

Orji River Women Contributions to Rural Development in Enugu State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

For effective and sustainable national development, everyone has to be involved. In most parts of the world, especially in African societies, women relegated to the background by patriarchal barriers, cultures and norms; as well as religious practices. The study titled "Assessment of the role of women in rural development" with Oji-River Local Government Area of Enugu State as the case study. Oji River which is located in Enugu State, Nigeria has a total population of about 66,813 and is made up of 5 communities. The general objectives of this study assess the roles of rural women in rural development in Nigeria which specifically involves: Identifying the contributions of rural women towards the development of rural areas; examine the sources and volume of funds used by the rural women in the execution of development oriented projects; to identify the problems and make policy recommendations. Some materials of relevance to the study were reviewed, including empirical studies; and a gap in literature were considered. The research work was carried out using both the primary and secondary means of data collection. 131 rural women were interviewed using questionnaires, and one-on-one interviews. Data obtained were clearly presented in tables; and analyzed using frequency counts, percentage and inferential statistics methods; such as the Chi-Square method, to draw inferences, some hypotheses were thus tested. It was concluded that the participation of women in rural development is essential, in other to reduce or eliminate wastage of the vast resources embedded in them.x

Keywords: Orji River, Women, Contributions, Rural Development, Enugu State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

As a child, I had a wonderful up-bringing; my parents played the mutual role of parenting-they took up responsibilities for one another as the occasion presented itself at caring and looking after me [1,2,3]. However I was startled one of the days, when I heard my neighbor say "the role of women ends in the kitchen" this statement, though very hyperbolic, soon became a major proposition at debate clubs in school [4,5,6]. Each time the proposing team (that the role of women ends in the kitchen) won, I felt really bad. How does the role of such a unique populace get so relegated to the background and their involvement in the societal development suffers such neglect. Certain synonyms of the word "Rural", such as unsophisticated, crude, rough, give us an idea of the intrinsic attributes of the rural community. However in general, a rural area is a geographical area that is located outside cities and towns [7,8,9]. Typical rural

areas have a low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas are commonly rural; different countries have varying definition of "rural" for statistical and administrative purpose. The health resources and services Administration of US Department of Health and Human Services defines the word encompassing" [10,11,12]. All population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area. Whatever is not urban is considered rural" [13,14]. The typical African semi rural community as described by the novel. The three sisters is characterized by these dominant themes, women boredom, religion and under development [15,16]. All over the world there are rural communities; different countries have varying ranges of 'rurality', and unique features or characteristics attached to their rural areas. The typical African semi rural community as described by the novel "Three Sisters" is characterized by these dominant themes: Women,

boredom, religion, and under development [17].

A community is an aggregate of homes and the rural community is not an exception. The family is the smallest unit of the society, as described by Salvador Minuchin, [8]. Several families, which are the small units, make up the society or community, a typical family is made up of a father, mother and children; with women being present in every family. Brigham Young, an American leader in the latter-day unit movement and the first governor of Utah territory, in one of his most famous speeches said, "Educate a man, you have educated a man, you educate a woman you educate a generation". Going by the Brigham's statement, it could be said that women can be better relied upon to relay some core values, knowledge and norms to the younger generation. Suffice to say that the woman's location-at the smallest unit of the society is rather strategic. Rural women are vital in achieving the transformational and social changes required for sustainable development [11]. The place of women however, be it rural or urban cannot be neglected. In sub-Saharan Africa, Agriculture and Agricultural related activities are largely subsistent and on small scale basis. Women form an intrinsic part of agricultural practices in sub-Sahara Africa. Small-scale farming is predominantly practiced within the region, with more than 50% of the agricultural activity performed by women. Women produce about 60-70% of the food in the region [14]. Women play a critical role in food security in this region by fulfilling their role as food providers. Another essential role of women in the rural communities geared towards its development is seen in areas of orthodox/native mid-wifery; where pregnant women in the rural areas who cannot access medi-care from modern hospitals, rely on these rural mid-wives for antenatal care; care during maternity (i.e. labor) and post-natal care. Other services rendered by rural mid-wives include child circumcision, and care for the nursing mother. The rural women

have to employ crude techniques to ensure safer delivery for women in the area.

