

Rural Women's Access to Infrastructural Facilities in Rural Areas in Osun State, Nigeria

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KEYWORDS Poverty; access; infrastructure; rural and facilities

ABSTRACT Women constitute about 46.6 percent of the total population and are responsible for 60-80 percent of the food produced in the country in addition to their traditional reproductive, household and community management roles. The rural women form a substantial proportion of the poor and most members of the female labour force live and work in rural areas. The study investigated rural women's access to infrastructural facilities in rural areas in Osun State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 360 respondents in the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the research questions and to test the hypotheses stated respectively. The chi-square analyses revealed that there were significant relationships between rural women's access to infrastructural facilities and place of origin of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 10.95$, $p < 0.05$); Educational level ($\chi^2 = 8.12$, $p < 0.05$); Religion ($\chi^2 = 5.22$; $p < 0.05$) and decision making ($\chi^2 = 7.72$; $p < 0.05$). The results also showed that significant correlations existed between rural women's activities and access to infrastructural facilities such as reliable public transportation ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$); health care facilities ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$), electricity ($r = 0.20$ $p < 0.05$) good water supply ($r = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$). Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that there is need to increase the level of awareness of the rural populace to the significance of education. Also efforts should be made by individuals, philanthropists, governments at Local, State and Federal levels to make provisions for the improvement of access to infrastructural facilities by rural women.

INTRODUCTION

It is becoming increasingly difficult for breadwinners to provide other basic family needs (apart from food) of housing, clothing, education, health etc for their dependants. Inability to meet these basic needs are indices of poverty which give a sense of non-accomplishment to the bread winner and pre-disposes him to have low-self morale which is a strong index of psychological unwellness (Sokoya, 1998.)

The tasks which the rural women are expected to perform and the skills needed to carry them out vary. The African rural woman, like most women, must be able to eliminate malnutrition from her family and had the major responsibility of lifting her family out of poverty. Therefore bearing in mind the enormous roles which they must perform in order to increase the standard of living of their families, there is need to look into the access of rural women to infrastructural facilities in Osun State.

Poverty is commonly defined as the inability to attain a minimal standard of living, interpreted to encompass not only consumption of food,

clothing and shelter but also access to education, health. Services, clean water etc. (World Bank, 1990). Dutta (1992) examined why the poor had not yet benefited from various rural development scheme and he therefore maintained that this had primarily been the result of their having remained too passive, disorganized and suppressed to struggle for their rights and benefits. Economic activities of the poor have little chance of becoming self sustaining unless total economic environment is radically altered (Dutta, 1992).

On the local socio-cultural perspectives on rural poverty, the inhabitants of Umu-Itodo in Enugu state viewed poverty as lack of infrastructural facilities and services such as access to roads, pipe borne water, hospital, schools, churches, electricity and agricultural services (World Bank, 1996).

Adekanye (1988) stressed the fact that the women's access to productive resources in agriculture was restricted compared to that of men due to the patrilinear system and the fact that change agents were usually men. Lack of access to productive resources, notably land in rural areas and the unavailability of alternative sources of

income determine the persistence of chronic poverty among potentially productive groups (World Bank, 1991.) In a similar vein, Agarwal (1989) and Power (1992) submitted that there were inequalities in the distribution of food, health care and access to employment opportunities and in women's unequal and declining access to land. Poorer women have temporary and uncertain access to land, labour, capital and even decision making while better-off women and men are more likely to have long term control.

The poor in rural areas take initiatives to improve their own standard of living the level of services available to them and their capacity to survive in terms of exceptional hardship (Akinwunmi and Olawoye, 1994).

Statement of the Problem

Overall evidence suggests that the scale of poverty in the developing countries continue to worsen despite investments in poverty alleviation (Jazairy et al., 1992). Today, women have additional work and less assistance and are therefore under greater pressure. It is of special concern that many projects ignore or do not understand this chain of events. The inadequate information on the rural women's access to infrastructural facilities results in the under utilization of their local potential efforts and their further marginalization in the process of development. To this end, there is need to find out their access to infrastructural facilities in order to see to the survival and continued sustenance of their families

The general objective of the study was to study the rural women's access to infrastructural facilities in Osun State while the specific objectives included the followings: To

- i. identify the demographic characteristics of rural women in Osun State.
- ii. find out the activities of rural women in Savannah and rain forest regions of Osun State.
- iii. investigate the extent of access of rural women to infrastructural facilities in Osun State.

Statement of the Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant relationship between the demographic characteristics (Marital status, age, education, religion) of rural women and their access to infrastructural

facilities in Osun State.

- ii. There is no significant difference between the activities of rural women in savannah and rain forest regions and their access to infrastructural facilities in Osun State.
- iii. There is no significant relationship among rural women and their access to infrastructural facilities in Osun State.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study would contribute in no small measure to filling the existing gap in the information on rural women's access to infrastructural facilities. The findings also were assumed will be useful for policy planners in understanding the extent of rural women's access to infrastructural facilities. It will also help the policy planners in designing programmes that will meet the needs of rural women as identified by them and improve upon their present local initiatives.

