Vol. 7 No. 2 (Special Edition) September 2024
JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND TOURISM EDUCATION
ISSN: 2659-0794 (PRINT) ISSN:2659-0808(ONLINE)
Content Available at: **https://jeate.net/index.php/Jete/issue/archive**

Leadership Role, Advocacy Role of Women and Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 3, 5 And 6 in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

Nyiam, Agnes Etta
Email: agnesnyaim@yahoo.com
&
Demben, Rachael Okwe
Email: okwedemen@yahoo.com
Phone no: 08036674161

A

Department of Environmental Education
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
University of Calabar,
Calabar, Nigeria

Keywords
Leadership Role, Advocacy Role Women and Attainment, Sustainable Development Goals

Correspondence Email:
agnesnyaim@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study examined leadership role, advocacy roles of women in attainment of sustainable development goals 3, 5 and 6 in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Two hypotheses were tested in the study. Correlational design was adopted for the study. 93,983 women within the age of 18-55 in Calabar Education Zone formed the population of the study, from which 4,699 women were selected as sample for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted for the study. One instrument tagged "Leadership, Advocacy Roles of Women and Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals Questionnaire (LARASDGQ) was used for data collection. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis and Multiple Linear Regression analysis were used for data analysis. The result revealed that leadership role of women and advocacy role of women have significant relationship with attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Based on this result, it was suggested that effective attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State needs adequate mobilization of women to perform their various roles in communities in the Zone. It was recommended that government should organize leadership training

	programmes for women in communities in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. This will boost the level of attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the Zone.

Introduction

The attainment of sustainable development goals is maximized when the quality of life and wellbeing of the people including access to clean water and sanitation is achieved, when men and women have equal access to political, economic, social and environment opportunities, when male and female children from all socio-economic backgrounds have equal educational opportunities and when there is reduction in maternal mortality in the society through adequate access to healthcare services. Regrettably, the progress and development of communities in Cross River State seem to be bedeviled by many issues ranging from poverty, discriminatory and gender-biased cultural, political and socio-economic practices, inadequate empowerment of women, inadequate access to quality wellbeing and healthy living and poor access to clean water and sanitation activities.

In Calabar Education Zone which is made of the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, the researcher observes that a greater percentage of women are local farmers who can only provide little for the upkeep of the family and thus are unable to live quality and healthy lives. The researcher also observes that many families in the Zone cannot afford three square meals a day, let alone being able to afford clean water or pay for healthcare service. It is also observed by the researcher that some communities in the Zone do not have health facilities, and thus increasing mortality rate in the areas. In addition to this, those who are found in the corridor of power are mostly men and they lack the will to promote the development of their local communities. Similarly, the researchers observe in many secondary schools in the Zone that female students mostly form greater percentage of dropouts due to early pregnancy as a result of exposure to hawking goods for family upkeep.

These conditions have overtime led to poor attainment of the sustainable development goals especially goals 3, 5 and 6 in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Government of Cross River State in an attempt to ensure effective attainment of Sustainable Development Goals in the State had implemented measures such as enforcing free and compulsory nine year education for all school children at the basic level, giving women opportunities to participate in the State politics, providing free healthcare services to pregnant women, and establishing Water Board Cooperation to supply water in the State. In spite of these efforts, the sustainable development goals 3, 5, and 6 are still not maximally attained in communities in Calabar Education Zone of the State. Given that women play a significant role in the development of society, the researcher was prompted to raise the question: How does the role of women relate to the attainment of sustainable development goals 3, 5 and 6 in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Leadership role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals

The significance of women leadership role in the attainment of sustainable development cannot be over-emphasized in Nigeria. Hassan and Silong (2008) submitted that women have long been the mainstay of communities and are heavily involved in community initiatives in various forms, and that though often the unsung heroes of community action, women's role in community development have become increasingly important. According to the researcher, in some communities, they have established themselves as leaders in community development and acquired the skills that have brought positive change to their communities. Okafor and Akokuwebe (2015) noted that the leadership roles played by both Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Mrs Margaret Ekpo in the Nigerian pre-independence political struggles of the 1950s are incontrovertible, and that Mrs Kuti was a strong advocate and campaigner for women's rights across the country, while Mrs Margret Ekpo was the only female member of the seven-man committee set up in 1951 to organize a national political organization geared toward achieving self-government within five years, who became the Vice-President of the Eastern House of Chiefs in 1959.

