 4.1 Preamble

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of data gathered from respondents through the administered questionnaires. The responses are organized in frequency distribution tables and expressed in simple percentages, followed by thorough interpretations. The data analyzed were obtained exclusively from the completed questionnaires. Of the one hundred (100) questionnaires distributed, all were duly completed and returned, yielding a 100% response rate. Hence, the analysis was carried out using all one hundred (100) retrieved questionnaires.

### 4.2 Analysis of Respondents Demographic Data

This section begins with the presentation of respondents' demographic information, including gender, age, educational qualification, and ranks. These variables are intended to provide a clear understanding of the impact of women education on sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	31	31%
Female	69	69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of respondents, with 31% being male and 69% being female. This indicates that the majority of the study population consists of female respondents, while males represent a smaller proportion.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age**

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
18-25	62	62%
26-35	22	22%
36-45	11	11%
46 years and above	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

From the table 2, respondents within the age range of 18–25 years form the largest group, with 62 respondents, representing 62% of the total. This is followed by those aged 26–35 years, who make up 22 respondents or 22%. Next are respondents aged 36–45 years, accounting 11% of the respondents. The smallest group comprises those aged 46 years and above, with 5 respondents, representing 5%. This indicates that the majority of respondents fall within the 18–25 age range.

**Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Religious Affiliation**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Christian	76	76%
Muslim	18	18%
African Traditional Religion	6	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

Table 3 shows the religious affiliation of respondents, with 76% (76 respondents) identifying as Christians, 18% (18 respondents) as Muslims, and 6% (6 respondents) practicing African Traditional Religion. This indicates that Christianity is the

predominant religion among the respondents, followed by Islam and African Traditional Religion.

**Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Single	73	73%
Married	24	24%
Divorce	3	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

Table 4 above shows the marital status of respondents, with 73% being single, 24% married, and 3% divorced. This indicates that the majority of respondents are single, while a smaller proportion are married or divorced.

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Farmer	21	21%
Civil servant	34	34%
Trader	41	41%
Others	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

Table 4 revealed that 21% of the sampled respondents are those whose occupation is farming, 34% are civil servants, 41% are traders while 4% belong to other occupation not specified. This indicates that majority of the respondents are those in trading occupation.

### 4.3 Analysis of Findings

#### Objective One: To Find Out How Access to Education Empower Women to Contribute to Economic Growth and Development

**Table 6:** Distribution of Responses on How Access to Education Empower Women to Contribute to Economic Growth and Development

S/N	Items	Total No of respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Educated women are more likely to access formal employment opportunities and contribute economically	100	57 (57%)	33 (33%)	7 (7%)	3 (3%)
2.	Education empowers women to become entrepreneurs and manage profitable businesses independently	100	69 (69%)	24 (24%)	5 (5%)	2 (2%)
3.	Women's education plays a vital role in national economic development and productivity	100	64 (64%)	30 (30%)	4 (4%)	2 (2%)
4.	Educated women contribute more effectively to economic innovation and sustainable community development.	100	61 (61%)	29 (29%)	6 (6%)	4 (4%)
5.	Education enables women to make sound financial decisions and improve household income levels	100	59 (59%)	34 (34%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

Table 6 presents the distribution of responses on how access to education empowers women to contribute to economic growth and development. In item 1, findings show that education significantly enhances women's access to formal employment and their economic contributions, as 57% of respondents strongly agreed and 33% agreed, while

only 7% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed, indicating that 90% recognised education as a key factor in women's employability. Item 2 reveals that education promotes women's entrepreneurship and independent business management, with 69% strongly agreeing and 24% agreeing, whereas only 5% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed, suggesting that 93% acknowledged the entrepreneurial empowerment effect of education. For item 3, 64% strongly agreed and 30% agreed that women's education plays a vital role in national economic development and productivity, while just 4% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed, implying 94% support for this assertion. Similarly, item 4 shows that 61% strongly agreed and 29% agreed that educated women contribute more effectively to economic innovation and sustainable community development, while 6% and 4% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, revealing 90% overall agreement. Finally, item 5 indicates that 59% strongly agreed and 34% agreed that education enables women to make sound financial decisions and improve household income levels, with only 4% and 3% dissenting, representing 93% consensus. Overall, the data clearly demonstrate that access to education overwhelmingly empowers women to drive economic growth, innovation, and development both at household and national levels.

