

# **Influence of Civic Education Programmes on the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal “5” among Women in Rural Communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area**

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**Abstract:** *The study examines the influence of civic education programmes on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal “5” among rural women in Ikwerre Local Government Area. Three research questions were answered with three null hypotheses that were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study. The study adopted the descriptive research survey design. The target population of the study consist of all the 401,328 adult women in Ikwerre Local Government Area. A sample of 400 women (Beneficiaries = 200, Non-beneficiaries = 200) were determine through Taro Yamen formula and selected using purposive sampling technique. The instrument for the data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire designed in the pattern of 4-point rating scale of agreement. The instrument was face and content validated and a reliability coefficient of 0.83 was established for the study using Cronbach Alpha. Research questions were answered using Mean and Standard Deviation statistics. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test. The result of the study showed that civic education programmes such as cultural education, political and voter's education have influenced the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. Based on the finding of the study, it was recommended among others that rural women should participate in civic education programmes for them to be able to fight against cultural practices that relegates women to the background.*

**Keywords:** *Civic Education Programme, Gender Equality, Rural Communities, Sustainable Development Goal and Impact.*

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## **Introduction**

Nigeria is a heterogeneous nation blessed with different people of different ideas, norms, beliefs, attitudes and values that can be of advantage if positively utilized for the benefit of the citizenry. Moral values in Nigeria are in a state of collapse where corruption, embezzlement, armed robbery, kidnapping, wanton destruction of lives and property, injustice, dishonesty, rape, child and women abuse and trafficking, examination malpractices, drug abuse, cultism, internet, and other forms of fraud are the order of the day (Abdu-raheem, 2018).

Nigeria, women are affected by laws of the past, which discriminate against them in participating in the community development process. Those in the rural areas are mostly affected by laws

imposed on them by their homelands (culture) and those imposed by their local leaders. Through these laws, women are relegated into a lesser position that determines their status in all ramifications. Women in rural areas are traditionally low in status; most of them are deprived education by their own parents, just because they were females; some who manage to attend school, dropped out of school before acquiring adequate education that would have empowered them to enter into skilled labour, and consequently improve their socio-economic status. Not only that women education in the past is given little attention in most rural areas in Nigeria, but the status of women has also been conceived as inferior to that of their male counterparts, which eventually denied them many socio-economic development opportunities. The low status attached to women education make them vulnerable to male dominance and also reduce their participatory power to community development. Women in this category needed to be empowered to stand out to defend themselves and participate in the development of their community.

Women are to be given only such training in domestic activities that would enhance their being good wives and mothers. In the face of scarce resources, many parents believed that educating a male child is preferable and more beneficial to educating a female. This is because most African family systems are patrilineal; having their generations recorded and headed through males (Suara, 2013). These opinions have negatively impaired the education of women and the girl-child. In recent times, women and the girl-child education has attracted not only local or national attention but also international attention because of the large population of the female folk and their role in nation-building and development.

Development according to Onyeozu (2017) is a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of person's palms. Onyeozu further stressed that development should be perceived as a multi-dimensional process which involve the re-organization and reorientation of the entire social, economic and cultural systems of a definite locality or society. The society consist of men and women of diverse aspirations and views. Women are recognized the world over as very important element in the development process. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2006) claimed that it is not just because of the number of the womenfolk but the social and economic assignments which they carry out in their societies. In spite of the importance of education to women's contribution to development, available statistics showed that women lag behind men in all areas of education, science and technology, thereby hampering their participation and contribution not just in community but national development. This is corroborated by National Bureau of Statistics (2012) reports on employment rate of 68.72% for men as against 31.28% for women in Nigeria. The indispensable role of women in the developmental effort of the society calls for their empowerment at all levels. Today, in most of the developed and developing countries in the world and Nigeria inclusive, women are being relegated such that they are discriminated and segregated from participating in some public functions in areas of policy formulation and programme development. This marginalization in terms of political, religious, cultural, social and economic rights against the female folks necessitated the idea of gender equality where all (male and female should be treated equally).

Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefiting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in their home, community and society. Gender equity is one means of achieving gender equality. This implies that gender equality is a tool that can be used in the achievement of sustainable development since both sexes (men and

women) has equal chances of contribution towards economic, social, political and cultural development of the society.

