

**ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY BY PROMOTING OLDER WOMEN'S
RIGHTS AND EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE IN OVIA SOUTH-WEST
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA. EDO STATE**

Dr. Osagie Joseph EGHAREVBA¹

Dr. Kingsley OMORUYI²

¹Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences University of Benin, Benin City,
Edo State. Nigeria. joseph.egharevba@uniben.edu +234 803 234 3678
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8896-3440>

&

²Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin
City, Edo State Nigeria Kingsley.omoruyi@uniben.edu +234 706 689 5119

Abstract

The paper examined advancing Gender equality by promoting older women's rights and empowerment initiative in Ovia South-West Local Government area Edo State. The research objectives were to investigate the empowerment initiative implementation for the older women and ascertain the extent to which the initiative have empowered and enhanced the older women socio-economic and political status in Ovia South-West Local Government Area Edo State. The study adopted empowerment theory. The study employed a descriptive survey research design; this is because the study sought the opinion of various older women living in Ovia south west Local Government Area Population of Older women sixty-five (65) years and above in Ovia South West Local Government area was 117,937 according to National Population Commission (NPC,2006) and the projection up to 2025 at the rate 3% population growth is 246,509. Sample size for the study was 399. The study established that empowerment initiatives through social protection, serves as a safety net, that also raises the income especially for low-income households' earners through the provision of employment. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that the older women should be regularly empowered through government initiative and the children of the older women should be gainfully employed and the Nigerian constitution should guarantee and uphold the rights of women and men by ensuring that both genders have equal legal and human rights across all sectors in the country.

Keyword: Community, Equality, Empowerment, Gender, Women

1. Introduction

Older people have a wealth of life experience and wisdom to impart to younger generations and improve communities. The term "older women" refers to people who are generally in their later years, as indicated by retirement age and accumulating life experience. This group is distinguished by distinct changes in health, social roles, and

cognitive capacities, as well as distinct physical, social, and psychological changes. Culturally speaking, many societies value the contributions of the older women because they are seen as carriers of tradition and knowledge. They may, however, also experience difficulties like social isolation, health problems, and ageism. Recognizing the older women's varied experiences and the significance of promoting their inclusion in society and well-being are essential to understanding them (Dauda, 2019). The rights and care of the older women involve taking new roles and responsibilities and frequent reorientation of the reorganization of family life, resulting in an escalation of dependencies that contribute to daily activities and proper placement of the older adults. (Egharevba, 2023)

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a procedure that empowers individuals to take action on matters they deem significant in order to develop power for use in their own lives, communities, and society (Geeta, 2018). Women's empowerment is defined as "the capacity of women to make deliberate life decisions in situations where they had not previously been afforded that ability" (Cohen, 2015). As a result, empowerment is essential to preserving the advantages that women enjoy on a personal, domestic, social, and wider scale (Cohen, 2015).

According to Akinboye (2004), it entails taking steps to improve women's status via literacy, education, training, and awareness-raising. Empowering women to make life-changing decisions on a variety of national issues is the core of women's empowerment. According to Ferree & Mueller (2007), Older adults gender equality is the idea that a person's "rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female." It can also be described as an environment in which people are free to explore their individual potential and make decisions free from the constraints imposed by rigid gender norms, and in which the needs and goals of men and women are given equal weight and consideration (Holzner, 2010).

2. Statement of the Research Problem

Older adults gender inequality is a global problem that has women's empowerment and gender equality at the top of everyone's agenda. In comparison to developed nations, gender inequality is more pervasive in developing nations (Alesina, & Giuliano, 2010). The government is making a lot of effort to address gender-based discrimination and inequality, but these issues are still very much present in Nigeria. According to the United Nations Development Programmes (2015), the country's development process is still hindered by the high gender gap and low level of women's empowerment especially the older women. Despite the nation's progress in many areas, the likelihood of its sustainability is uncertain because of the stark gender gap. Numerous studies have demonstrated that older gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for sustainable development. As a result, gender equality is said to be a human rights concern as well as a prerequisite for and a sign of sustainable development (Akinboye, 2004).