**Objective Two: To Ascertain the Extent Women Education Contribute to Poverty Reduction and Improved Living Standards in Communities**

**Table 7:** Distribution of Responses on Extent Women Education Contribute to Poverty Reduction and Improved Living Standards in Communities

S/N	Items	Total No of respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Women’s education is essential in reducing household poverty and improving community living standards	100	64 (64%)	26 (26%)	6 (6%)	4 (4%)
2.	Educated women invest more in their children’s education, health, and general well-being	100	61 (61%)	31 (31%)	3 (3%)	5 (5%)
3.	Education increases women’s earning potential and reduces dependency on male household members	100	52 (52%)	37 (37%)	5 (5%)	6 (6%)
4.	Women with education are more likely to lift their families out of poverty	100	56 (56%)	36 (36%)	3 (3%)	5 (5%)
5.	Literacy among women directly improves access to housing, food security, and healthcare services	100	59 (59%)	35 (35%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

Table 7 presents the distribution of responses on the extent to which women’s education contributes to poverty reduction and improved living standards in communities. In item 1, findings show that women’s education plays a crucial role in reducing household poverty and enhancing community welfare, as 64% of respondents strongly agreed and 26% agreed, while only 6% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed, indicating that 90% recognised education as a tool for poverty alleviation. Item 2 reveals that educated

women invest more in their children's education, health, and well-being, with 61% strongly agreeing and 31% agreeing, whereas 3% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed, suggesting that 92% acknowledged the intergenerational benefits of women's education. For item 3, 52% strongly agreed and 37% agreed that education increases women's earning capacity and reduces economic dependency, while 5% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed, showing 89% consensus on women's financial empowerment. Item 4 indicates that 56% strongly agreed and 36% agreed that educated women are more likely to lift their families out of poverty, with 3% disagreeing and 5% strongly disagreeing, reflecting 92% affirmation. Lastly, item 5 shows that 59% strongly agreed and 35% agreed that women's literacy directly enhances access to housing, food security, and healthcare, while only 3% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed, representing 94% agreement. Overall, the data indicate a strong consensus that women's education significantly reduces poverty, improves family welfare, and enhances living standards across communities.

**Objective Three: To Examine the Role Women Education Play in Promoting Health**

**Awareness and Family Well-Being**

**Table 8:** Distribution of Responses on Role Women Education Play in Promoting Health Awareness and Family Well-Being

S/N	Items	Total No of respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Educated women are more knowledgeable about disease prevention and healthy living practices	100	59 (59%)	34 (34%)	5 (4%)	2 (3%)
2.	Women’s education enhances childcare practices, leading to healthier children and family members	100	67 (67%)	25 (25%)	3 (3%)	5 (5%)
3.	There is a strong relationship between women’s education and lower infant mortality rates	100	49 (49%)	39 (39%)	6 (6%)	6 (6%)
4.	Educated women are more informed about reproductive health and birth spacing options	100	72 (72%)	21 (21%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)
5.	Education enables women to promote family well-being through better health decision-making	100	61 (61%)	29 (29%)	6 (6%)	4 (4%)

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

Table 8 presents the distribution of responses on the role women’s education plays in promoting health awareness and family well-being. In item 1, findings indicate that educated women possess greater knowledge of disease prevention and healthy living, as 59% of respondents strongly agreed and 34% agreed, while only 4% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed, showing that 93% recognised education as a vital factor in promoting health awareness. Item 2 reveals that women’s education enhances childcare practices,

leading to healthier family members, with 67% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing, whereas only 3% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed, suggesting that 92% viewed education as crucial to improved family health. For item 3, 49% strongly agreed and 39% agreed that there is a strong relationship between women's education and reduced infant mortality rates, while 6% each disagreed and strongly disagreed, indicating that 88% supported this link. Item 4 shows that 72% strongly agreed and 21% agreed that educated women are more informed about reproductive health and birth spacing, while 4% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed, reflecting 93% affirmation. Finally, item 5 demonstrates that 61% strongly agreed and 29% agreed that education enables women to promote family well-being through informed health decisions, while 6% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed, giving a total of 90% agreement. Overall, the data reveal that women's education plays a vital role in improving health awareness, reproductive health management, and family well-being.