Scope and Limitations of the Study: All the states of the federation could not be covered because of inadequate time. There were also some difficulties in data collection with problems of precisions.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Osun State, which was created on August 27, 1991 as a result of the bifurcation of the former Oyo State. The target population for the study comprised of all rural women in Osun State, Nigeria. For this research work, stratified random sampling technique was used in the selection of the respondents. The thirty local Government Areas (LGAs) available in the state were stratified into two that is those in the derived savannah zone of the state and the rain forest zone from which three

Table 1: Composition of the sample based on LGAs

Zone	LGA	Head- quarter	Number of respondents
<i>Rain Forest Zone</i>			
1	Atakunmosa west	Osun	60
2	Ayedaade	Gbongan	60
3	Irewole	Ikire	60
<i>Savannah Zone</i>			
4	Irepodun	Ikirun	60
5	Odo- otin	Okuku	60
6	Ifelodun	Ilobu	60
Total			360

Source: Field Survey, 2000

(LGAs) were randomly selected from each group. The composition of the sample is as shown in Table 1.

The required information needed for the study was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The reliability of the instrument was conducted using test-retest method and this procedure resulted in reliability coefficient of (r)= 0.82.

The demographic characteristics were measured at nominal level. Access to infrastructural facilities were measured by listing the infrastructural facilities such as school, pipe borne water, reliable water supply, motorable roads, market and health services. The respondents were asked to pick the ones that existed in their areas and the ones they had access to in their localities.

Demographic characteristics were analysed with the use of frequency and percentages, chi-square, contingency coefficient, crammer's phi were used for testing hypothesis one, t-test for independent samples was used for testing hypothesis two and Pearson product moment correlation was used in testing hypothesis three.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Variables

Age: The actual ages of the respondents were considered and grouped into 10 categories as shown in Table 2. The table shows that only one of the respondents is below 20 years and this indicates that most of the respondents are well above twenty years. The mean age of the respondents was thirty-nine years hence they are still very active women.

Marital Status: The marital status is as shown in Table 3. This is categorized into four groups, which include single, married, widowed or divorced. Most of them are married (73%) and this implies that most rural women have additional responsibility to carry out.

Educational Level: The Table 4 shows the educational level of the respondents. The study reveals that 7.2 percent have adult education while 31.1 percent of them have no formal education. The second category of the respondents will not be exposed to the various opportunities available in meeting household needs. There is clear indication that those who are educated did not go beyond vocational

training courses and this might be attributed to the nature of the areas under study, which is mainly rural. Those that finished secondary school represent 8.9 percent of the respondents. The opportunity opened to the rural women with respect to having been educated is not encouraging since 31.1 percent of them did not have formal education. This might also be due to financial constraint of the rural women.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age categories

Age in years	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 20	1	0.3
21 – 24	23	6.4
25 – 29	28	7.8
30 – 34	54	15
35 – 39	66	18.3
40 – 44	73	20.3
45 – 49	53	14.7
50 – 54	37	10.3
55 – 59	18	5
60 and above	7	1.9
Total mean age 30.004	360	100

Source: Field Survey, 2000

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
I Single	47	13.1
II. Married	263	73
III. Widowed	32	8.9
IV. Divorced	18	5
Total	360	100

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by level of education

Variable level of education	Frequency	Percentage
No formal education	112	31.1
Adult education	26	7.2
Some primary	27	7.5
Finished primary	45	12.5
Some secondary	40	11.1
Finished secondary	32	8.9
Vocational education	36	10.0
Others	42	11.7
Total	360	100.0

Religion: The figure 1 reveals that majority of the respondents are Christians (73.3 percent), this is significant because the type of work that can be done by the Christian women may differ from that of the Muslim women. In some localities, Muslim rural women may not be allowed to go out and perform specific activities in the area of agriculture such as piggery or even fieldwork.

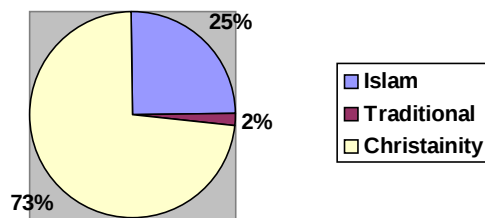


Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents by religion

Access to Infrastructural Facilities

The problem of lack of access to infrastructural facilities is shown in table 5 and the facilities considered include rural physical infrastructures, rural utilities, rural institutional infrastructures

Most of the respondents (89.7 percent) did not have access to reliable public transportation. The implication of this for rural women is that they will find it difficult to get their produce to the market and the perishable produce may get spoilt, nearly all the basic infrastructural facilities are not available and in areas where they are available, most of the respondents do not have access to them. The consequence of this finding as revealed by Akinwunmi et al. (1994) was that rural residents needed to go to larger towns to secure such services.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The hypothesis which is stated in the null form states that: There is no significant relationship between the demographic characteristics (marital status, education, religion) of rural women and their access to infrastructural facilities in Osun State.