Furthermore, older adults gender inequality is confirmed to exist in all cultures worldwide and to be a major obstacle to sustainable development if it is not addressed (Moodley,

(2019). Furthermore, UN Women (2014) correctly noted that attaining gender equality is crucial to building a just and sustainable world as well as enhancing women's roles in supporting their families and communities. However, the nation's development will be hampered if older adults gender equality is not upheld. Accordingly, Moodley, (2019) opined that growing body of research suggests that gender disparities are generating significant financial burdens and contributing to social injustices and environmental deterioration globally

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine advancing older women gender equality by promoting women's right and empowerment initiatives in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State. The specific objectives were to;

1. investigate the empowerment initiatives implemented for the older women in Ovia South- west LGA, Edo State.
2. ascertain the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South- west LGA, Edo State.
3. examine the impact of the empowerment initiatives on the economic growth of the community among older adults in Ovia South-West LGA, Edo State.
4. access the factors hindering the effectiveness of empowerment initiative in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State.

4. Literature Review

Gender equality is the principle that individuals should have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities regardless of their gender. It combines social, political, economic, and cultural elements in an effort to end bias and discrimination that has historically harmed women and other marginalized gender groups. Social justice, human rights, and sustainable development are all dependable on achieving gender equality (Geeta, 2018). Global development must prioritize gender equality, but most literature has historically ignored the particular difficulties faced by older women in favor of women in the working age group. Complex forms of discrimination are introduced by the intersection of gender and aging, leaving older women marginalized, vulnerable, and with limited access to opportunities and resources.

The phenomenon known as "gendered aging," which describes the compounding effects of age and gender discrimination, is especially common among older women. Ikpe, (2004) highlighted the gendered nature of aging, noting that women frequently face greater social and economic setbacks than men do as they get older. These disadvantages stem from enduring gender disparities, which show up as lower social status, less financial stability, and a higher risk of abuse and illness as people age. According to Estes (2004), older women are more likely to experience poverty and isolation as a result of gendered social structures. This is frequently brought about by the cumulative effects of gender differences in work, education, and caregiving responsibilities, which restrict women's lifetime

opportunities to amass wealth and resources. Retirement and pension systems, which frequently fall short of providing sufficient assistance to older women, especially those who have worked for years providing unpaid care, are a reflection of these disparities. Studies have shown that recently emphasis has been placed on the function of legal protections in advancing the rights of older women. In this sense, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) continues to be a key agreement.

However as noted by Dasylva, (2013), there is still variation in the way gender-sensitive policies cater to the needs of older women and the way they are implemented internationally. Due to this disparities, older women frequently lack the legal assistance needed to defend their rights, especially when it comes to inheritance, social security benefits, and protection from abuse. Furthermore, Bhasin, (2003) emphasized the significance of global frameworks like the United Nations Principles for older persons (1991), which demand that senior citizens be included in all facets of society and stress the necessity of their involvement in decision-making. However, many nations still do not have specific laws that address the rights of older women, particularly in areas where religious and customary laws are dominant. For example, a study conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa by Crossley, & Hurwitz, (2013) discovered that older women are often denied the right to inherit, which results in financial instability and homelessness. Legal changes aimed at reducing older abuse are becoming more and more popular, especially in light of the growing acknowledgement of violence against older women as a serious violation of human rights. According to Bamberger, (2016), women are disproportionately affected by older adult's abuse, which includes financial, emotional, and physical abuse.