Ntiwunka (2013) stressed that lack of women in decision-making position is one of the reasons given for the low investment in the health and education sectors of the Nigerian economy which are crucial to human development. If more women are in key positions where they can influence decision making in the country, it will ensure that policies and provisions that will enable children especially girls go to school and remain in school till they graduate are made; ensure that the budget is gender neutral by giving equal preference to the rights and needs of men, women and children; and enable women who are more in the agricultural sector especially in the areas of labour and food processing benefit equally from the provisions in that sector like their male counterpart. These expressions imply that the leadership role of women can enhance the attainment of sustainable development goals in Nigeria.

Hoare and Gell (2009) noted that women's equal participation and leadership in decision-making processes at every level and in every sector is therefore fundamental to attempts to eliminate gender-based poverty, and that in order to challenge the unequal and ultimately unsustainable economic and social systems in which we live, and to secure the essential resources they need for dignified and rewarding lives, women need 'to be visible politically as women and be empowered through training to act in that capacity, because they have needs and attitudes on vital issues which differ from those of men. The researchers further reiterated that training women to function in elected bodies and in economic institutions can result in more equitable policy outcomes because it is likely to encourage policy makers to give more attention to issues affecting women, such as equal pay, better conditions of employment, child-care, violence against women, and unpaid labour.

Ozor and Nwankwo (2008) examined the role of local leaders in community development programmes in Ideato Local Government Area of Imo State. The study ascertained the role of local leaders in community development programmes in Ideato LGA and derived implications for local leadership as an institution for extension policy. A total of 104 respondents comprising leaders and non-leaders and selected through stratified random sampling technique participated in the study. Percentage and mean scores were utilized in realizing the objectives. Results showed that the most important roles played by local leaders in community development were; decision-making (= 3.82); liaison between governmental and non-governmental agencies and the community for financial and technical assistance (= 3.80); monitoring and evaluation of projects (= 3.78); and fund raising for projects (= 3.76). Further results showed that the most important (40%) source of information for community development efforts were through the local leaders themselves. Gender was a major issue in community development as result revealed that women were not given equal opportunity for participation in community initiatives like their male counterparts. Incompatibility of government policies with community programmes, insufficient sources of funds, poor implementation of programmes, and gender bias constituted the major constraints to effective leadership in community development programmes in the area. It was concluded that for sustained success to be achieved in community development efforts, there is an urgent need for extension policy that will formally accommodate the local leaders in all community development initiatives of both governmental and nongovernmental agencies and that women should be trained in leadership for effective participation in community development initiatives.

Hassan and Silong (2008) examined women leadership and community development. The researchers observed that traditionally, community affairs and administration has been the domain of men. According to them, women have not been active in local politics and are relatively inactive in public processes due to institutional, socio-economic and cultural constraints. However, the researchers stressed that there is now an acceptance that women can and do play a vital role in community affairs, particularly in contributing to the achievement of community security, development and progress. This study examined the experiences of three female leaders in their quest to unite and lead their peers in the betterment of their communities. This qualitative research employed various methodologies such as in-depth interviews, observations and document analysis. Specifically, the research findings described and analyzed the leadership understanding and styles, reasons for becoming leaders, barriers of women leadership and strategies employed by these women leaders in developing the community. Analysis of data showed that leadership understanding and style employed by women leaders is participatory or collaborative in nature and this is in line with some of the finding from other studies in women led organization in other countries. It was also found out that the desire to serve the community, to have better quality of life, religious calling and the need to give back are the main motives why they became leaders. They also faced challenges such as resistance from some members, lack of funding, balancing role as women and leaders,

dwindling interest in participation and because of these, they have to adopt several strategies such as using collaborative leadership style. Women leadership related more to a holistic and "bottom-ups" approach in developing the community. This implies that training women on community leadership may boost their ability to participate more in community development in their locality.

Sahu and Yadav (2018) examined the relationship between education level and political participation of women. The study was guided by the following objectives; the first was to assess women's political participation and decision making. Secondly, what the opportunities of women political participation the third objectives was to determine the level of opportunities women's political participation and decision making. The indices of political participation observed in the study included the following: membership of political party, voting in elections, occupation of political post, means of occupation of political post and level of occupation of political post.