The result shows that the chi-square (χ^2) calculated in each variable is greater than the chi-square (χ^2) tabulated. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected in all the variables as shown in table 6. The implication of this is that the type of activities to be involved will be determined by the demographic characteristics. However, the Cramer's phi (Q) calculated is greater than Zero in each of the variables

Hypothesis 2: The hypothesis, which is tested in the null form, states that:

There is no significant difference between the activities of rural women in savannah and rain forest regions and their access to infrastructural facilities in Osun State. The t-test calculated of -0.37, p .05 which is shown on table 7 implies that there is no significant difference between the activities of rural women in savannah and rain forest regions and their access to infras-

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by access to infrastructural facilities

Variables	Do not have access to		Have access to	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
A. Rural Physical Infrastructures				
I. Reliable public transportation	232	89.7	27	10.3
II. Adequate storage facilities	250	69.4	110	30.6
III. Adequate processing facilities	360	100	-	-
B. Rural Social Infrastructures				
I. Health care	324	90	36	10
II. Educational facilities				
a. Primary schools	334	92.8	26	7.2
b. Secondary schools	322	89.4	38	10.6
Rural Utilities				
I. Electricity	327	90.8	33	9.2
II. Good water supply	330	91.7	30	8.3
Rural Institutional Infrastructures				
I. Co-operatives societies	261	72.5	99	27.5
II. Women groups	306	85	54	15
III. Markets for goods produced	325	90.3	28	9.7

Table 6: Relationship between the demographic characteristics of rural women and their access to infrastructural facilities

Variable	χ^2	f	P	Cc	Q	Decision
Marital status	7.369	3	0.061	0.1416	0.1431	Sig
Educational level	8.117	7	0.149	0.149	0.1507	Sig
	5.216	2	0.1204	0.1204	0.1204	Sig

Table 7: t- test calculation on the difference between activities of rural women in savannah and rain forest regions and their access to infrastructural facilities in Osun State

Activities	No. of cases	Mean	SD	SE	Mean difference	P-value	t- test decision
Savannah region	180	28.71	6.73	0.5	-0.25	0.71	Not sig.
Rain forest region	180	28.96	5.9	0.44	-0.37		

Source: Field Survey, 2000

Table 8: Correlation, coefficient analysis ion the relationship among rural women and their access to infrastructural facilities in Osun State

Variables	R	P	Decision
1. Relable public transportation	-0.12	0.03	Significant
2. Adequate storage facilities	-0.1	0.06	Not significant
3. Processing facilities	0	0.86	Not significant
4. Health care facilities	0.15	0.01	Significant
5. Primary schools	-0.08	0.12	Not significant
6. Secondary schools	0.01	0.79	Not significant
7. Electricity	0.02	0	Significant
8. Good water supply	0.19	0	Significant
9. Co-operative societies	0.59	0.26	Not significant
10. Women groups	0.13	0.02	Significant
11. Markets for goods produced	-0.01	0.79	Not significant

Tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Source: Field Survey, 2000

tructural facilities in Osun State. The hypo-thesis is therefore accepted. It also implies that they engage in similar activities, this is shown in the means of 28.70 and 28.96 respectively.

Hypothesis 3: The hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship among rural women and their access to infrastructural facilities in Osun State.

In variables where P. value are less than 0.05, there are non- perfect positive relationship and the relationship too are significant. Such cases are recorded in variables 3 and 1 i.e. processing facilities and access to reliable public transportation

The inadequacy of these infrastructural facilities in the rural areas really account for the relationship. There is need therefore to improve upon the condition of the rural areas in order to alleviate the suffering of these rural women in terms of their access to infrastructural facilities

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With reference to the objectives stated, the study revealed that only one of the respondents was twenty years. Most of them were between 30 and 49 years. It was found out that 89.7 percent of them did not have access to reliable public transportation, adequate storage facilities (69.4

percent) etc. the consequence of these findings was that the rural women had to go to other areas in search of these facilities.

The first hypothesis was rejected because the chi-square tests revealed that there were significant relationships. Significant correlations also existed among rural women with respect to their access to infrastructural facilities.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made

1. There is need to increase the level of awareness of the rural populace to the significance of education as majority of them did not have formal education
2. Efforts should be made by individuals philanthropists, governments at Local, State and Federal levels to make provision for the improvement of infrastructural facilities
3. Provision should equally be made particularly for the maintenance of these facilities to ensure sustainability.

On the final note, efforts should be made to carry out similar research work in other parts of the country so as to make general assertion on the access of women to infrastructural facilities in the country.

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