



Role of Women in the Rural Development Programme in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Zainab Alakayi Oladele¹

Department of Sociology, Nasarawa State University, Keffi¹

A.W. Ogidi²

Department of Sociology, Nasarawa State University, Keffi²

Sadi H. Yiga³

Department of Sociology, Nasarawa State University, Keffi³

Abstract- This study examines the role of women in rural development programmes in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study examines the major roles performed by women, the strategies for enhancing their involvement in rural development programmes, and the challenges hindering their effective participation. Using a mixed-method survey design combining descriptive and explanatory approaches, 384 respondents were sampled from five wards using a multistage sampling technique, alongside 10 key informants purposively selected for interviews. The study is anchored on Structural Functionalist Theory. Findings show that women play a significant role in rural development, most notably through agricultural production and food security (40.6%), followed by community sanitation and environmental management (25.5%) and small-scale trading and income generation (22.9%), while community leadership and decision-making (10.9%) was the least reported role, reflecting women's limited representation in governance despite their strong economic contributions. The study further reveals that women's participation is significantly constrained by lack of access to finance (34.4%), low level of education and skills (21.9%), cultural and traditional practices (15.9%), poor government support (15.1%), and heavy household and family responsibilities (12.8%). To address these constraints, respondents identified increased access to credit and financial assistance (23.7%), provision of education and vocational training (21.9%), stronger government policies and support programmes (20.1%), greater community awareness and gender equality initiatives (17.7%), and increased involvement of women in community decision making (16.7%) as the most effective strategies for enhancing participation. The study concludes that while women are willing and active contributors to rural development, structural and institutional gaps continue to prevent their full integration into leadership and decision-making processes. Recommendations include expanding access to credit and financial services, strengthening



educational and vocational training, enacting gender-responsive policies, and reducing women's domestic burden to ensure their meaningful representation beyond implementation roles.

Keywords- Role of Women, Rural Development Programme, Challenges, Strategies, Keana, Nasarawa

I. Introduction

Rural development remains one of the most enduring global concerns, as more than half of the world's poor live in rural areas where livelihoods depend largely on agriculture. Women constitute a significant share of the rural workforce, contributing substantially to food production, processing, and household sustenance, yet their contributions have historically been under-recognised in mainstream development discourse (Kandiyoti, 1990; Kaur & Sharma, 1991). International bodies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have increasingly stressed that sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the deliberate inclusion of women, given their central role in agricultural labour, natural resource management, and community welfare. According to the FAO's Status of Women in Agrifood Systems report, closing the gender gap in farm productivity and wages would raise global GDP by nearly USD 1 trillion and reduce food insecurity by 45 million people (FAO, 2023). Despite this shift in global thinking, women in many developing regions still face structural barriers, such as limited access to land, credit, education, and decision-making platforms, that constrain their full participation in development processes (FAO, 2023). In Africa, the centrality of women to rural livelihoods is even more pronounced, given the continent's predominantly agrarian economy. A recent FAO report, developed with the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Greenwich and African Women in Agricultural Research and Development, found that 76 percent of working women in sub-Saharan Africa are employed in agrifood systems, the largest share of any region in the world, with women also far more likely than men to engage in off-farm rural work (FAO, 2026). In Nigeria, rural development has remained a recurring policy focus since independence, given that a large share of the population resides in rural areas where agriculture is the dominant occupation. Successive governments have introduced programmes such as the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the National Fadama Development Project, the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), and, more recently, the National Social Investment Programmes, aimed at improving rural infrastructure, productivity, and household income (Nnamdi, 2020; Etebom & Fagbewesa, 2024). Keana Local Government Area, one of the thirteen Local Government areas of Nasarawa State, is a predominantly rural and agrarian community,



with farming, salt mining from the renowned Keana Lake, and trading as its principal economic activities. Despite various rural development interventions in the area, the extent to which women have been meaningfully incorporated into the planning, execution, and benefit-sharing of these programmes remains largely undocumented, as existing literature has tended to focus on communities in southern and south-western Nigeria (Nnamdi, 2020; Attamah, Asadu, & Eze, Etebom & Fagbewesa, 2024). This study, therefore, examines the role of women in the rural development programme in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of Women in the Rural Development programme in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. The specific objectives are:

- To examine the role of Women in Rural Development programmes in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.
- To examine the strategies for enhancing women's participation in rural development programmes in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.
- To identify the major Challenges hindering the contribution of Women in Rural Development programme in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Conceptual Clarification

Rural Development

Rural Development has been the subject of much scholarly interest over the decades, but it remains one of the most contested and variously defined concepts in development studies. This is largely because scholars approach it from different disciplinary backgrounds, ideological orientations and country-specific experiences Odebode, O. O., Salisu, O. O., & Ajaegbu, N. G. (2023). As several writers have noted, there is no single definition of rural development that is universally accepted; the concept has evolved historically with changing development paradigms, from an early concern with agricultural modernisation and infrastructure provision to a later, more people-centred understanding foregrounding empowerment, participation and redistribution of benefits to the rural poor Attamah, C. O., Asadu, A. N., & Eze, C. C. (2020). Furthermore, Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C. Smith (2021) view rural development as an integral component of national development that seeks to transform rural economies through investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure, agricultural modernization, entrepreneurship, and institutional reforms. They argue that improving rural livelihoods contributes significantly to poverty reduction, food security, and sustainable economic growth. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2022), view rural development as a multidimensional process that promotes the economic, social, and environmental well-being of rural communities. Rather than



focusing solely on agricultural production, contemporary rural development emphasizes innovation, digital transformation, sustainability, resilient local economies, quality public services, effective governance, and strong partnerships between rural and urban areas Olumba, C. C., & Alimba, J. O. (2022). The OECD argues that rural development policies should improve people's quality of life while enabling rural regions to adapt to demographic, technological, and environmental changes Akpan, 2015).

II. Rural Development Programme

A rural development programme may be understood as a structured, time-bound, and often institutionally coordinated set of policies, projects, and activities designed and implemented by government, donor agencies, or communities themselves, with the specific objective of improving the economic, social, and infrastructural conditions of a defined rural population Sasa, Adebayo, and Maurice (2022). Unlike the broader concept of rural development, which refers to an overarching goal or process, a rural development programme refers to the concrete vehicle, whether a scheme, project, or initiative, through which that goal is pursued within a specific timeframe, budget, and institutional framework (Paul, Agba, & Chukwurah, 2021). Accordingly Paul, Agba, and Chukwurah (2021) note that Nigeria has, since independence, initiated a wide array of rural development programmes intended to close the persistent development gap between urban and rural areas, yet many of these programmes exist more prominently on paper than in the lived experience of their intended beneficiaries, largely because of weak implementation, elite capture of resources, and limited grassroots involvement in programme design. Olumba, C. C., & Alimba, J. O. (2022), argue that the Agro-Processing, Productivity Enhancement, and Livelihood Improvement Support (APPEALS) project, describe a rural development programme as one that combines agricultural empowerment, extension support, and group-based mobilisation strategies, and note that the extent to which rural women benefit from such a programme is heavily dependent on their prior awareness, group membership, and access to extension services rather than on the design of the programme alone. Furthermore, Obar and Adekoya (2022) agree that Community and Social Development Project (CSDP), a rural development programme structured around distinct phases, needs assessment, funding, decision-making, plan formulation, training, and implementation, and observe that the sustainability and inclusiveness of such a programme depend significantly on how genuinely community members, including women, youth, and elders, are involved across each of these phases, rather than being confined to only the more visible, labour-intensive stages such as implementation.