The results revealed that women of the South West region of Cameroon were fairly well exposed to formal education as only 4.1% of the sampled population had no formal education. The study revealed that the higher the level of women's formal education, the more their tendency to participate in politics in areas of voting in elections and occupation of political post either through elections or appointments at all levels of government. The researcher recommended that the government, civil society and women activists need to work towards sensitization and awareness creation among the community to realize the need of the Women to participate in politics and governance. It was also recommended that the men need to realize the women's need for political power and change the way they look at the women and the government should embark on activities which support women's political initiatives and leadership. This finding has implications on the present study in that the researchers have established women were given adequate opportunities to contribute to the leadership of their communities and this is against the attainment of sustainable development goals of gender equality and access of to good life in the society.

Nyamweya, Ogwora and Nyamwange (2018) assessed how cultural perceptions influence women's active participation in leadership in Kitutu Masaba Sub County. The study made use of the Feminist theory which recognizes the pervasive influence of gender divisions on social life and Empowerment Theory which explain how individuals' and communities increase power to control various aspects of their lives and participate in the community with dignity. Related literature on women participation was reviewed. The targeted population was men and women aged 18 years and above, the sample size was 384, arrived at through the use Morgan 7 Table. Purposive Sampling was used to sample leaders in the community (elected, appointed, men and women at all levels ad opinion makers) in the six wards of Kitutu Masaba Sub County. Respondents were selected from each ward on stratified random sampling and targeted at least 64 respondents from each ward of Kitutu Masaba sub County. Data collection was done through question guidelines and interviews. The study used descriptive survey design. Data

were analyzed using the computer programme, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Result findings were presented using frequency tables, graphs, charts and narrations. From the findings of the study, it was concluded that women were marginally under-represented in leadership in the community, and that cultural factors were the strongest barriers that hinder women from participating in leadership positions. The researchers concluded that findings of this study may assist the community and relevant government departments in developing more appropriate strategies, policies and regulations that will encourage more women to take part in leadership positions in Kitutu Masaba Sub County for the smooth attainment of sustainable development goals of gender equality and even development and wellbeing of all in Kenya. The researchers also stressed that the results of the study may also formed a basis for making recommendations on how more women could be empowered to perform leadership roles through leadership training programmes as this may boost their ability to contribute to the development of the society.

Hora (2014) examined factors that affect women participation in leadership and decision making position. This study aimed to identify status of women in Bedele town administration, as well point out factors hindering women from participating in public and forward some possible recommendations for solving the problems identified through study. The study was of descriptive in nature and survey method was used in data gathering. Data used were both primary and secondary data. Quantitative and qualitative types were incorporated. Out of total employees existing in Bedele Town administration, 108 (30% of total population) sample respondents were selected using systematic random sampling method, and were placed questionnaires containing open ended and closed ended nature questions. 103 of them had filled and returned the questionnaire.

In addition, a mayor of the town and Women Affair office head were addressed through interview using interview guide. In way of analyzing data, techniques such as tabulation, percentages, chart and the like has been employed. Study revealed that, in public institutions existed in Bedele Town, the majority of women had educational status of diploma and lower, holding lower non-decision making and leadership positions. The observed major barriers that hindered women from public leadership and decision-making positions included Socio-cultural attitudes and lack of acquisition of the necessary experience for taking part in public decision-making, Over burden of domestic responsibilities, continuation of the negative attitudes regarding women's ability to lead and govern, lack of role models of women leaders for young women and girls was also a major setback to women. Finally, the researcher recommended that leadership training programmes can help enhance women's ability to assume leadership positions in the community for attainment of sustainable development in area.

Bullough (2008) carried out a study of global factors affecting women's participation in leadership. This study was a multi-level, cross-cultural study of women in leadership

conducted with both macro-society data and individual-level data aggregated to the country level. The research questions were: What macro and micro forces are hindering or advancing women into business or political leadership? "How do these forces impact the level of women's involvement in business and political leadership in a particular country?" Data were collected from 10 secondary sources, available for 213 countries, and included about 300 variables for business leadership and political leadership. According to the researcher, the importance of this cross-cultural studies on women in leadership stemmed from the potential to better understand why some countries have more women in positions of both business and political leadership; and the factors that affect women's involvement in such positions in different countries. A "Levels of Women's Participation in Leadership" country model was tested using cluster and discriminant analyses. Results indicated that the factors that affect women's participation in leadership in countries with fewer women leaders are different from the factors that affect women's participation in countries with high levels of participation. This study proposed training initiatives to increase participation of women in leadership