In modern democracies, one major way of eliciting the people's support and participation in state affairs is civic education. Civic education is aimed at instilling in the people some democratic principles, ethics, values as well as an understanding of how democratic institutions function; their rights and responsibilities as they participate in the political process. Civic education attempts to equip individuals to become informed and active citizens. In this process, citizens are inculcated with such values as tolerance, equality and justice as important instruments in nurturing a healthy and vibrant civil society. With an increased knowledge, awareness and capacity, majority of the citizens get informed and become active participants on political issues. Their level of patriotism is also enhanced in this process.

Njoku (2005) perceived education has to do with the systematic method of training, building, developing, sustaining knowledge, skill and character among students. Civic education therefore represents a careful and sequential process of liberating members of a community from ignorance and equipping them with the necessary skill, good political, economic, social and administrative conscience that would facilitate and maintain national conscience (James, 2019). Through civic education, the people are meant to acquire good values, and attitude of good citizenship and thereby paving way for patriotism or love for one's motherland. Civic education enables every stratum of society to get educated on their rights and duties as well as the obligations of the government to the people including the female gender who were culturally and educationally disadvantage.

Gender is often seen as the mere categorization of the human species into male and female. However, gender is far from just the binary identification of humans into these categories. Gender is thus a social construction of the relations between male and female in terms of roles in power sharing, decision making, division of labour and remuneration on labour both at home and in the workplace (Idyrorough, 2017). Gupta and Kumari (2017) succulently looked at gender "as the widely shared expectations and norms within a society about appropriate male and female behaviour, characteristics, and roles. It is a social and cultural construct that differentiates women from men and defines the ways in which women and men interact with each other.

Gender equality therefore implies that there should be no discrimination of any individual on the basis of sex with regard to the allocation of economic resources, political positions or access to social services. Gender equality will develop the society as women are empowered to showcase their talents side by side with men. The United Nations Development Programme identified five-basic levels of analyzing gender equality namely: welfare, access, conscientization, participation and control. These frameworks are avenues through which women can be empowered for meaningful and sustainable national development of the society. It is clear that there is a relationship between civic education programmes and women education that leads to empowerment. Based on these scenarios, this study is designed to examine the impact of civic education programmes on the achievement of sustainable development goal "5" (gender equality and women empowerment) among women in rural communities in Rivers State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria, women are affected by laws of the past, which discriminate against them in participating in the community development process; those in the rural areas are mostly affected by laws imposed on them by their homelands (culture) and those imposed by their local leaders. It is evident regarding political participation, women have been grossly underrepresented, even as they constitute about 50 percent of Nigerian population (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2021).

Under-representation of Nigerian women in educational, economic and political programmes could lead to a serious setback in development and, thus, the need for gender equality and women empowerment. In achieving this equality, many programmes have been put in place at local, state, national and international levels with the aim of discouraging gender imbalance including the Millenniums Development Goals (MDGs) that metamorphose to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These programmes were introduced with the aim of empowering the women, and engender equity between male and female, but it was observed that many changes have not been achieved. It is against these backdrop that this study seeks to examine the impact of civic education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of civic education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. Specifically, the study seeks to find out the influence of:

1. Cultural education on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.
2. Political education on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.
3. Voter's education on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered to guide the study.

1. What is the influence of cultural education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area?
2. What is the influence of political education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area?
3. What is the influence of voter's education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of female beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on the influence of cultural education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of female beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on the influence of political education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean response of female beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on the influence of voter's education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted the descriptive research survey design and was carried out in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. The target population of the study consist of all the adult women in Ikwerre Local Government Area. As at the time of this study, the total number of adult women in Ikwerre Local Government Area was estimated at 401,328 (Source: National Population Commission, 2021). A sample of 400 women were determine using Taro Yamen sample determination method. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 200 women who are

beneficiaries and 200 women who are not beneficiaries of literacy programmes. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled “Civic Education Programmes on the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Questionnaire” (CEPASDGQ). The instrument was designed in the pattern of 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha method for a measure of internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.80 was established for the instrument. Out of 400 copies distributed (Beneficiaries = 200 and Non-beneficiaries = 200), only 307 copies (Beneficiaries = 171 and Non-beneficiaries = 136) were completely filled and successfully retrieved and used for the analysis. This gives 88 percent retrieval. Research question was analysed using mean and standard deviation statistics while the null hypothesis formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test.

### **Result**

The result of the study was presented as follows.

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of cultural education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area?