III. Theoretical Framework

Structural Functionalist Theory

This study is anchored on the Structural Functionalist Theory, propounded principally by Emile Durkheim and later developed further by Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. Structural functionalism views society as a complex system whose various parts, institutions, groups, and roles, work together, like organs in a living body, to maintain the stability, order, and overall equilibrium of the whole. According to this theory, every structure within a society performs a specific function that contributes to the survival and smooth functioning of the entire social system, and any structure that fails to perform its expected function, or is prevented from doing so, creates a form of dysfunction that weakens the stability of the system as a whole (Durkheim, 1893; Parsons, 1951). Central to structural functionalism is the idea of interdependence: no single part of a society operates in isolation, and the effective functioning of the whole depends on each part performing its designated role adequately. Merton (1968) refined this idea by distinguishing between manifest functions, the intended and recognised consequences of a structure or institution, and latent functions, the unintended or less visible consequences that nonetheless contribute to the functioning of the system. Merton also introduced the concept of dysfunction, referring to situations in which a structure fails to contribute positively to the system, or actively undermines its stability, a concept that is particularly useful for understanding situations of exclusion or under-participation within an otherwise functioning social system. Applied to this study, the rural Development programme in Keana Local Government Area can be understood as a structure established within the wider social and economic system of the community, with the function of improving the livelihoods, infrastructure, and general wellbeing of rural dwellers. Within this system, women constitute a critical structural component, performing indispensable functions in farming, food processing, salt harvesting, trading, and household maintenance, all of which sustain the rural economy and, by extension, the wider social system of which the rural Development programme forms a part. From a structural functionalist perspective, for the rural Development programme to achieve equilibrium and effectively fulfil its overall function of community advancement, it must adequately integrate and support the roles that women already perform within the system, rather than treating them as peripheral or incidental to the process. Viewed through this lens, any exclusion of women from the planning, decision-making, or benefit-sharing stages of the rural Development programme in Keana LGA can be understood as a form of structural dysfunction, one that disrupts the interdependence between the productive roles women play in the rural economy and the institutional structures designed to support and build on those roles. Where women's functions are recognised and supported by the programme, the system moves towards



equilibrium, with positive outcomes for household welfare, food security, and overall community development. Where women's contributions are overlooked or under-integrated into the programme's structures, however, the resulting imbalance manifests as reduced programme effectiveness, slower rural transformation, and the persistence of the very rural underdevelopment the programme was established to address. This theory is considered appropriate for the present study because it provides a systemic framework for understanding the rural development programme in Keana LGA not as an isolated intervention, but as one structural component operating within a wider social system in which women's roles are already deeply embedded and functionally necessary. It allows the study to examine women's participation not merely as a matter of fairness or inclusion, but as a functional requirement for the stability, coherence, and overall success of the rural development system as a whole.

IV. Methodology

This study used a survey design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, with descriptive and explanatory methods, to examine women's role in rural development programme in Keana Local Government Area, the challenges they face, and factors influencing their participation. This design suited the LGA's population size, enabling a representative sample and generalisable findings. Keana LGA has an estimated population of 126,300 across 10 electoral wards (NPC & NBS, 2023). The study population comprised men and women aged 18+ in five selected wards (Oki, Obene, Kwara, Aloshi, Iwagu), plus women leaders, traditional heads, and NGO officials. Sample size (385) was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for finite populations. A multistage sampling technique was applied: the 10 wards were first clustered; five were randomly selected by balloting; convenience sampling then selected questionnaire respondents within each ward, while 10 key informants (women leaders, traditional rulers, NGO/LGA officials) were purposively selected for interviews based on their knowledge of women's socioeconomic contributions. Data were collected via questionnaires (self-administered, researcher-administered, and pick-and-drop methods) and Key Informant Interview (KII) guides, FGD, with support from two trained local research assistants. The questionnaire covered sections: (A) socio-demographic characteristics, and (B) substantial issues of the study. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages), while KII&FGD data were analysed thematically through transcription, repeated review, and manual coding, with findings interpreted alongside the quantitative results