Nyong and Archibong (2018) examined women community managing roles and contribution to social development of Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was specifically centered on women educational role, political development, agriculture and effective food production towards the development of the community. The survey research design was employed through a well-designed questionnaire using a sample of 388 derived from Taro Yemen sample calculation. Data was analyzed with Pearson product moment correlation and multiple linear regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Result from the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between women managing role and educational and political development of Akpabuyo Local Government Area. Furthermore the second hypothesis also revealed that women involvement in agricultural production had a significant relationship with improved food production in the study area. It was concluded that in spite of the imposed constraints on the Nigerian women, there was overwhelming evidence from this study that they were formidable productive force and a store of incredible human resources which were viable for national development. Finally, it was recommended among others, that efforts have to be made by women themselves to be heard, seen and involved in all ventures including politics because the best advocate for women emancipation was women themselves. This implies that rural women were mostly involved in farming than leadership and politics in the area surveyed. Thus, training them in leadership may arouse their morale to take up community leadership positions through politics and other social organizations.

Kassa (2015) examined challenges and opportunities of women political participation in Ethiopia. The researcher observed that Women's political participation has been recognized internationally as an important measure of the status of women in any particular country. Hence, in recent years, women's participation in politics and decision-making has received significant attention across the world. The researcher further explained that women remain

seriously underrepresented in decision-making positions especially at the community basis in rural settings. The central objective of this study was to examine challenges and opportunities of women political participation in Ethiopia. To this end qualitative research methodology was employed. Data was collected from secondary sources mainly from published journal article, books and report of government and non-government organization.

The finding of the study showed that different casual factors such as; economic, religious, social and cultural factors contributed to women's poor political participation in the country. The study further revealed that political participation allowed women to address their basic problems and needs in their community and ensures the openness, real fight against rent-seeking, accountability, political commitment, political leadership, political responsiveness of the existing national and gender inequality, regional, districts, and local levels. The researcher concluded that women in the surveyed area lacked access to political decision making and leadership opportunities as compared to their male counter parts at all levels of government in urban locations. This implies that factors such as economic, religious, social and cultural factors hindered rural women from political participation in Ethiopia, thus heightening the level of gender equality and uneven development in the areas. This study is related to the present study in that as women participate in leadership and decision-making structure of their communities, the more gender equality is achieved in the society and the more women have access to good life and wellbeing in the society, which are the sustainable development goals.

Abaka (2018) conducted a study to explore rural women's experiences and participation in local governance activities in the Abura–Asebu–Kwamankese district of Ghana. Using a qualitative case study design, the study collected data from 53 women with different socio-economic backgrounds in focus group discussions and interview sessions. The demographic characteristics of women in the study showed the majority (30) within the age group of 18–30. There were three women who were above age 50. Twenty nine of the women were married. The data on women's economic activities showed that most of the women were self-employed (26) engaging in the sale of fish and farming as the predominant activities with a few involved in trading, dressmaking and hairdressing. About two-fifths of the women had no formal education (23). Only five respondents had obtained higher education.

The study results showed that while women were as likely as men to be engaged in local governance activities, they were less likely to be recruited into key decision-making roles. Women's participation was linked more to their physical presence during local governance activities without much power to influence and control decisions. The study found that women wanted to be more empowered through their formal and "political" education in order to increase their levels of assertiveness and confidence to enable them assume key decision-making roles through their participation in local governance activities. It was recommended that government should design leadership training programmes for women and that government should enforce strictly the implementation of the quota system to increase

women's appointments into the district assemblies so as to achieve gender equality in governance and education and also give women access to good life in their locality in Ghana.

Advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals

The advocacy roles women play in the liberation of society for the parochial cultural and traditional practices to modern society have been widely acknowledged by scholars all over the world. Stephen (2017) stated that the impact of women in the society is significant - from wars to settlements and from invasions to the struggle for independence, and that women have been playing a crucial role in the making of today's society. This researcher noted that Clara Zetkin, an early German Communist and women's rights advocate who was the pioneer of women empowerment and gender equality professed that social justice is possible through equal opportunities for men and women.