Furthermore, the roles of rural women extend to girl child education; especially in evolving communities where younger women are given sex education. Women are largely involved in the manufacture of a wide variety of locally made crafts, ranging from pottery-making of utensils, and decorative objects; Broom-making, knitting, and textile manufacturing. Dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century, Yoruba women started fabricating dyed cloth decorated with resist patterns. This revolutionary textile fashion was popularly known as "adire" which translates to "Tied" and "dyed". [14]. Women are also seen in leadership roles, though on a relatively small scale - due to religious and cultural inhibitions. The involvement and participation of women in leadership, especially formal leadership roles in most communities around the world is limited. Traditional and persistent barriers have been shown to hinder the active pursuit of women to obtain position of leadership [17]. Women play a pivotal role in maintaining rural communities as well as the economic activities of these communities; they make major contributions to the maintenance of family and community life [8]. However, in most patriarchal societies, females are regarded as the inferior species; because of this, women are denied access to leadership roles (Endale, 2014). As a result of this relatively intense discrimination against women in areas of leadership, leadership roles among women have been veered towards gender sensitive areas such as women enlightenment campaigns, girl child advocacy; which is engendered mostly towards rehabilitation of victims of rape and molestation. Furthermore, the leadership role of women in the society is also reflected in the struggle for gender equality in governance and in education. The roles of women in the society (both rural and urban), have so far been highlighted, however, this research is aimed at relating the prior mentioned points to rural communities, taking a

typical case study of Oji-River Local

Government Area [8].

Statement of Problem

Nigeria has 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Each Local Government Area is administered by a Local Government Chairman as the leader. The local Government Chairman is furnished with adequate resources to ensure proper functioning and significant development of the area. However, a majority of our Local Government Areas still are rural; lacking basic social amenities. Despite the huge allocations of money and human resources, our Local Government Areas remain largely under developed. Majority of people living in these area do not have access to portable sources of water as many of them rely on rainfall and other natural sources of water (that are still in

their natural state) for washing, cooking and drinking. The people living in these areas do not have access to electricity and good roads even in this 21st century. Majority of pregnant women are able to access good Medicare before, during and after child birth, and so many pregnant women resort it traditional forms of Medicare. The presence of basic social amenities in our rural communities is although quite relative. Some communities have some of these amenities but the amenities are in deplorable condition owing to poor maintenance culture. Similarly the standard of education remains largely poor in most of our communities.

Objectives of Study

The general objective of this project is the access the roles of women in the development of Oji River Local Government area of Enugu State.

However, the specific objectives of the project are stated below to:

1. examine the possible roles of women of Oji River in the development of their community.
2. identify areas in which women can play more roles in the development of Oji River.

3. seek ways through which women can be better position or encourage for developmental contributions in the community.
4. identify factor militating against participation of women in rural development within the area.
5. proffer a solution on the way forward

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following are the research questions:

1. To what extent have Nigerian women contributed in the development of the rural areas in Nigeria?
2. What are the natures of economic activities carried out in the areas of study?
3. What are the sources and volume of funds used by the rural women

- in the execution of development oriented projects in the rural areas?
4. Are there any effects of the economic activities of the rural women on the rural communities?
5. What are the problems facing rural women on their development efforts?

Hypothesis

H_{0_1} : There is no significant relationship between leadership positions and role of women in the development of Oji-River.

H_{0_2} : There is no significant relationship between illiteracy and the role of women in the development of Oji-River.

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between leadership positions and women in Oji-River.

H_2 : There is no significant relationship between illiteracy and the role of women in the development of Oji-River.

Significance of Study

For a study that attempts to inquire into the roles of women (political, socio-economic and domestic) in rural development, this study certainly holds great significance to a variety of individuals and groups. Hence, the information that will be obtained will be resourceful for a wide range of purposes; it will provide a better understanding of the unique characteristics of the women of Oji River as well as the factors influencing their roles in the development of the area. Primarily, during the course of this study, the appropriate methods of data will be employed, the data collected will be analyzed, and the results of the analysis collected will be revalidated. Hence, conclusions can be drawn. These conclusions will serve as a reliable source of citation for bibliographical references. Secondly, several organizations, local and international, from the private and public sectors will rely on information for a wide range of socio-economic relationships and interactions within the area, as well as with the people of the area. The purposes this study will serve to the aforementioned organizations include investment guides. For example, if it is established that there are more elderly