V. Result/Analysis

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile

Variables	Frequency (n) (%)	Percentages
Age:		
18 - 25 years	74 19.3	
26 - 35 years	118 30.7	
36 - 43 years	96 25.0	
44 - 49 years	62 16.1	
50 - 65 years	34 8.9	
Level of education:		
FSLC	86 22.4	
JSSC	114 29.7	
SSSC	121 31.5	
OND/NCE	47 12.2	
B.Sc./B.A	12 3.1	
M.Sc/PhD	4 1.1	
Marital Status:		



Single	68	
	17.7	
Married	258	67.2
Divorced	23	
	6.0	
Widowed	35	
	9.1	
Occupation:		
Farmer	176	
	45.8	
Petty Trader	128	
	33.3	
Artisan	60	15.6
Civil-servant	20	
	5.3	
Religion:		
Christianity	236	
	61.5	
Islam	136	
	34.4	
Traditional	16	
	4.1	
Income Level:		
5000–10000	98	
	25.5	
11000–20000	136	
	35.4	
21000–30000	90	
	23.4	
31000 and above	60	15.7
Place of residence:		
Oki	92	
	24.0	
Obene	86	
	22.4	



Kwara	78 20.3
Aloshi	66 17.2
Iwagu	62 16.1
Total	384 100.0

Sources: Field Work, 2026

The findings indicate that 118 respondents (30.7%) were between the ages of 26 and 35 years, making this the largest age category. This was followed by 96 respondents (25.0%) who were aged 36 to 43 years, while 74 respondents (19.3%) fell within the 18 to 25 years age bracket. Respondents aged 44 to 49 years accounted for 62 (16.1%), whereas those aged 50 to 65 years constituted the smallest group with 34 respondents (8.9%). This distribution suggests that the majority of respondents were within the economically active and productive age groups, implying that they are actively involved in rural development activities and possess relevant experiences regarding women's contributions to community development.

Regarding educational attainment, the results reveal that 121 respondents (31.5%) had completed Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSSC), representing the highest proportion of respondents. This was followed by 114 respondents (29.7%) with Junior Secondary School Certificate (JSSC), while 86 respondents (22.4%) possessed First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC). Furthermore, 47 respondents (12.2%) had obtained OND/NCE qualifications, 12 respondents (3.1%) possessed Bachelor's degrees (B.Sc./B.A.), and only 4 respondents (1.1%) had attained postgraduate qualifications (M.Sc./Ph.D.). The findings indicate that although most respondents possessed basic or secondary education, relatively few had tertiary education, suggesting that rural women continue to participate in development programmes despite limited access to higher educational opportunities.

The marital status of the respondents shows that 258 respondents (67.2%) were married, representing more than two-thirds of the study population. Single respondents accounted for 68 (17.7%), while 35 respondents (9.1%) were widowed and 23 respondents (6.0%) were divorced. The predominance of married respondents reflects



the family-oriented nature of rural communities, where married women often play significant roles in household welfare, agricultural production, and community development initiatives.

In terms of occupation, the findings reveal that 176 respondents (45.8%) were farmers, making farming the dominant occupation among the respondents. Petty traders constituted 128 respondents (33.3%), while 60 respondents (15.6%) were artisans. Only 20 respondents (5.3%) were civil servants. These findings indicate that agriculture remains the principal economic activity in Keana Local Government Area and that women are predominantly engaged in farming and small-scale trading, which are critical sectors for rural economic development.

The distribution of respondents by religion indicates that 236 respondents (61.5%) were Christians, representing the majority of the respondents. Islam accounted for 132 respondents (34.4%), while 16 respondents (4.1%) practiced traditional religion. This reflects the religious diversity within the study area, with Christianity being the predominant faith among the respondents.