The researcher explained further that the first women's conference was organized during her social activism for women, which created a platform to observe a day for women, and the United Nations drew ideas on these lines and in December 1977, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace be observed on any day of the year by Member States, in accordance with their historical and national traditions. This advocacy role of Clara Zetkin led to women liberation and gender equality issues that are being addressed by all nations of the world. Sandler (2007) added that gender equality promotes universal primary education, reduces child mortality, improves maternal health, reduces vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and influences poverty reduction directly through women's greater labour force participation, productivity and earnings, and that Women's Network and Groups Worldwide have taken action to promote gender equality and women empowerment through different advocacy programmes.

Okafor and Akokuwebe (2015) also added that Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Mrs Margaret Ekpo were the two women leaders who spearheaded advocated the 1929 Aba Women's Riots in South-Eastern Nigeria and were the precursors and roles model of the two better known female political activists in Nigeria. Hoare and Gell (2009) submitted that women's equal participation and leadership in decision-making processes at every level and in every sector is therefore fundamental to attempts to eliminate gender-based poverty. According to them, in order to challenge the unequal and ultimately unsustainable economic and social systems in which we live, and to secure the essential resources they need for dignified and rewarding lives, women need 'to be visible politically as women and be empowered through training to act in that capacity, because they have needs and attitudes on vital issues which differ from those of men. The researchers further stressed that training women to function in selected bodies and in economic institutions can result in more equitable policy outcomes because it is likely to encourage policy makers to give more attention to issues affecting women, such as equal pay, better conditions of employment, child-care, violence against women, and unpaid labour. Ntiwunka (2013) noted that the late Mariam Babangida played an advocacy role when she established the Better Life for Rural Women in 1986 to stimulate and

motivate rural women towards achieving better living standards; educate women on simple hygienic family planning, the importance of childcare and the increased literacy rate; and inculcate the spirit of self-development particularly in the field of education, business, the art and agriculture. This implies that the advocacy role of women can boost the extent of attainment of sustainable development goals in the Nigerian society.

Ntiwunka (2013) examined gender and national development as the role of Ogun State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. The researcher observed that gender equality has been identified globally as one of the development strategies for reducing poverty. To implement this strategy, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Ogun State planned and implemented projects aimed at improving the economic and social standard of women and children considered as the most vulnerable groups in society. The researcher noted that In spite of these efforts, women still have limited access to the projects of the ministry and men still dominate key sectors of the economy. This study therefore examined the projects formulated and implemented by the Ministry specifically geared towards gender equality and access to development.

A survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised directors and coordinators of projects in the Ministry, and beneficiaries. The research instruments were structured questionnaire, interview, and direct observation. The work was anchored on gender and development theories. Findings revealed that the Ministry embarked on several programmes geared towards gender equality and access to development. But some of these programmes are not popularized in the state. Factors such as inadequate funds, mobility, manpower, enabling environment; failure to domesticate some policies in the state; and harmful traditional practices limited the effective implementation of these programmes. Consequently, women in the State were not sufficiently empowered to achieve gender balance and improved socio-economic standards. The study concluded that the programmes of the Ministry have limited impact and needed more publicity in order to meet their stated objectives. The study recommended among others that the Ministry must intensify effort to enlighten and empower women educationally, socially, politically, and economically and create awareness of its advocacy programmes to the citizens through publicity and workshops organized especially at the grassroots level. This empirical findings have implication on the present study in that Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development plays advocacy roles in enhancing women rights and social wellbeing in the society which are part of the goals of sustainable development goals.

Orisadare (2019) carried out an assessment of the role of women group in women political participation, and economic development in Nigeria. The researcher observed that the exclusion of women in politics has been identified in recent times as one of the major setbacks for economic development, and that women's groups are a strong pillar for grassroots politics; and a drive for more women participating in politics at the grassroots still faces a lot of

challenges, making it difficult for them to harness available opportunities for economic development. The researcher stressed that the opportunity therein for more women's participation in politics and women empowerment was yet to be exploited by the women's groups in Nigeria. This present study assessed the role of women's groups in politics, identified their challenges and also explored its implication for economic development in Osun State, Nigeria.