**Table 1: Mean Responses on Cultural Education Programme on the Achievement of Gender Equality Among Women in Rural Communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area**

S/N	Cultural Education Programme on Gender Equality Achievement	Beneficiaries			Non-Beneficiaries		
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	RMK	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	RMK
1.	Educating women on their cultural rights to vie for leadership positions will increase participation of women and lead to gender equality.	3.64	0.63	SA	3.77	0.80	SA
2.	Educating women on their cultural responsibilities will enable women decide their faith creating a balance gender wise.	3.05	0.79	A	3.12	0.63	A
3	Through cultural education more women will demand to become part of leadership in communities and can replace men's slot.	3.11	0.61	A	3.80	0.70	SA
4.	Educating women on their cultural rights will make them seek to be part of decision-making body in communities which enhance gender equality.	3.62	0.70	SA	3.38	0.84	A
5.	It educates women on cultures that are used to suppress the female folks which encourages gender equality.	3.66	1.02	SA	3.64	1.11	SA
6	Educating women on cultural rights would encourage fight against those tradition and culture that causes gender parity.	3.13	0.80	A	3.73	0.57	SA
7	Cultural education educates rural women on how to interact with people of other societies which enhances gender equality.	3.67	0.75	SA	3.19	0.63	A
<b>Average Mean/SD</b>		<b>3.41</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>SA</b>

**Source:** *Researcher's Field Result; 2022*

Table 1 shows the influence of cultural education programmes on the achievement of sustainable development goal “5” (gender equality) among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. The respondents who were beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of cultural education programme agree that the programme have influenced the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. This was in the average mean response of 3.41 and 3.52 which is higher than the cut-off points of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale.

**Research Question 2:** What is the influence of political education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area?

**Table 2: Mean Responses on Political Education Programme on the Achievement of Gender Equality Among Women in Rural Communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area**

S/N	Political Education Programme on Gender Equality Achievement	Beneficiaries			Non-Beneficiaries		
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	RMK	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	RMK
8.	Educating women on their political rights to vie for leadership positions will increase the number of women who contest for elective positions thereby reducing male dominance.	3.57	0.84	SA	3.58	0.70	SA
9.	Educating women on their political responsibilities will enable women decide on leaders thereby enhance gender equality.	3.10	1.02	A	3.04	0.66	A
10.	Educating women on their rights to vie for leadership positions will increase the number of women who contest for elective positions thereby reducing male dominance in political sphere.	3.22	0.66	A	3.61	0.84	SA
11.	Educating women on their political rights will make them seek to be part of decision-making body in communities.	3.71	1.01	SA	2.87	1.01	A
12.	Educating women on their rights as citizens will trigger their desire to exercise their franchise by electing leaders of their choice which could reduce male dominance.	3.66	0.70	SA	3.66	0.66	SA
13.	Political education educates rural women on how to interact with people of other societies which enhances gender equality.	3.74	0.63	SA	3.01	0.74	A
<b>Average Mean/SD</b>		<b>3.50</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>SA</b>

**Source:** *Researcher's Field Result; 2022*

Table 2 shows the influence of political education programmes on the achievement of sustainable development goal “5” (gender equality) among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local

Government Area. The respondents who were beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of political education programme agree that the programme have influenced the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. This was in the average mean response of 3.50 and 3.30 which is higher than the cut-off points of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale.

**Research Question 3:** What is the influence of voter's education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area?

**Table 3: Mean Responses on Voter's Education Programme on the Achievement of Gender Equality Among Women in Rural Communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area**

S/N	Voter's Education Programme on Gender Equality Achievement	Beneficiaries			Non-Beneficiaries		
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	RMK	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	RMK
14.	Voter education makes rural be aware of their electoral rights and make them participate in election to reduce gender inequality.	3.10	0.74	A	3.73	0.90	SA
15.	Educating women on how to go about election registration which is seen as masculine activities.	2.94	1.01	A	3.35	0.62	A
16.	Expose the women on the conduct of election and its offenses which reduces the level of intimidations from men.	3.63	0.63	SA	2.84	0.70	A
17.	The men cannot easily convince them with money to sell their votes thereby making them aware of electoral rights.	3.48	0.57	A	3.02	0.84	A
18.	It makes the rural women to be able to vote a female candidate of their interest which could enhance gender equality.	3.84	0.66	SA	3.63	1.01	SA
<b>Average Mean/SD</b>		<b>3.40</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>A</b>

**Source:** *Researcher's Field Result; 2022*

Table 3 shows the influence of voter's education programmes on the achievement of sustainable development goal "5" (gender equality) among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. The respondents who were beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of voter education programme agree that the programme have influenced the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. This was in the average mean response of 3.40 and 3.31 which is higher than the cut-off points of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale.