**Objective Four: To Determine How Women Education Impacted Political Participation and Leadership Roles Among Women**

**Table 9:** Distribution of Responses on How Women Education Impacted Political Participation and Leadership Roles Among Women

S/N	Items	Total No of respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Education increases women’s involvement in political campaigns and decision-making processes	100	71 (71%)	24 (24%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)
2.	Educated women are more likely to pursue leadership roles in public and private sectors	100	68 (68%)	22 (22%)	6 (6%)	4 (4%)
3.	Women’s education builds confidence and skills necessary for effective political participation	100	72 (72%)	21 (21%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)
4.	There is a positive relationship between women’s education and civic awareness	100	56 (56%)	37 (37%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)
5.	Educated women influence public policy by engaging in leadership and governance activities	100	79 (79%)	15 (15%)	4 (4%)	2 (2%)

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

Table 9 presents the distribution of responses on how women’s education impacts political participation and leadership roles among women. In item 1, findings show that education significantly increases women’s involvement in political campaigns and decision-making processes, as 71% of respondents strongly agreed and 24% agreed, while only 3% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed, indicating that 95% recognised education as a key driver of women’s political engagement. Item 2 reveals that educated

women are more likely to pursue leadership roles in both public and private sectors, with 68% strongly agreeing and 22% agreeing, whereas 6% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed, suggesting that 90% affirmed the link between education and leadership ambition. For item 3, 72% strongly agreed and 21% agreed that women's education builds confidence and skills essential for effective political participation, while 4% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed, showing 93% overall agreement. Item 4 demonstrates that 56% strongly agreed and 37% agreed that there is a positive relationship between women's education and civic awareness, with only 3% and 4% disagreeing and strongly disagreeing respectively, reflecting 93% consensus. Lastly, item 5 indicates that 79% strongly agreed and 15% agreed that educated women influence public policy by engaging in leadership and governance, while 4% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed, revealing a remarkable 94% agreement. Overall, the data suggest that women's education has a profound impact on enhancing political participation, leadership representation, and civic engagement among women in society.

**Objective Five: To Highlight Some of the Major Barriers to Women's Access to Quality Education in Nigeria**

**Table 10:** Distribution of Responses on Major Barriers to Women's Access to Quality Education in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Total No of respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Early marriage limits many girls' chances of completing their basic and higher education	100	52 (52%)	33 (33%)	9 (9%)	6 (6%)
2.	Cultural and religious norms discourage girls from continuing education beyond primary level	100	47 (47%)	38 (38%)	11 (11%)	4 (4%)
3.	Poverty remains a major barrier to consistent school attendance for many girls	100	27 (27%)	59 (59%)	6 (6%)	8 (8%)
4.	Gender stereotypes and discrimination restrict girls' access to equal educational opportunities	100	61 (61%)	28 (28%)	6 (6%)	5 (5%)
5.	Insecurity and school violence create unsafe learning environments for female students	100	44 (44%)	31 (31%)	11 (11%)	14 (14%)

**Source: Field Work, 2025**

Table 10 presents the distribution of responses on the major barriers to women's access to quality education in Nigeria. In item 1, findings reveal that early marriage significantly limits girls' chances of completing both basic and higher education, as 52% of respondents strongly agreed and 33% agreed, while 9% disagreed and 6% strongly

disagreed, indicating that 85% recognised early marriage as a critical barrier to female education. Item 2 shows that cultural and religious norms also discourage girls from pursuing education beyond the primary level, with 47% strongly agreeing and 38% agreeing, whereas 11% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed, suggesting that 85% acknowledged socio-cultural restrictions as a major hindrance. For item 3, 27% strongly agreed and 59% agreed that poverty remains a key obstacle to regular school attendance among girls, while 6% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed, giving a total of 86% agreement on the economic challenges faced by females. Item 4 indicates that gender stereotypes and discrimination restrict girls' access to equal educational opportunities, as 61% strongly agreed and 28% agreed, with 6% disagreeing and 5% strongly disagreeing, reflecting 89% consensus on the persistence of gender bias in education. Lastly, item 5 reveals that insecurity and school violence contribute to unsafe learning environments for female students, with 44% strongly agreeing and 31% agreeing, while 11% disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed, showing 75% agreement. Overall, the data suggest that early marriage, poverty, cultural norms, gender discrimination, and insecurity remain the dominant barriers hindering women's access to quality education in Nigeria.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