In Nigeria, poverty, discrimination, lack of access to healthcare, and social marginalization are among the major obstacles that older women frequently face. (Palmer, 2015) The societal environment that usually marginalizes older women, especially in rural areas, exacerbates these difficulties. (Dauda, 2019) Empowerment programs that are specifically aimed at empowering older women are crucial for the advancement of gender equality. For older women to live with worth and autonomy, these programs must meet their needs on an economic, social, and health-related level. (Dauda, 2019) Several important empowerment initiatives that can support older women's rights and gender equality includes;

Addressing Social Isolation and Discrimination: Ageism and gender-based discrimination are two issues that social empowerment programs for older women seek to address while also reducing isolation. Through intergenerational activities, community involvement, and social service access, these programs frequently aim to promote social inclusion. (Moodley, 2019) For older women, social exclusion and prejudice are serious problems, especially in cultures where ageism is pervasive and women's roles are frequently underestimated as they get older. Older women's quality of life can be improved by empowerment programs that support social inclusion because they give them chances for meaningful social interaction, lessen loneliness, and create a sense of community. According to the World Health Organization (2017), there is a connection between social inclusion and better mental and physical health outcomes, both of which are vital for the wellbeing of older women.

Enhancing Access to Healthcare and Support Services: UNFPA (2006) showed that health-related problems that older women frequently encounter include chronic illnesses, problems with their mobility, and a lack of access to quality medical care. To solve these issues, social empowerment programs that prioritize enhancing caregiver support and expanding access to health services are crucial. Enabling older women to have access to affordable, age-appropriate health care is essential to ensuring that they can maintain their independence and health. Gender-based differences in income, education, and social status make older women more susceptible to health disparities.

5. Theoretical Framework

Empowerment originates from American community psychology and is associated with the social scientist Julian Rappaport (1981). In social work, empowerment forms a practical approach of resource-oriented intervention. Empowerment theory acknowledges that oppression is present within society and affects individuals and communities, yet individuals and communities do have strengths and resources and can combat such societal oppression (Adams, 2008). Individuals need to have power and control over their lives in order to obtain and use the resources necessary for positive growth and development, which can be achieved through individual and collective strategies. Feminist theory explains the inequalities between women and men, the oppression of women, the development and consequences of socially defined gender roles and seeks to explain how development and life experiences differ for women and men (Enns, 2004; Hyde and Else-Quest, 2003). Anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist theories acknowledge the structural oppression and discrimination that impacts on clients and seeks to promote social work practice that challenges such structures by working individually with clients and participating and joining in social movements that challenge oppression and discrimination within larger structures (Dalrymple and Burke, 2006; Dominelli, 2008; Robbins, 2011; Thompson, 2006). Environmental and green social work applies a social work perspective to the ways in which environmental issues and crises can lead to disadvantage and limit resources, and focuses on targeting the social-political forces that impact on individual, community and global well-being in order to promote environmental and social justice (Dominelli, 2012; Gray et al., 2013)

6. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey research design; this was because the study sought the opinion of various older women living in Ovia south west Local Government Area. The design was considered most suitable for this study as it allowed the study to collect data from the respondents on their opinions concerning the phenomenon under investigation in their natural setting. The projected population of Ovia South west Local Government area up to 2024 was 246,509, while National population commission for 2006 was 117,937 for older women in Ovia South-East LGA, Edo State. The older women

were the targeted population for this study; these were people who are resident in Ovia south-west Local Government Area. This was to ascertain a comprehensive report on advancing gender equality by promoting older women's right and empowerment initiative in Ovia South-west Local Government Area. This was necessary to target people who were old enough to understand the issue under study. This comprised of older women irrespective of their educational qualification, socio economic backgrounds, employment status, religious affiliation, marital status and ethnic affiliation.

The study adopted simple random sampling technique, systematic sampling technique and purposive sampling technique. In selecting people who are residents of Ovia South-West Local Government Area, Communities that make up ovia south-west was identified as thus Iguobazuwa, Udo, Ora, Usen, Umaza, Ugbogue, Siluko, Ofunama. It may not be feasible to cover the above-mentioned communities as a result of funds and time. Hence, simple random sampling technique was used to select two (2) communities (Iguobazuwa and Udo) from the twelve (18) communities listed above. On the basis of this, lucky-dip method was used in selecting the communities. To get a sizable number of the respondents, the communities was further divided into streets, using lucky-dip method to select streets numbered A, B, C, and D where systematic sampling was adopted in the selection of households, so that the household would be evenly selected. The household would be selected at certain intervals using the "kth" element represented as

$$K = N$$

—
n

Where k= sampling interval

N= population size

N= sample size

In each of the selected households, at least two older female adults were purposively selected.