women than younger women in Oji River, then any of these organizations having investment plans can be guided on more effective strategies that will meet the appropriate market and in turn guarantee profit and continuity. This research will proffer an insight into the realities on ground with respect to women in Oji River local government. The information thus gathered will serve great empirical and intellectual value especially for other researchers, academicians, statisticians, historians etc. Finally, to draw to a close the inexhaustible significance this study portends, I will categorically state that the research could guide the government in certain decision making especially as it (the decisions) relates to the women of Oji River. Decisions such as infrastructural development such as the establishment of certain basic amenities such as maternity centers, women skill acquisition centers; establishment of certain industries that are gender sensitive ie industries where the services of women are more required. For example, weaving center; palm oil press, "tie and dye" industries, etc. Furthermore, the information gathered from this study could be relied upon during some policy making exercise.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The scope of the study covers the roles and activities of women in the rural

development of Oji River Local Government Area in Enugu State.

Literature Review

Concept of Rural Development in Nigeria

The Nigeria Women have made a lot of contributions towards the development of the rural areas and even the urban centers of the country. Such contributions are mainly in the areas of agriculture, formation of cooperative societies, assisting in the provision of social and infrastructural facilities like electricity, pipe borne water, good roads, schools, hospitals etc and in the rural areas participation in politics and other social and economic activities which are development oriented. According to [5], the women particularly the rural women are engaged in different degrees of agricultural production in Nigeria. The figures vary from one community to another as an alternative source of

income are available in the view of the author, for women who are farming in Nigeria, some are only involved with the tasks on family farming, which is controlled by male head of the household. Even for women who work on the family farm but do not have separate personal farm, still have food crops which can be used for home consumption. [9], further asserted, that the Nigeria constitution guaranteed equality of opportunities to both men and women. The lack of full-scale study on the role of women in the economy made it impossible to be precise one the structure and contribution of the women folk. Agricultural development efforts have left out the incorporation of women into rural development

programmes resulting ton loss of their economic power and their access to farm resources and decision making affecting farm productivity. The women have also been able to form themselves into cooperatives groups and have successfully carried out various projects that are of tremendous importance to their localities. In fact, cooperatives are natural with women from childhood to old age. Women have cooperated and formed themselves into clubs and societies. They have also been able to learn from home economics programmes to engage themselves in various activities such as cookery, sewing, knitting and other handicraft of various types. In his contribution, [11] cited in [13], asserted that, the role of rural in agricultural production has been established to be of great significance. Many research studies have shown that they supply much of the labour for production, processing and distribution of food crops. It cannot be over emphasized that we must find ways to enlarge women's productive capacities and income. Their access to resources such as credit, training and tools that would enable them to increase their production and income as small farmers or micro-entrepreneurs is still limited. Apart from agriculture and formation of cooperative societies, most women in Nigeria both rural and abroad have contributed in the development projects within the communities such projects

Obstacles to Rural Development Efforts of Nigeria Women

The rural development efforts of the Nigerian women are hindered by certain factors. According to [9], the problems militating against the contribution of rural women to agricultural productivity and cooperative development in Nigeria. Ladapo, went further to summarize these problems:

- Religious and political problems
- Lack of access to credit facilities and other types of four co-operatives resources.
- The social environment which perceives women as child bearer only.
- Lack of trained manpower to manage the projects of co-operatives societies.

include rural electrification project, rural water scheme, road construction and maintenance, building of schools and hospitals etc. Sustainable development can only be achieved with the full participation of women who constitute almost 50% of the population and yet their role in the development has only gained serious attention in the last ten years. Therefore, in the view of Akende; National Government need to involve women in the decision and implementation of development programme, so as to make them more active and effective participant in economic, social, political and cultural changes. There is a definite need to enhance and facilitate women's entrepreneurial efforts, especially rural women, for increasing their economic contributions to National development. In regard, one must commend the efforts of better life for rural women programme which opened up markets and provide marketing facilities for rural products and the family economic advancement programme (FEAP). According to [7], the better life programme for rural women in Nigeria was established on 1st of September 1987 to lead with issues of women education, family health, farming, trading etc. Unfortunately, the better life programme turned out to be for the ruler's wives rather than rural women, who it was originally aimed at.