### **Test of Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean response of female beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on the influence of cultural education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

**Table 4: z-Test Analysis on the Influence of Cultural Education Programmes on the Achievement of Gender Equality among Women in Rural Communities**

S/N	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	df	$\alpha$	zcal	zcrit	Remark
Beneficiaries	3.41	0.76	171	305	0.05	-1.26	1.96	Accepted
Non-beneficiaries	3.52	0.75	136					

**Source:** *Researcher's Field Result; 2022* Accept Ho if  $z_{cal} \leq z_{crit}$ , Otherwise Reject Ho.

Since the calculated value of z ( $z_{cal} = -1.26$ ) is less than the critical value of z ( $z_{crit} = 1.960$ ) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean response of female beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of cultural education programmes on its influence on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean response of female beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on the influence of political education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

**Table 5: z-Test Analysis on the Influence of Political Education Programmes on the Achievement of Gender Equality among Women in Rural Communities**

S/N	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	df	$\alpha$	zcal	zcrit	Remark
Beneficiaries	3.50	0.81	171	305	0.05	1.20	1.96	Accepted
Non-beneficiaries	3.30	0.76	136					

**Source:** *Researcher's Field Result; 2022* Accept Ho if  $z_{cal} \leq z_{crit}$ , Otherwise Reject Ho.

Since the calculated value of z ( $z_{cal} = -1.20$ ) is less than the critical value of z ( $z_{crit} = 1.960$ ) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean response of female beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of political education programmes on its influence on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the mean response of female beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on the influence of voters' education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

**Table 6: z-Test Analysis on the Influence of Voters' Education Programmes on the Achievement of Gender Equality among Women in Rural Communities**

S/N	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	df	$\alpha$	zcal	zcrit	Remark
Beneficiaries	3.40	0.72	171	305	0.05	1.01	1.96	Accepted
Non-beneficiaries	3.31	0.81	136					

**Source:** *Researcher's Field Result; 2022* Accept Ho if  $z_{cal} \leq z_{crit}$ , Otherwise Reject Ho.



Since the calculated value of  $z$  ( $z_{cal} = 1.01$ ) is less than the critical value of  $z$  ( $z_{crit} = 1.960$ ) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean response of female beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of voters' education programmes on its influence on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Result from Table 1 revealed the influence of cultural education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. The study found that educating women on their cultural responsibilities will enable women decide their faith and who leads them in the community and through cultural education more women will demand to become part of leadership in communities as they are knowledgeable on the beliefs and norms among others aid the achievement of gender equality. The finding of this study is in agreement with Gupta and Kumari (2017) who found that educating the female folks on cultural implication enhances enlightenment of women and reduce cultural bias against women.

Result from Table 2 revealed the influence of political education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. The study found that educating women on their political rights will make them seek to be part of decision-making body in communities and educating women on their rights as citizens will trigger their desire to exercise their franchise by electing leaders of their choice that could protect their interest among others. This finding agrees with Udipta (2022) as aver that current level of political empowerment among women so low, despite various efforts towards achieving greater political equality and that political equality is achievable through political education of the women.

Result from Table 3 revealed the influence of voters' education programmes on the achievement of gender equality among women in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area. The study found that educating women on how to go about election registration which is seen as masculine activities and exposing women on the conduct of election and its offenses which reduces the level of intimidations from men. This finding corroborates with Kinge and Adepoju (2014) who opined that voters' education is essential ingredient to through which women can actively participate to choose a female representative in election.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings it was concluded that civic education programmes have influenced on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal "5" among rural women in Ikwerre Local Government Area. This is drawn from the finding which shows that civic education programmes such as cultural education, political and voters' education have influenced on the achievement of sustainable development goal "5" in rural communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the follow recommendations were made;

1. Rural women should participate in cultural education programmes for them to be able to fight against cultural practices that relegates women participation in community cultural development.
2. Rural women should participate in political education programmes for them to be able to vote and be voted for during election.

3. Rural women should participate in voters' education programmes for them to be able to exercise their franchise in terms of selecting leaders during electioneering process thereby increasing women representation.

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