To determine the sample size; Slovin's formula for calculating sample size was adopted.

It is represented as thus: $n = \frac{N}{(1+N(e)^2)}$

Where n= sample size

N=Population of the study

E=Degree of freedom

1=Constant

Therefore

N= 117937

E=0.05

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

$$n = \frac{117937}{(1+117937 (0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{117937}{(1+117937)(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{117937}{(1+294.84)}$$

$$n = \frac{117937}{295.84}$$

$$n = 398.6$$

From the above, the sample size was 399 women and questionnaires were designed in line with the stated objectives for data analysis.

7. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1- Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Measurements	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group	Below 60years	42	10.5%
	60-64years	74	18.5%
	65-69 years	200	50.1%
	70-74 years	34	8.5%
	75-79 years	39	9.8%
	80 and above	10	2.5
	Total	399	100.0
Marital status	Single	10	2.5%
	Married	190	47.6%
	Divorced	19	4.8%
	Widowed	180	45.1%
	Total	399	100.0
Level of Education	No Formal Education	40	10.0%
	Primary level	84	21.1%
	Secondary level	50	12.5%
	Tertiary	225	56.4%
	Total	399	100.0

Occupation	Unemployed	90	22.6%
	Self-employed	180	45.1%
	Civil servant	30	7.5%
	Retiree	99	24.8%
	Total	399	100.0
Religion	Christianity	241	60.4%
	Traditional	46	11.5%
	Islam	112	28.1%
	Total	399	100.0

Source: Field work, 2025

The table 1 above showed the age distribution of respondents, the result from the table revealed that 42 of them, representing 10.5% Below 60years; while 74, representing 18.5% are within the age range of 60-64years. Also 200 of the respondents, representing 50.1% of the entire respondents' falls within ages 65-69 years. However, 34 of them, representing 8.5%are within the age range of 70-74 years; and also 39 of them, representing 9.8%of the respondents fall within ages 75-79 years and 10 of them, representing 2.5% are 80 and above. Therefore, majority of the respondents who participated in this study fall within ages 65-69 years.

Table 2

Objective 1: Distribution on the empowerment initiatives implemented for the older women in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State.

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Are you aware of any empowerment initiatives for the older women in Ovia south west local government area?	YES	260	65.2%
	NO	134	33.5%
	Don't know	5	1.3%
	Total	399	100.0
If yes please mention	Social support programs	60	15.0%

	Affordable health care	9	2.3%
	Provision of loans	130	32.6%
	Protection programs	200	50.1%
	Total	399	100.0

Source: Field work, 2025

The above table show the distribution on the empowerment initiatives implemented for the older women, table 4.2 revealed that 65.2% are aware that empowerment initiatives implemented for the older women while 35.5% said No, and 1.3% said that they don't know, as to whether there are empowerment initiatives implemented for the older women in the area. Similarly, 50.1% said that the government have put in place Protection programs for the older women, while 32.6% mentioned Provision of loans, while 15.0% and 2.3% mentioned Social support programs and Affordable health care respectively. This shows that from the analysis above, that there are empowerment programmes in the locality as affirmed by majority of the respondents.

Table 3

Objective 2: Distribution on the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State.

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Do you know the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State?	Yes	240	60.1%
	No	150	37.6%
	Don't know	9	2.3%
	Total	399	100
If yes, what is the extent?	Very High	290	72.7%
	High	100	25.0%
	Low	5	1.3%
	very low	4	1.0%
	Total	399	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The above table show how distribution on the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South- west LGA, Edo State. Findings revealed that 60.1% affirmed that they know the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State, while 37.6% said No and 2.3% said that they don't know. on the extent to which they know, Findings revealed that 72% and 25.0% are of the very high and high that the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State, while 1.3% and 1.0% low and very low to the opinion. With these responses from the respondents it can be deduced these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State to a very high extent.