- Poor project planning.
- Lack of appropriate and effective technology and where available, most of the women cannot read and write so as to benefit from the improved technology.
- Heavy demand on the women's time arising from lack of labour saving technologies.
- Food wastage and spoilage in various stages of harvest, storage, processing and marketing.
- Lack of preservation and packaging materials to carryout food preservation seriously and consistently.

- Inadequate extension services, recourses and impact to improve food-crop production.
- Food policies that is not favorable to small and medium scale farmers.
- Obstacles to marketing surplus crops.
- Persistent traditional norms that assign roles by sexes.
- Land accessibility to the rural women.
- Access to decision making power for the rural women.

The rural women depend on their male relations, usually their husbands or families to provide them with a piece of land for growing food to feed the family. According to [8], men limit their ability to get into more projectable growing of perennial crops, since they have no assurance of having access to the same piece of land for many years and also ownership if the land is largely impossible. Without assurance, rural women fear to establish any long term investment which would take several years to mature. The access to land problem is not only a case of getting the land, but the quality of land that can be secured. To increase the agricultural productivity is often not a decision for women, even if they have other necessary resources in abundance. Most agricultural extension agents shy away from disseminating innovations to women folk directly. If rural women are giving access to new farm practices, they will be in better position to make more informed decisions as they acquire more decision making power, more access to land and more improved farm inputs like seeds and fertilizer. In his contributions, Omokhodion, (1995), sees illiteracy, cultural factors, sociological factors and health factors as part of the problems preventing the Nigerian women especially the rural women from contributing greatly in the development of the rural areas. In further simplification of the concept or ideology of Omokhodion, one of the major factors militating against rural women's active involvement in the socio-economic development of the rural areas is poor educational attainment limits their contribution to rural

development. In the Nigeria demographic and health survey conducted in 1990, an enquiry into the highest educational attainment of women revealed that 57% of them had no formal education, 24% had only primary education, 9% had secondary education, while 10% had post secondary education. In some parts of the country, early marriage is one of the major obstacles to socio-economic progress of the rural areas, as young girls are denied the opportunities of developing their individual potentials before assuming the responsibilities of a wife and motherhood. In the opinion of Omokhodion," the women are disadvantaged in such matters as opportunities, autonomy, authority and power. A reduction in the number of child births per rural women will reduce the risk of mortality and also make the women more available to contribute their quota to rural development. According to [11], cited in [14], they are several barriers preventing the Nigeria women especially the rural women from participating in national development as a whole and rural development in particular. These barriers include:

- The discriminatory attitude and practices against the Nigeria women which have been prevalent in the Nigerian system.
- Household and child care responsibilities of women.
- Lack of role models and support from the women in power.
- Poverty and high cost of seeking and holding public offices.
- Low self-esteem among women.
- Designation of males (men) as "heads of households" for all socio-economic and political purposes.

Though, according to Onyeike, the list of inhibiting factors against women's (rural women) participation in public life, politics and rural development is not exhaustive, the women constitute the greatest problems to themselves. She therefore, enjoined them (the women) to turn a new leaf and manifest love for one another.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher has selected (the feminist theory after careful consideration and critical thinking). As a theoretical framework suitable for the study; providing the necessary support rationale and justification for this study. A theoretical framework is a broad umbrella

made up of theoretical postulations (theories, perspective, models or paradigms) that researchers or writers can utilize as guides for understanding or analyzing a reality or phenomenon under study.

Feminist Theory

The feminist theory aims to understand the nature of gender inequality. It examines women's roles, experiences, interests, and feminist politics in variety of fields, such as anthropology and sociology, communication, psychoanalysis, economics, literature, education and philosophy [9]. Feminist

theory focuses on analyzing gender inequality. Themes explored in feminism include: discrimination, objectification (especially Sexual Objectification), oppression, patriarchy [11], and contemporary arts [11,13] and anesthetics [9].

History of Feminist Theory

The feminist theories first emerged as early as 1794 in publications such as "A Vindication of the rights of women by Mary Wollstonecraft", "The changing woman" [14]. The history of the modern western feminist movement is however divided into three "waves [11]. Each wave dealt with different aspects of the same feminist issues. First wave feminist critiques comprised women's suffrage movements of the 19th and early 20th

centuries, promoting women's right to vote. Second wave (gyno-criticism), was associated with the ideas and actions of the women's liberation movement beginning in the second wave however campaigned for legal and social equality for women. Third wave "gender theory", was a continuation of and a reaction to the perceived failures of second wave feminism, and it began in the 1990s [4].