The study was carried out using primary data from forums and dialogues within women's groups, consisting of an average of thirty (30) members from ten (10) local government areas (LGAs) in Osun state, Nigeria. In addition, explorative methods using existing literature were also employed. Findings from the study indicated that women's groups did not have political agenda; mostly, their goals did not align with any political agenda, although their members accept appointments, and also enjoy government patronage. The researcher noted that there was also an indication that there existed a high illiteracy rate among the members of the women's groups and most of them were not aware of existing National or International gender equality laws or affirmative action. Thus, it was difficult to participate in politics and contribute their voices to political issues. The study concluded that the present role played by women's groups at the grassroots level may not be adequate in encouraging more women's participation in politics and in influencing economic development. Thus, there was need to step up their activities and embrace political issues if they are to help more women participate and be relevant in politics. The study therefore suggested that more empowerment programs, especially in the area of decision making and participation in politics, should be targeted at women's groups at the grassroots levels by the governments and all stakeholders as a matter of priority.

Chinwokwu and Arop (2018) examined gender equality and women empowerment towards sustainable national development in Nigeria. This study investigated the imperative for gender equality and women empowerment as basic to sustainable national development and growth in Nigeria. The researchers maintained that there is no gainsaying that women are the heartbeat of men’s strength and success and therefore engine room for development in the society. They stressed further that the sustainability of socio-economic development in Nigeria will depend so much on the way men carry along the women in their stride for national development and growth especially if the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are workable and realizable in Nigeria. The highly descriptive nature of the study demanded for the adoption of extensive desk research approach in this study. The study sought not to advocate for new principles for gender equality, but brought to bare the rationale for women to be seen and treated as composite entity with men in the attempt to attain sustainable national development in Nigeria through advocacy programmes.

The study argued that given the same opportunity with men, women have the capacity and competence to compete favourably with men and in most cases have performed creditably better than men under the same platform without prejudice. The study recommended among

others that family policy legislation; the government as a matter of urgency to pass the bill on women empowerment, the will on the part of governance to enforce all policies and regulations that discriminate against gender equality and women empowerment without bias; the total elimination of all socio-cultural laws contrary to basic human rights as entrenched in the constitution; empowerment of the girl child through massive elimination of socio-cultural structures that inhibits their education and protection of the womanhood of all ages against obnoxious cultural practices and regulations.

Ogbogu (2012) study examined the role of women in politics and in the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. The main aim of the study was to elicit their challenges, experiences and contributions to the democratic process and how these challenges can be curbed through women advocacy movement aa strategies that can assist women realize their political leadership potentials. Questionnaires were administered on 700 randomly selected female politicians, activists and professionals in government and dominant parties across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. Also, interview schedules were conducted with 10 of the randomly selected respondents. Results revealed that women were marginalized and featured minimally in government because Nigeria lacks a legislative framework that secures quotas for women in political parties and lack of women groups to speak out their minds. Patriarchal attitudes, poor informal networks/mentoring, finance, religion and educational status were found to also militate against women's participation in politics and governance. To overcome these problems, the study recommended amongst others, the development of electoral reforms that promote equitable representation of women and respect for due process. Empowerment of women by ensuring their access to credit facilities was proffered. The study concluded that the institutionalization of varieties of special mechanisms such as women advocacy programmes are most needed in increasing women's participation in governance.

Nzewi and Ojiagu (2014) investigated Women August Meeting and Socio-Economic Development of selected Communities in Anambra State. The objectives of this study were to assess the perception of members on whether training in skill acquisition has enhanced their income generation; and to find out the extent to which soft loan provision has facilitated investment in micro businesses. Descriptive survey research design was employed and data were analyzed with mean and standard deviations. One sample t-text of significance and Kruskal-Wallis test of independence were used to test the formulated hypotheses at 5% (percent) level of significance. Findings revealed that there was significant difference in responses of members that training in skill acquisition has enhanced their income generation. The researchers stressed that investment in micro-business depends on soft loan given to August Women members. It was therefore recommended that women should create new strategies for sourcing funds outside the churches and the government at all levels (local, state and federal) should provide grants to the women for comprehensive training in skill acquisition and establishment of micro-businesses. The researchers therefore advocated that for any meaningful socio-economic development of communities in Anambra State, the Women

August Meeting should elicit adequate financial and technical support from government and all stakeholders including Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), Women for Change Initiative and Non-Governmental organizations in the society. This finding has implications on the present study in that Women August Meeting is an advocacy group in the South-East region of Nigeria whose aim is to stand as a voice for Igbo women, protect the right of the vulnerable women, settle disputes for warring communities and provide financial assistance for member to improve their standard of living. As affirmed by this empirical finding, the roles of this advocacy group in promoting gender equality and better life for women in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized.