With respect to income level, the highest proportion of respondents, 136 (35.4%), earned between ₦11,000 and ₦20,000 monthly. This was followed by 98 respondents (25.5%) earning between ₦5,000 and ₦10,000, while 90 respondents (23.4%) earned between ₦21,000 and ₦30,000. Only 60 respondents (15.7%) reported earning ₦31,000 and above. These findings suggest that a considerable proportion of the respondents earn relatively low incomes, reflecting the economic realities of rural households and underscoring the importance of women's participation in rural development programmes as a means of improving household livelihoods and economic well-being.

Finally, the place of residence of the respondents shows that 92 respondents (24.0%) resided in Oki, representing the highest proportion. This was followed by 86 respondents (22.4%) from Obene, 78 respondents (20.3%) from Kwara, 66 respondents (17.2%) from Alosi, and 62 respondents (16.1%) from Iwagu. The relatively balanced distribution of respondents across the selected communities suggests that the study adequately captured opinions from different parts of Keana Local Government Area, thereby enhancing the representativeness and reliability of the findings.

Section B: Role of Women in Rural Development programmes in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State



Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on the Major Role Played by Women in Rural Development Programmes in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State

Major Role	Frequency	Percentages
Community leadership and decision making	42	10.9
Community sanitation and environmental management	98	25.5
Agricultural production and food security	156	40.6
Small scale trading and income generation	88	22.9
Total	384	100%

Sources: Field Work, 2026

Table 2 shows that 156 respondents (40.6%) identified agricultural production and food security as the major role played by women in rural development programmes in Keana Local Government Area, making it the most frequently reported role. This was followed by community sanitation and environmental management, which accounted for 98 respondents (25.5%). Furthermore, 88 respondents (22.9%) indicated that women contribute significantly through small scale trading and income generation, while 42 respondents (10.9%) identified community leadership and decision making as the primary role performed by women. The findings indicate that women's contributions to rural development are predominantly centred on agricultural production and food security, reflecting the agrarian nature of the study area.

One participant from Alosi Community stated:

"Women contribute mostly through farming because agriculture is the main occupation in our community. We cultivate crops, assist during planting and harvesting, and ensure that food is available for our families and the community." (FGD/Participant 4/Alosi Community, 2026).

Another participant explained:

"Whenever there is environmental sanitation or community clean up, women always come out in large numbers. We also engage in petty trading to support our families and contribute to community development." (FGD/Participant 8/Keana Town, 2026).



Similarly, a Community Development Officer noted:

"Women have remained the backbone of most rural development programmes, particularly in agriculture, sanitation and household economic activities. However, their representation in community leadership and decision making is still relatively low." (Key Informant Interview/Community Development Officer, 2026).

Section C: The strategies for enhancing women's participation in rural development programmes in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents on the Strategies for Enhancing Women's Participation in Rural Development Programmes in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State

Strategies	Frequency	Percentages
Increased access to credit and financial assistance	91	23.7
Stronger government policies and support programmes	77	20.1
Greater community awareness and gender equality initiatives	68	17.7
Provision of education and vocational training	84	21.9
Increased involvement of women in community decision making	64	16.7
Total	384	100

Sources: Field Work, 2026

Table 3 indicates that 91 respondents (23.7%) identified increased access to credit and financial assistance as the most effective strategy for enhancing women's participation in rural development programmes in Keana Local Government Area. This was followed by the provision of education and vocational training, reported by 84 respondents (21.9%). Furthermore, 77 respondents (20.1%) emphasized the need for stronger government policies and support programmes, while 68 respondents (17.7%) suggested greater community awareness and gender equality initiatives. The least reported strategy was increased involvement of women in community decision making, identified by 64 respondents (16.7%). The findings imply that improving women's access to financial resources, education, institutional support, and inclusive governance would significantly enhance their participation in rural development programmes.



One respondent remarked:

"If women are given access to loans and financial assistance, many of us will be able to expand our farming and trading activities and contribute more to community development." (FGD/Participant 5/Kadarko Community, 2026).