Central Theme of the Feminist Theory

The central theme of the Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical fields. The feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power reactions and sexuality. In addition, feminist theory also focuses on the promotion of women's rights and

Feminist theory interests. Themes explored in feminist theory include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (especially sexual objectification), expression and patriarchy [6]. Many overlapping feminist movements and ideologies have developed over the years. The most important ones are:

Political Movement

This entails key political inclinations of the larger societies such as liberation and conservatism or focus on the environment.

- Liberalism: seeks individualistic equality of men and women through political and legal reform without altering the structure of society. it further considers the male hierarchy

as the defining feature of women's oppression [9].

- Conservation feminism: Is conservative relative to the society in which it resides.
- Libertarian Feminism: Conceives people as self owners and therefore as entitled to freedom from cohesive interference (Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy).

Materialist ideologies.

Under this movement, Marxist feminists; Rosemary Hennessy and Chrys Ingraham, Propagated the materialist feminism ideology. They argued that capitalism is

the root cause of women in domestic life and employment is an effect of capitalist ideologies [7].

Social constructionist ideologies

Various feminists began in the late 20th century to argue that gender roles are socially constructed and that it is

impossible to generalize women's experience across cultures and histories [8].

Applicability of theory:

The feminist movement has effected change in Western society and some other regions of the World, including women's suffrage; greater access to education; more nearly equitable pay with men; the right to initiate divorce proceedings; the right of women to make individual decisions regarding pregnancy (including access to contraceptives and abortion); and the right to own property [11]. Therefore to effectively carryout this research work, it is rather resourceful to

have brought the topic under careful observation using a theory that typically accounts for women in the society; their roles, capabilities, and rights as well as the challenges they face in the society. Summarily, Nigeria is a patriarchal society where the men have majority of the say. Also, discrimination and stereotyping is highly, prevalent in our society. Therefore the feminist theory provides an ideal frame work for this discourse [13].

Empirical Review of the Study

In a journal paper on "An Assessment of Participant of Rural Women in Community Based Development Activities" presented by [5], he conducted a research using structured interviewed schedule to carried out data for the study. The study revealed that average age of rural women participating in community based development activities (CBDA) was 47.9 with standard deviation of 9.0. This implied that the many of the respondents were middle aged and active; this could enable them to participate actively in CBDAs. He concluded that the relevance of rural women as a stakeholder in community-based development activities as a way of attaining and sustaining national development. Achieving sustainability at the grassroots level calls for active participation of women in all aspects of planning, decision and execution of community-based project(s). [8], in a study on "Women Empowerment and Community Development" opines that the research was carried out with the use of well structured interview schedule to obtain the necessary data. The study revealed that women are actors in solving the major issues on the development agenda for the coming century, including the need to manage the environment in a sustainable manner, the exploding rate or population and urbanization, food security, human needs with regards to health education and literacy and also the elimination of poverty in the society.

[10], states that women play a significant role in agriculture, the world over. About 70% of the agricultural workers, 80% of food producers, and 10% of those who process basic foodstuffs are women and they also undertake 60 to 90% of the rural marketing. Thus making up more than two-third of the workforce in agricultural production. They undertake various activities in agriculture such as cleaning of fields, field preparation, sowing, intercultural practices, weeding, harvesting, picking, cleaning of grains, drying of grains etc. But it is unfortunate that they remain invisible workers. The data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 90 women in agriculture (WIA). Analysis of the data indicated that 52% of the respondents were within the age range of 31 to 40 years and about 90% were married. Some 52% of the women farmers had at least primary education and 34% had farming experience ranging from 16 to 205 years. Average family size of the respondents ranged between 5 and 10 [11]. Although the WIA programme has led to an increase in agricultural production and income level of the participants, correlation analysis showed a negative relationship between marital status and agricultural production level. The study concluded that the WIA programme had a positive impact on the standard of living of the participants and their family

members. According to [8] on his journal paper "The Role of Cooperative Organizations in Rural Community Development in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges" he concluded that poverty is seen as a rural phenomenon and where majority of the people in the developing nations lived. Poverty is one the reason why women do not contribute to fund for development of project for benefit of the community. Another group of scholars in their paper assessment of the influence of

education on women empowerment, [10], poor education in the country cause women to ignore their role. "Women efforts in national development cannot be overemphasized. Women have contributed immensely towards the development of the society." Education is a veritable tool for national development. It empowers people and strengthens nations. Women play a key role in educating the children with resulted to development in rural area.