Findings from the study revealed that access to education overwhelmingly empowers women to drive economic growth, innovation, and development both at household and national levels. This finding can be attributed to the fact that education equips women with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to participate actively

in economic, social, and political spheres. Educated women are more likely to engage in income-generating activities, make informed financial and health decisions, and contribute meaningfully to household welfare. At the national level, increased female education expands the skilled labor force, fosters innovation, and enhances productivity, leading to sustainable economic growth. Moreover, education promotes gender equality, reduces dependency, and enables women to assume leadership roles that influence development policies and practices. This finding is in line with Wamako and Udom (2023) who asserted that when women receive formal education, they acquire essential skills, competencies, and confidence that enable them to function productively within the workforce. In same vein, Lawal and Eze (2020) observed that educated women increasingly participate in research, industrial innovation, and digital transformation efforts that are central to Nigeria's economic progress.

Findings from the study shows that women's education significantly reduces poverty, improves family welfare, and enhances living standards across communities. This finding can be explained by the fact that educated women are better equipped with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities needed to secure gainful employment and generate income, thereby lifting their families out of poverty. Education also enables women to make informed choices about health, nutrition, and child welfare, which directly improves the overall well-being of their households. Furthermore, educated women tend to invest more in their children's education and health, creating a positive cycle of development that enhances living standards within communities. As a result,

women's education serves as a powerful tool for breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and promoting sustainable community development. This finding aligns with the views of Usman and Udoji (2021) who affirmed that when women have access to education, they gain the literacy, skills, and confidence necessary to secure better employment or start small businesses. Similarly, Mustapha (2022) observed that women who receive formal education are better at budgeting, saving, and managing household expenditures efficiently.

Findings from the study indicated that women's education plays a vital role in improving health awareness, reproductive health management, and family well-being. This finding can be attributed to the fact that education enhances women's understanding of health issues, enabling them to make informed decisions about nutrition, hygiene, and preventive healthcare. Educated women are more likely to access medical services, adopt healthy practices, and manage reproductive health responsibly, which reduces maternal and child mortality rates. Furthermore, education promotes awareness about family planning and disease prevention, empowering women to maintain healthier families. By improving health literacy, women's education not only strengthens individual well-being but also contributes to the overall health and stability of the family unit and the wider community. In line with the findings, Ezeaku (2021) asserted that educated women are more likely to possess accurate knowledge about hygiene, nutrition, reproductive health, and disease prevention. In the same vein, Zulum and Ibrahim (2020) posited that educated

women are more likely to attend antenatal clinics regularly and follow professional advice throughout their pregnancy.

Findings from the study revealed that women's education has a profound impact on enhancing political participation, leadership representation, and civic engagement among women in society. This finding can be explained by the fact that education empowers women with the knowledge, confidence, and critical thinking skills necessary to understand political systems, advocate for their rights, and actively participate in governance. Educated women are more likely to engage in civic activities, vote in elections, and pursue leadership positions where they can influence policies that promote gender equality and social justice. Moreover, education fosters awareness of democratic values, strengthens communication abilities, and builds networks that support women's involvement in decision-making processes. Consequently, women's education becomes a driving force for inclusive governance and societal development. In support of the findings, Salami (2023) asserted that when women are educated, they become more aware of their civil rights and are better equipped to participate meaningfully in political processes. Similarly, Hadiza (2022) argued that when women receive quality education, they acquire critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills that are vital for effective leadership.

Findings from the study indicated that early marriage, poverty, cultural norms, gender discrimination, and insecurity remain the dominant barriers hindering women's

access to quality education in Nigeria. This finding can be attributed to the fact that socio-economic and cultural factors continue to limit girls' educational opportunities in many parts of Nigeria. Poverty often forces families to prioritize survival over schooling, while early marriage disrupts girls' education and confines them to domestic responsibilities. Deeply rooted cultural norms and gender discrimination further reinforce the belief that educating girls is less important than educating boys. Additionally, insecurity, especially in regions affected by conflict or insurgency, discourages school attendance and leads to the closure of educational institutions. These interconnected challenges collectively restrict women's access to quality education and perpetuate cycles of inequality and underdevelopment. This finding is in corroboration with Haruna (2023) who asserted that in several northern and rural communities, societal norms and religious ideologies discourage the formal education of girls, often encouraging early marriage and domestic training instead. Similarly, Maduku (2021) opined that many low-income households prioritize boys' education when resources are scarce, believing males are more likely to provide economic returns.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Preamble

This section presents a summary of the study, the conclusions derived, the findings obtained, and the recommendations provided.