Table 4

Objective 3 Distribution on the impact of the empowerment initiatives on the economic growth of the community among older women in Ovia South- west LGA, Edo State.

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Are you aware of any impact of the empowerment initiatives on the economic growth of the community among older women in Ovia South-East LGA, Edo State?	Yes	265	66.4%
	No	131	32.8%
	Don't know	3	0.7%
	Total	399	100.0
If yes, to what extent?	Very High	200	50.1%
	High	130	32.6%
	Low	9	2.3%
	very low	60	15.0%

	Total	399	100.0
--	--------------	------------	--------------

Source: Field work, 2025

The above table shows the impact of the empowerment initiatives on the economic growth of the community among older women in Ovia South- west LGA, Edo State, Findings revealed that 66.4% affirmed that they know the impact of the empowerment initiatives on the economic growth of the community among older women in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State, while 32.8% said No and 0.7% said that they don't know Probing the issue further, respondents were asked whether Findings revealed that 50.1% and 32.6% are of the very high and high that the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State, while 2.3% and 15.0% low and very low to the opinion. With these responses from the respondents it can be deduced these initiatives have impacted on the economic growth of the community among older women in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State seriously.

Table 5

Objective 4: Distribution on the factors hindering the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals in Ovia South- west LGA, Edo State.

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Are there factors hindering the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State?	YES	260	65.2%
	NO	134	33.5%
	Don't know	5	1.3%
	Total	399	100.0
Do you think that Lack of fund hinders the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals?	YES	295	73.9%
	NO	100	25.0%
	Don't know	4	1.0%

	Total	399	100.0
Do you think that lack of good legal framework hinders the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals?	Yes	265	66.4%
	No	131	32.8%
	Don't know	3	0.7%
	Total	399	100.0
Other factors hinders the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals?	YES	260	65.2%
	NO	134	33.5%
	Don't know	5	1.3%
	Total	399	100.0

Source: Field work, 2025

The above table shows the distribution on the factors hindering the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals, table 5 revealed that 65.2% agreed that there are factors hindering the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals while 33.5% said No, and 1.3% said that they don't know, furthermore, 73.9% said yes that Lack of fund hinders the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals, while 25.0% said no, and 1.0% said that they don't know. Also The result revealed that 66.4% said yes that lack of good legal framework hinders the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals, while 32.8% said no, and 0.7% said that they don't, furthermore, the study revealed that 65.2% agreed that other factors such as lack of education, lack of awareness and Resistance to Change hinders the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals, while 33.5% said no, and 1.3% said that they don't know. With these responses from the respondents, it can be deduced that there are factors hindering the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State.

8. Discussion of Finding

Empowerment initiatives through social protection, serves as a safety net, that also raises the income especially for low-income households through the provision of employment or a minimum income guarantee, insurance, or subsidies. Older adults gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for sustainable development as they promote social justice, economic growth, and poverty reduction. Ensuring equitable access to healthcare and education promotes social stability by promoting healthier and better educated societies. In order to solve interrelated global issues and create a more just and prosperous world, gender equality is essential. From research Objective one revealed that 65.2% are aware that empowerment initiatives implemented for the older women, this shows that

from the analysis above, that there are empowerment programmes in the locality as affirmed by majority of the respondents. This agrees with Fredrick, (2019) who asserted that gender equality is the principle that individuals should have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities regardless of their gender. It combines social, political, economic, and cultural elements in an effort to end bias and discrimination that has historically harmed women and other marginalized gender groups. Social justice, human rights, and sustainable development are all dependable on achieving gender equality (Fredrick, 2019).

From the result of research objective two on the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South- west LGA, Edo State, findings revealed that 60.1% affirmed that they know the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State. while 37.6% said No and 2.3% said that they don't know. on the extent to which they know, Findings revealed that 72% and 25.0% are of the very high and high that the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State, while 1.3% and 1.0% low and very low to the opinion. This is in agreement with Pascal, (2015) who said that older women's empowerment programs are not only important for advancing gender equality and improving these women's quality of life, but they also have a big effect on local economies (Pascal, 2015).