Summary of Empirical Literature

Women constitute the central pillar of rural development in developing countries yet they are not visible in the mainstream rural development policies and programmes. Many productive and development activities necessary for human well-being are made possible by women, yet they are not officially considered part of the conventional economy. [7], noted that the conventional economy includes paid work, the activities of business and the making of profit, whereas women's voluntary contributions towards the well-being of rural communities has not been considered part of the conventional economy. In Nigeria, the role of women in rural development is mostly located in

the informal agricultural sector. However, most government at the centre of policy and programmes development agenda. Statistics vary, but the general impression is that women involvement in public rural development programmes are at minimal level. Why do involvement of woman in policy making low after all the role women play in development of rural area? The paper is expected to find out the role of woman play in rural development in Oji River Local Government Area. As can be seen in the empirical study above not much has been done in this regard especially as it concerned. As rural women of Oji River Local Government area.

Research Design and Methodology

Research design is a plan of investigation that specifies the sources and types of information relevant to the research question [12], while research methodology is a strategy of enquiry which moves from the underlying assumptions to research design and data collections [7]. Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher carefully described the

methods and procedures adopted in carrying out the study. This chapter was analyzed under the following; Research design, Area of study and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, validity of instrument, Reliability of instrument, method of data collection and analysis.

Research Design

The survey and descriptive research design has been chosen by the researcher for this research. According to Dr. Emma E.O Chukwuemeka, "Survey research is the best method to study a population too large to observe directly for descriptive, exploratory or explanatory studies, [5].

Conversely, this study made extensive inquiries about the population sample rural women of Oji River Local Government Area. A part of the population was studied and the findings obtained generalized on the entire population.

AREA OF STUDY

The study was conducted on Oji-River local government area which is one of the Local Government Area in Enugu state, Nigeria. To the south it borders Anambra

state and Abia state. It has its headquarters situated in the town of Oji-River. Oji-River is made up of five towns: - Inyi, Achi, Awlaw, Akpuloeze and

Ezema *et al*

Ugwuoba. Orji-River is bounded by a land area of 403 km² and it has a population of 126,587 at the 2006 census. Majority of the people from Oji-River are Christians with majority either practicing Catholics or Anglicans while the rest practice local beliefs. Oji-River has a favorable climatic

condition; it is known as land of fertility in the sense that it is naturally blessed with agricultural endowment such as fertile land and large land scale. 60% of the population was servants and as well small scale business men and women while 40% are civil servants.

Population of Study

According to Dr. Emma E.O Chukwemeka, a population in research refers to animate and inanimate things of which the study is focused. However, the population of Oji-River Local Government area is estimated at 126,587 at 2006 census [8]. The universe of discourse which refers to a specific population selected to be

studies as selected by [8]. This universe of discourse (or research population) is made up of women living in the Oji-River local government area of Enugu state whose population is estimated at 66,813 which is about 53% of the total population of the local government area.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sample size determination is the act of choosing the number of observations or replicates to include in statistical sample. With the universe of discourse of already determined as 66,813 women, in order achieve increased precision with studying unknown parameters regarding this research, the researcher has chosen the Taro Yamani formula in computing the sample size. The Taro Yamani formula for determination of sample size is given as:

Therefore,

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

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= 66,813 \\
 e &= 0.085 \\
 n &= 66,813 \\
 n &= \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \\
 n &= \frac{66,813}{1 + 66,813(0.085)^2} \\
 n &= \frac{66813}{1 + (66813 \times 0.007225)^2} \\
 n &= \frac{66813}{483.7239} \\
 n &= 138
 \end{aligned}$$

Where N = Total population

n = Sample size.

n = Total population size (universe)

e = Level of accepting error limit making for 5% accepting error limit

e = error limit (ranging from 0.5, to 0.6, 0.7 ... 0.8, 0.10) depending on the population size. A higher population size requires a higher error limit.

Sample size = 135 women

Finally, due to the number of town in Oji River the Researcher choose to carry out the study on all five towns in the Local Government Area.