#### 5.2 Summary

The study investigated the impact of women education on sustainable development in Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study, five (5) research questions were raised and answered. The sample size for the study was made up of 100 respondents. The researcher used descriptive survey research design in building up this project work. An analysis of data was done using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Simple descriptive statistics such as frequency count and simple percentage were used in presenting the findings of the research.

The study revealed that access to education overwhelmingly empowers women to drive economic growth, innovation, and development both at household and national levels. This finding can be attributed to the fact that education equips women with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to participate actively in economic, social, and political spheres. Educated women are more likely to engage in income-generating activities, make informed financial and health decisions, and contribute meaningfully to

household welfare. At the national level, increased female education expands the skilled labor force, fosters innovation, and enhances productivity, leading to sustainable economic growth. Moreover, education promotes gender equality, reduces dependency, and enables women to assume leadership roles that influence development policies and practices.

The study also revealed that women's education significantly reduces poverty, improves family welfare, and enhances living standards across communities. This finding can be explained by the fact that educated women are better equipped with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities needed to secure gainful employment and generate income, thereby lifting their families out of poverty. Education also enables women to make informed choices about health, nutrition, and child welfare, which directly improves the overall well-being of their households. Furthermore, educated women tend to invest more in their children's education and health, creating a positive cycle of development that enhances living standards within communities. As a result, women's education serves as a powerful tool for breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and promoting sustainable community development.

It was further seen from the study that women's education plays a vital role in improving health awareness, reproductive health management, and family well-being. This finding can be attributed to the fact that education enhances women's understanding of health issues, enabling them to make informed decisions about nutrition, hygiene, and

preventive healthcare. Educated women are more likely to access medical services, adopt healthy practices, and manage reproductive health responsibly, which reduces maternal and child mortality rates. Furthermore, education promotes awareness about family planning and disease prevention, empowering women to maintain healthier families. By improving health literacy, women's education not only strengthens individual well-being but also contributes to the overall health and stability of the family unit and the wider community.

The study also shows that women's education has a profound impact on enhancing political participation, leadership representation, and civic engagement among women in society. This finding can be explained by the fact that education empowers women with the knowledge, confidence, and critical thinking skills necessary to understand political systems, advocate for their rights, and actively participate in governance. Educated women are more likely to engage in civic activities, vote in elections, and pursue leadership positions where they can influence policies that promote gender equality and social justice. Moreover, education fosters awareness of democratic values, strengthens communication abilities, and builds networks that support women's involvement in decision-making processes. Consequently, women's education becomes a driving force for inclusive governance and societal development.

The study further revealed that early marriage, poverty, cultural norms, gender discrimination, and insecurity remain the dominant barriers hindering women's access to

quality education in Nigeria. This finding can be attributed to the fact that socio-economic and cultural factors continue to limit girls' educational opportunities in many parts of Nigeria. Poverty often forces families to prioritize survival over schooling, while early marriage disrupts girls' education and confines them to domestic responsibilities. Deeply rooted cultural norms and gender discrimination further reinforce the belief that educating girls is less important than educating boys. Additionally, insecurity, especially in regions affected by conflict or insurgency, discourages school attendance and leads to the closure of educational institutions. These interconnected challenges collectively restrict women's access to quality education and perpetuate cycles of inequality and underdevelopment.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study examined the impact of women's education on sustainable development in Nigeria, focusing on how access to education empowers women to contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction, health awareness, and political participation. Based on the findings derived from the research objectives, it was concluded that women's education serves as a fundamental driver of sustainable national development. Educated women were found to play crucial roles in boosting economic productivity through entrepreneurship, formal employment, and innovation. Moreover, education enhances their capacity to make informed decisions, manage resources efficiently, and contribute meaningfully to the financial stability of their households and communities. The study also revealed that improved access to education among women

has a direct link to poverty reduction, as it opens opportunities for decent work, promotes financial independence, and leads to overall improvement in living standards across families and societies.