Another participant observed:

"Training programmes and vocational education will help women acquire new skills and improve their confidence to participate actively in development projects." (FGD/Participant 9/Keana Town, 2026).

A Community Development Officer further stated:

"Government should strengthen rural development programmes by providing financial support, training opportunities and ensuring that women are adequately represented in community decision making. These measures will increase their participation and improve development outcomes." (Key Informant Interview/Community Development Officer, 2026).

Section D: Identify the major challenges affecting women's participation in rural development programmes in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents on the Major Challenges Affecting Women's Participation in Rural Development Programmes in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State

Challenges	Frequency	Percentages
Lack of access to finance	132	34.4
Poor government support	58	15.1
Cultural and traditional practices	61	15.9
Heavy household and family responsibilities	49	12.8
Low level of education and skills	84	21.9
Total	384	100%

Sources: Field Work, 2026

Table 4 reveals that 132 respondents (34.4%) identified lack of access to finance as the major challenge affecting women's participation in rural development programmes in Keana Local Government Area. This was followed by low level of education and skills, reported by 84 respondents (21.9%). In addition, 61 respondents (15.9%) identified cultural and traditional practices as a significant challenge, while 58 respondents



(15.1%) reported poor government support. The least reported challenge was heavy household and family responsibilities, identified by 49 respondents (12.8%). These findings suggest that inadequate financial resources constitute the greatest barrier to women's participation in rural development programmes.

A female participant explained:

"Many women have the willingness to participate in development programmes, but they do not have access to loans or financial support to expand their farming and business activities." (FGD/Participant 6/Agaza Community, 2026).

Another participant stated:

"Some women are unable to participate fully because they have little education and are not aware of the opportunities available through government or development programmes." (FGD/Participant 2/Giza Community, 2026).

A traditional ruler also observed:

"Although women are hardworking, cultural expectations and limited government support continue to discourage many of them from participating actively in community development programmes." (KII/Traditional Leader, 2026).

VI. Discussion of Findings

On the role of women, the study found women play significant roles in rural development, primarily in agricultural production and food security (40.6%), followed by community sanitation/environmental management (25.5%) and small-scale trading (22.9%). Community leadership and decision-making was the least reported role (10.9%), showing that despite their strong contribution to rural livelihoods, women remain underrepresented in governance. This aligns with Kabeer (2020), FAO (2023), Todaro and Smith (2021), and Attamah, Asadu, and Eze (2020), all of whom note women's central but under-recognized role in rural economies. Finding on the Strategies for Improvement: The most effective strategies identified were increased access to credit/financial assistance (23.7%), education and vocational training (21.9%), stronger government policies (20.1%), community awareness/gender equality initiatives (17.7%), and greater involvement in decision-making (16.7%). These findings align with Kabeer (2020), UN Women (2023), FAO (2023), and Todaro and Smith (2021), who emphasize that financial access, education, and inclusion in governance are key to empowering rural women and achieving sustainable development. Finding on the Major Challenges: Lack of access to finance (34.4%) was the greatest barrier to women's participation, followed by low education/skills (21.9%),



cultural/traditional practices (15.9%), poor government support (15.1%), and heavy household responsibilities (12.8%). This supports Kabeer (2020) and FAO (2023) on unequal access to credit and resources, and Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2023) and Paul, Agba, and Chukwurah (2021) on educational and institutional constraints facing rural Nigerian women.