Method of Data Analysis

After a successful data collection, analysis of the data collected and proper presentation. In the process of this analysis and presentation, the hypothesis will be tested in order to develop concrete evidence as to the validity of a hypothesis.

The researcher intends to use the descriptive statistics method in this data analysis. The percentage of respondents

who satisfy a particular options or categories will be computed and used to test the hypothesis they represent. The data will be presented in tables and frequencies of responses will be used to compute the corresponding percentages. This percentage will be computed using the following;

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Frequency} \times 100}{\text{Total no. of respondents}}$$

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Contained in this chapter are the data questionnaires and interviews) and a obtained from the yield (using the detailed analysis of these data.

TABLE 1 Questionnaire Distribution and Rate of Response

Community	Population sample	Population sample	Questioner distribution	Questioner returned	Questioner returned	% returned	% Not returned
INYI	19,553	40	40	37	3	28.24	2.29
ACHI	13,127	28	28	27	1	20	0.76
ANLAW	11,445	24	24	22	2	16.8	1.53
AKPUGO-EZE	12,850	26	26	25	1	19.08	0.76
UGWUOBA	10,035	20	20	20	0	15.27	-
TOTAL	66,813	138	138	131	7	94.66	5.34

Source: Research Field Findings, 2022

Inyi and Achi have the highest population in Oji River and this influence the percentage of questionnaires distributed in the two communities however questionnaires were also distributed to

the remaining communities. Only 5 % of the questionnaires distributed was not returned, against 94.66% that were duly cumulated and returned.

TABLE 2 Occupational Distribution

This table shows the occupational distribution of Women in Oji River.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Trader	22	16.79
Farmers	45	34.35
Potters	25	19.08
Civil/Servants	5	3.82
Artisans	4	3.05
Sand Suppliers	25	19.08
Others	5	3.82
Total	131	100

Source: Research Field, 2022

From the table, 45 respondents which represent approximately 34% of the population under study are farmers, followed by potter and sand suppliers which case both it there account for 19%.

Traders account for 17% was a total 22 respondents. Civil servants represent 5% while the least are Artisans which represent barely 3% of population.

TABLE 3: Responses on ways women can contribute to development in Oji River

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Creating women forums	15	11.45
Training the children	30	22.90
Enjoying in business	25	19.08
Food Production/Processing	24	18.32
Participating on governance	30	22.90
Building schools, hospitals	5	3.82
No idea	2	1.53
Total	131	100

Source: Research Field Findings, 2022

This table attempts to determine how best women can contribute to the development of Oji River. However, from the data obtained, Training the children, and participating in governance stood out as the highest (with 22.9%). Others areas

through which women can contribute to development include creating women forums, engaging in food production (with 11.45%, 19.08% and 18.32% respectively). The least noted means of

women’s contribution to development of

the area is building schools and hospitals.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

HYPOTHESIS ONE:

H o1: There is no significance relationship between leadership position and role of women in the development of Oji-River.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Degree of Freedom (df)} &= (R-1) (C-1) \\ &= (2-1) (2-1) \\ &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

Ho2: There is a significance relationship between leadership positions and role of women in the development of Oji-River.

To test the H01, response to questionnaire item was used. The respondents were asked if they were any relationship between leadership positions and role of women in the development of Oji-River.

Test Statistics $X^2 = \text{Chi-square}$

O = Observed Frequency

E = Expected Frequency

Level of Significance = 0.05

CONTINGENCY TABLE

RESPONSES	O	E	O - E	(O - E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Yes	120	91	29	841	92.4
No	63	92	-29	841	9.14
Total					18.48

Calculated X^2 Value = 18.48

Critical or Table Value = 3.84

DECISION RULE: Reject the HO1, If the calculated X^2 is greater than the critical table value . Since the calculated X^2 value

is 18.48 and the critical table value is 3.84, we reject the Ho1. This implies that there is a significant relationship between leadership positions and role of women in the development of Oji-River.

HYPOTHESIS TWO

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between illiteracy and the role of women in the development of Oji-River.

H2: There is a significance between illiteracy and the role of women in the development of Oji-River.

CONTINGENCY TABLE 2.