Older women enhance the general economic vibrancy of their communities when they become financially independent, take better care of themselves, and engage more fully in social and commercial life. Initiatives aimed at empowering older women to engage in revenue-generating pursuits like small-scale business ownership, farming, and handicrafts enhance their involvement in the economy. Research objective three revealed that 66.4% affirmed that they know the impact of the empowerment initiatives on the economic growth of the community among older women in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State, while 32.8% said No and 0.7% said that they don't know Probing the issue further, respondents were asked whether the empowerment can enhance the older female social functioning, the findings revealed that 50.1% and 32.6% are of the very high and high that the extent to which these initiatives have empowered and enhanced the older women's social, economic and political status in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State, while 2.3% and 15.0% low and very low to the opinion. With these responses from the respondents it can be deduced these initiatives have impacted on the economic growth of the community among older women in Ovia South-west LGA, Edo State seriously.

The findings from research objective four on the distribution on the factors hindering the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals, table 4.5 revealed that 65.2% agreed that there are factors hindering the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals while 35.5% said No, and 1.3% said that they don't know, furthermore, 73.9% said yes that Lack of fund hinders the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals, while 25.0% said no, and 1.0% said that they don't know. Also The result revealed that 66.4% said yes that lack of good legal framework hinders the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their

goals, while 32.8% said no, and 0.7% said that they don't, furthermore, the study revealed that 65.2% agreed that other factors such as lack of education, lack of awareness and Resistance to Change hinders the effectiveness of these empowerment initiatives in achieving their goals, while 33.5% said no, and 1.3% said that they don't know.

According to Adeyemi (2018) Deeply ingrained cultural attitudes toward aging and gender often marginalize older women, making it difficult for them to benefit from empowerment programs (HelpAge International, 2015). Communities that uphold traditional gender roles frequently oppose efforts to advance gender equality. The opposition of male family members, community leaders, or even the women themselves who may have internalized these norms can all be examples of this resistance. The implementation and success of empowerment initiatives can be impeded by resistance to change, as programs may encounter opposition from the community or not receive full support. For instance, if community leaders do not support women in leadership roles, programs targeted at increasing the political participation of older women may find it difficult to gain traction. One of the biggest obstacles to advancing gender equality for older women in some areas is cultural resistance (UN, 2017).

9. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to encourage gender equality by promoting older women's right and empowerment initiative, a study of ovia south west local government area. We see evidence that women have differing access to resources compared with men, such as essential services, knowledge and information, technology dissemination, land, credit options, time, and markets. This differing level of access is shaped and reinforced by contextual social gender norms. Context-specific pathways link women's empowerment to important outcomes, such as household nutrition and dietary diversity; these pathways may vary between and within contexts. Cross-contextual evidence exists of positive associations between maternal education (and specifically, access to nutrition education) and positive outcomes for child and household nutrition and diet quality. Finally, relatively few studies included a gender-informed design and conceptual framework to best understand mechanisms to promote equality and empowerment. Moving forward, further research is required to produce stronger evidence on crosscontextual pathways to improve gender equality and women's empowerment in food systems.

10. Recommendation

Based on the aforementioned findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Older women should be regularly empowered through government initiative and the children of the older women should be gainfully employed
2. The Nigerian constitution should guarantee and uphold the rights of women and men by ensuring that both genders have equal legal and human rights across all sectors in the country.