VII. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that women occupy an indispensable position in the rural development architecture of Keana Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, contributing substantially to agricultural production, food security, environmental management, and household income generation. Despite these considerable contributions, the persistent underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision-making structures reveals a fundamental disconnect between women's economic contributions and their institutional recognition within rural governance systems. The study further establishes that this imbalance is not incidental but is sustained by structural and systemic barriers, chief among them limited access to finance, inadequate education and skills training, entrenched cultural norms, weak governmental support, and the disproportionate burden of domestic responsibilities borne by women. As the evidence from this study affirms, empowering rural women is not merely a matter of social equity but a strategic imperative for achieving inclusive, resilient, and sustainable rural development. Until women are fully integrated into the decision-making processes that shape their communities, the promise of rural development will remain only partially realized.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- State Government should expand access to credit and financial services for rural women through targeted microfinance schemes and reduced collateral barriers.
- Local Government authority should strengthen educational and vocational training programmes to equip women with skills for agricultural and economic advancement.
- Government should enact and enforce gender-responsive policies that guarantee women's inclusion in rural leadership and decision-making structures.
- Community should reduce women's domestic burden through community support systems, freeing time and capacity for productive and civic participation.



References

1. Akpan, N. S. (2015). Women and rural development in Nigeria: Some critical issues for policy consideration. *The Social Sciences*, 10(5), 1-10.
2. Attamah, C. O., Asadu, A. N., & Eze, C. C. (2020). Women involvement in rural community development in Enugu North Senatorial Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. *Path of Science*, 6(2), 4001-4007.
3. Durkheim, É. (1893). *The division of labor in society*. Free Press.
4. Etebom, J. M., & Fagbewesa, O. E. (2024). The roles of women in Nigeria's quest for rural economic development: A case study of Ife Central Area, Osun State. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(7), 2769-2782.
5. Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO]. (2023). The status of women in agrifood systems. FAO. <https://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/1638937/>
6. Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO]. (2026). The status of women in agrifood systems in sub-Saharan Africa (L. Forsythe, Ed.). FAO, Natural Resources Institute of the University of Greenwich, & African Women in Agricultural Research and Development.
7. Kabeer, N. (2020). Three faces of agency in feminist economics: Capabilities, empowerment and citizenship. In *The Routledge handbook of feminist economics* (pp. 1-20). Routledge.
8. Kandiyoti, D. (1990). Women and rural development policies: The changing agenda. *Development and Change*, 21(1), 5-22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.1990.tb00365.x>
9. Kaur, M., & Sharma, M. L. (1991). Role of women in rural development. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 7(1-2), 11-16. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0743-0167\(91\)90034-P](https://doi.org/10.1016/0743-0167(91)90034-P)
10. Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607-610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308>
11. Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social theory and social structure* (Rev. ed.). Free Press.
12. National Population Commission [NPC] & National Bureau of Statistics [NBS]. (2023). *Nigeria population projections*. NPC/NBS.
13. Nnamdi, A. I. (2020). The role of women in rural development in Enugu State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Policy*, 9(2), 135-153. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.26.2020.92.135.153>
14. Obar, E. E., & Adekoya, A. E. (2022). Sustainability likelihood of Community and Social Development Project in Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, 26(1), 88-103.



15. Odebode, O. O., Salisu, O. O., & Ajaegbu, N. G. (2023). The role of women empowerment in the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State. *Covenant Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 7(2).
16. Olumba, C. C., & Alimba, J. O. (2022). An assessment of discriminatory factors contributing to gender inequality among farmers participating in urban agriculture in Southeast Nigeria. *SN Social Sciences*.
17. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]. (2022). Rural policy review of Colombia 2022. OECD Publishing.
18. Parsons, T. (1951). *The social system*. Free Press.
19. Paul, O., Agba, M. S., & Chukwurah, D. C. J. (2021). Rural development programmes and rural underdevelopment in Nigeria: A rethink. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 7(1), 1-15.
20. Sasa, M. A., Adebayo, K., & Maurice, D. C. (2022). Community-driven development approach: A panacea for sustainable rural development in Nigeria. *American Journal of Rural Development*, 10(1), 1-5.
21. Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2021). *Economic development* (13th ed.). Pearson.
22. Uduji, J. I., & Okolo-Obasi, E. N. (2023). Gender inequalities in rural labour markets: The role of corporate social responsibility in Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Journal of Agribusiness in Developing and Emerging Economies*.