RESPONSES	O	E	O - E	(O - E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
YES	125	91	34	1156	12.70
NO	58	92	-34	1156	12.7
TOTAL					25.4

Calculated X^2 value = 25.4

Critical or table value = 3.84

DECISION RULE: Reject the Ho2 if the calculated X^2 value is greater than the critical table value. Since the calculated X^2

value is 25.4 and the critical table value is 3.84, we reject the Ho2. This implies that there is a significant relationship between illiteracy and the role of women in the development of Oji-River.

Summary of Findings, Recommendation And Conclusion

Summary of Findings

Women are an integral part of every society. The roles in the society are very important to the growth and development of the society. This research work, which focuses on the Orji River women contributions in rural development. Oji-River local Government area was chosen as the case study area. Very effective methods and tools of data collection of and analysis were employed; the data

obtained were analyzed using good statistical tools.

The following were deduced from the results of the findings:

- The major occupation of women in Oji-River is farming. They also engage in pottery, supply of sand and farming.
- There is a high prevalence of illiteracy among Oji-River women. More than

half of them have no formal education.

- Participating in governance and child training is the most effective way women can contribute to development of the rural community.
- Women are poorly involved in governance and leadership in Oji-River. Also, a very few women hold leadership positions in Oji-River.
- Lack of support from men is the main reason women are not found in leadership position in Oji-River. Other reasons include Lack of self-will; and amazingly lack of support from other women. However, a large percentage of women within the area believe there is need for increased

involvement of women in leadership and governance of Oji-River.

- Illiteracy (and lack of skill acquisition programs), Religious boundaries and patriarchal barriers are the key factors militating against the participation of women in rural development. Unfavorable government policies have also affected the inputs of the rural women in their efforts on rural development.
- Indulgence of women in economic activities such as farming, trading etc, has reduced the involvement of women in social vices such as stealing, prostitution, etc. It has also improved the chances of these rural women to accessing loans and financial benefits

Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendation is simply written policy advice prepared for some groups or bodies that have the authority to make decisions; whether a cabinet, council, committee or a body. Policy recommendations are key means through which policy decisions are made in most levels of government. Based on the analysis of the research findings, below are some policy recommendations:

- Illiteracy eradication programs should be initiated in these rural areas to drastically reduce the high level of illiteracy within these area. Government and other relevant authorities should work collectively towards achieving this.
- Skill acquisition programs such as weaving, tailoring, beading, handbags, shoes and hat making, poultry, tie and die (adire) making should be established in Oji-River to foster better entrepreneurial potentials among these women.
- Since participation of women in governance has been observed as one

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The core intention of this project is accessing the roles of women in the development of rural areas. Oji-River was the study area. The researcher put every resource at disposal to thoroughly access the subject. Accurate methods of analysis

of the avenues through which women contribute to rural development in Oji-River, special provisions and policies should be formulated to accommodate more women in governance.

- Women should be encouraged to engage in business activities through the provision of loans and credit facilities at reduced rates.
- Establishment of government owned factories to absorb trainee from the skill acquisition centers would also play an important role in engaging these women in productive activities; and increasing the volume of economic activities within the area.
- Platforms such as Unity forums, August women meetings, Umu-Ada forum should be encouraged in these rural areas. This will help foster unity and co-existence among women; ultimately, this will help promote support for one another especially to achieving improved participation in governance and leadership within the area.

were employed in order to achieve a fairly accurate analysis. There are certain areas that are open for further studies as regards to this project. I recommend further studies on the same topic; "Assessment of the role of women in rural

development”, using other local Government for further studies are:

1. Accessing the role of youths in rural development

CONCLUSION

The core intention of this project is accessing the role of women in rural development of rural area, with Oji-River as the study area. The researcher puts in every resource at disposal in order to carry-out a thorough assessment of the subject. Accurate methods data analysis was employed in order to arrive at a fairly accurate analysis. Questionnaires were used to obtain field data in relevant aspects of the study. Data obtained, were analyzed using ideal statistical methods of data analysis. From the analysis of the field findings, women hold a great significance in every society. Their role in rural development has a great

2. Improving the participation of women in politics and governance.

significance. Governance and leadership provides a very effective avenue for women to contribute adequately to rural development. Also, training children gives women a means to bring up individuals that will contribute meaning to the society. However, certain factors like patriarchal constraints; lack of education and entrepreneurial skills and unfavorable government policies, militate against the contribution of women to rural development. The Government is therefore, employed to provide some enabling environment in order to encourage the effort of these women towards rural development.

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