REFERENCES

- Adams, R., 2008. *Empowerment, Participation and Social Work*, fourth ed. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Akinboye, O. S. (2004). Challenges and Prognosis of Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics. In O. S. Akinboye, *Paradox of Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics* (pp. 232-236). Lagos: Concept Publications.
- Alesina, A. and Giuliano, P., (2010). The power of the family. *Journal of Economic growth*, 15(2), 93-125.
- Aluko, E. O. (2000). *Gender and Poverty Allevation in Nigeria*. 31st Annual Conference of the. Minna: NITP.
- Bamberger, M. S. (2016). Evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals. California : Eval Partners.
- Bhasin, K. (2003). *Understanding Gender*. New Delhi : Women Unlimited.
- Brickner, R. K (2006). 'Mexican Union Women and the Social Construction of Women's Labour Rights', *Latin American Perspectives*, 33.151: 55-74
- CEDAW Nigeria. (2008). *CEDAW and Accountability to Gender Equality in Nigeria*. Lagos: Women's Aid Collective.
- Cohen, N. P. (2015). *The Family: Diversity, Inequality and Social Change*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Crossley, A. & Hurwitz, H. M (2013). Women's Movement. In P. D. David A. S., *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Dasyilva, O. A. (2013). Politics of Development: Interrogating Phallocentric Space, Renegotiating the Gender of Modern Nigerian Politics. *The Gender of Power* . New Jersey: Africa World Press.
- Dauda, R. (2019). The paradox of persistent poverty amidst high growth: the case of Nigeria. In R. S. Kanbur, *Immiserating growth: When growth fails the poor* (pp. 1-3). UK: Oxford University Press.
- Dauda, O. S. (2004). The Economic Context of Gender Equality in Nigeria. In O. S. Akinboye, *Paradox of Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics* (pp. 62-90). Lagos: Concept Publications.
- Egharevba, J.O, (2023) An Assessment of Social Well-being of the Elderly in Ovia North-East Local Government Area, Edo State Nigeria. *KIU Journal of Social Sciences, Kampala International University*. 9(4) 127-135

- Ferree, M. and Mueller, C.M. (2007). *Feminism and women's movement: A global perspective*. In D. S. Snow, A., Soule, S.A., and Kriesi, H. The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements (pp. 576–607). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Geeta, R. G. (2018). *Progress Toward Gender Equality: Backlash and Resistance*. California: UN Foundation.
- Moodley, L. K. (2019). *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Africa*. Addis Ababa: McKinsey Global Institute.
- Ikpe, E. B. (2004). The Historical Legacy of Gender Inequality in Nigeria. In S. Akinboye, *Paradox of Gender Equality in Nigeria Politics* (pp. 20-40). Lagos: Concept Publications.
- Iman, A. M. (2010). Adopting Women's Human Rights Legislation in Nigeria: A Synthesis Analysis and Report. . Lagos: Nigeria: InfoVision Limited
- International Labour Organization (2008) *Global Employment Trends for Women*, Geneva: ILO
- Kabeer, N. (2008) *Mainstreaming Gender and Social Protection in the Informal Economy*, London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Ngai, P. (2005) 'A New Practice of Labour Organising: Community-based Organisation of Migrant Women Workers in South China', Presented at a conference on Membership-based Organisations of the Poor: Theory, Experience and Poverty, organised by WIEGO, Cornell University and SEWA, Ahmedabad
- Palmer, I. (2015) *Gender and Population in the Adjustment of African Economies: Planning for Change*, Geneva: ILO Women, Work and Development Series
- Salaam, T. (2003). A Brief Analysis on the Situation of Women in Nigeria. Abuja: DSM.
- UNDP. (2015). UNDP Nigeria Annual Report 2015. Abuja: UNDP
- UN Women (2014). *The World Survey on the role of women in development: Gender equality and sustainable development*
- UNFPA (2006) *A Passage to Hope. Women and International Migration*, New York: UNFPA
- Warburton, J. Winterton, R. (2017). A far greater sense of community: *The impact of volunteer behaviour on the wellness of rural older Australians*. doi: 10.1016/j.healthplace.2017.10.005. Epub Nov 6.
- William, A. (2019). The Revolution for Gender Equality. Human Development Report, 1-10

- Wilson, F. (2019) 'Workshops as Domestic Domains: Reflections on Small-Scale Industry in Mexico', *World Development*, 21.1: 67–80
- World Bank. (2016). *Poverty Reduction in Nigeria in the Last Decade*. Danvers: World Bank.
- World Health Organization (2015). *WHO world report on Ageing 2015* DO-10.13140/RG.2.1.5058.8245