Furthermore, the study concluded that women's education significantly enhances social and political development by promoting health awareness, family well-being, and active participation in governance. Educated women were observed to be more conscious of maternal and child health practices, family planning, and nutrition, thereby improving the overall quality of life in their communities. In addition, education equips women with the knowledge and confidence needed to engage in leadership and decision-making processes at various levels of government. However, the study identified persistent barriers such as cultural biases, poverty, early marriage, and inadequate government support, which continue to limit women's access to quality education in Nigeria. Overall, the study established that women's education is not only a tool for personal advancement but also a vital instrument for achieving inclusive growth, social equity, and sustainable national development.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. The government should allocate more resources to improve access to quality education for women, particularly in rural and underserved communities. This

includes building schools, providing learning materials, and ensuring affordable or free education at all levels.

2. There should be sustained public enlightenment programmes aimed at changing negative cultural and traditional beliefs that discourage girls' education. Community and religious leaders should be engaged to advocate for equal educational opportunities for both genders.
3. Government and private institutions should introduce and expand scholarship schemes, bursaries, and grants to encourage female enrolment, retention, and progression in formal education.
4. Existing policies on gender equality and education should be effectively enforced and regularly monitored to ensure compliance. The government should also introduce new policies that promote the inclusion of women in technical and leadership training programmes.
5. The government should collaborate more closely with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international development agencies to design and implement programmes that empower women through education. Such partnerships should support literacy initiatives, vocational training, and leadership development, thereby equipping women with the requisite skills to contribute meaningfully to sustainable national development.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

The questionnaire is for the purpose of investigating the “**Impact of Women Education on Sustainable Development in Nigeria**”. Kindly fill it as appropriate. Your information will be treated confidentially. Thank you for your time.

### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please tick the option you consider appropriate and fill in blank spaces

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
2. Age: 18-25yrs ( ) 26-35yrs ( ) 36-45yrs ( ) 46 years and above ( )
3. Religious Affiliation: Christian ( ) Muslim ( ) African Traditional Religion ( )
4. Marital Status: Single ( ) Married ( ) Separated ( ) Divorced ( )
5. Occupation: Civil Servant ( ) Farmer ( ) Trader ( ) Others ( )

### SECTION A: ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND WOMEN’S CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Educated women are more likely to access formal employment opportunities and contribute economically				
2.	Education empowers women to become entrepreneurs and manage profitable businesses independently				
3.	Women’s education plays a vital role in national economic development and productivity				
4.	Educated women contribute more effectively to economic innovation and sustainable community development.				
5.	Education enables women to make sound financial decisions and improve household income levels				

**Key:** Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

**SECTION B: ROLE OF WOMEN’S EDUCATION IN POVERTY REDUCTION AND IMPROVED LIVING STANDARDS**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
6.	Women’s education is essential in reducing household poverty and improving community living standards				
7.	Educated women invest more in their children’s education, health, and general well-being				
8.	Education increases women’s earning potential and reduces dependency on male household members				
9.	Women with education are more likely to lift their families out of poverty				
10.	Literacy among women directly improves access to housing, food security, and healthcare services				

**Key:** Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

**SECTION C: ROLE WOMEN EDUCATION PLAY IN PROMOTING HEALTH AWARENESS AND FAMILY WELL-BEING**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
11.	Educated women are more knowledgeable about disease prevention and healthy living practices				

12.	Women's education enhances childcare practices, leading to healthier children and family members				
13.	There is a strong relationship between women's education and lower infant mortality rates				
14.	Educated women are more informed about reproductive health and birth spacing options				
15.	Education enables women to promote family well-being through better health decision-making				

**Key:** Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

**SECTION D: IMPACT OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
16.	Education increases women's involvement in political campaigns and decision-making processes				
17.	Educated women are more likely to pursue leadership roles in public and private sectors				
18.	Women's education builds confidence and skills necessary for effective political participation				
19.	There is a positive relationship between women's education and civic awareness				
20.	Educated women influence public policy by engaging in leadership and governance activities				

**Key:** Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

**SECTION E: BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
21.	Early marriage limits many girls' chances of completing their basic and higher education				
22.	Cultural and religious norms discourage girls from continuing education beyond primary level				
23.	Poverty remains a major barrier to consistent school attendance for many girls				
24.	Gender stereotypes and discrimination restrict girls' access to equal educational opportunities				
25.	Insecurity and school violence create unsafe learning environments for female students				