Bayeh (2016) examined the role of empowering women and achieving gender equality to the sustainable development of Ethiopia. The purpose of this study was to uncover the role of empowering women and achieving gender equality in the sustainable development of Ethiopia. To achieve this purpose, the researcher employed qualitative methodology, with secondary sources as instruments of data collection. Based on the data analyzed, findings of the study showed that the role of women across different dimensions of sustainable development was less reflected in the country; the use of a women's labour force in the economic development of the country was minimal; the political sphere of the country was, by and large, reserved for men alone; the place of women in society was also relegated to contributing minimally to the social development of the country. In addition, women's rights were not properly being protected in order for women to participate in various the issues of their country but are subjected to abysmal violations. The researcher also found that women were highly affected by environmental problems, and less emphasis was given to their participation in protecting the environment.

The researcher concluded that unless women are empowered and gender equality is achieved so that women can play their role in economic, social, political, and environmental areas, the country will not achieve sustainable development with the recognition of only men's participation in all these areas. The researcher also noted that the fact that women constitute half the entire population of the country made empowering them to be an active part of all development initiatives in the country a compelling circumstance. Hence, this study called for the strong women advocacy group to speak out for women right in the society and the commitment of the government to empower women and utilize all the potentials of the country to bring about sustainable development.

Vixathep (2011) explored Khmu women’s participation in community development projects in Luang Prabang Province, Lao PDR. This study employed qualitative research methods including in-depth interviews and observations with community members, project staff and the Lao Women‟s Union (LWU). The LWU was a governmental organization that represented and promotes the interests of women and children of all ethnic groups. This study was conducted in two Khmu villages, in different locations and with different levels of development geography and livelihoods. One was officially identified as poor and recently

resettled and the other one was on a main road which has easy access. However, this study found that there was no word for participation in the Khmu language. Neither was there a direct translation in Lao for those who sought to encourage participation. Women viewed their participation in the household and the community as making a contribution or sharing. This study found that similar roles such as cleaning and serving were adopted by women in development projects. This research showed that Khmu women experience barriers to participation in project activities.

The barriers included language; education; cultural norms; health issues; workload; resettlement; poverty; low self-esteem; staff and project approach; the village administrative structure; fewer opportunities with development projects; and limited formal access and control over assets. To overcome these barriers and to participate in development projects women would benefit from greater support movement. The results of this study identified many roles that staff played when working with the community for example, teacher/trainer; learner; follower; advisor; demonstrator/role model and advocate. This study concluded that to empower women to overcome barriers themselves and participate more fully in community development requires both men and community to provide support and acceptance.

Kobani (2014) work investigated the impact of Girl-Child Education on community development with focus on Ika Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives of the study are to identify the role of Girl-Child Education in community development, to determine the factors impeding against girl-child education in the aforementioned area and to examine how social, economic and political development affects Girl-Child Education in Ika Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The total population for this study was 39,500 and the sample size of three hundred and ninety five (395) persons from the selected communities i.e. Ikot Inyang Udo, Ikot Akata, Urua Inyang, Ikot Oyo and Ikot Okon were drawn. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and data were analyzed using the chi-square (X2) statistic at 0.05 level of significance. It was found among other things that Girl-Child Education helps in Community Development and the factors militating against girl-child education were culture and poverty level of the people. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made; the society should stop the discrimination of the girl-child in the provision of education, also that government should make policy statements that will make the education of the girl child legal and compulsory. The implication of this finding to the present study is that Girl Child Education was an advocacy programme that aimed at promoting the right of female children to access best education in the society for gender equality in educational access and even development.

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the correlational design. Correlational research design is a research approach that attempts to find the nature of the non-causal relationship existing between a set of variables, of which cannot be determined by the researcher or

manipulated, but present naturally within a group or sample. The area of this study was Calabar Education Zone in Cross River State, Nigeria. Calabar Education Zone is located in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Calabar Education Zone is made up of seven (7) Local Government Areas namely; Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakasi, Biase, Calabar-Municipality, Calabar-South and Odukpani. The population of this study comprised all women from the age of 18-55 in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Information obtained from National Bureau of Statistics, 2019 reveals that there are nearly ninety-three thousand nine hundred and eighty-three (93,983) women within the active age of 18-55 in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

The sampling techniques adopted for this study was stratified sampling. Stratified proportionate sampling was used to divide the entire Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State into 7 strata based on the seven (7) Local Government Areas in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The sample of this study comprised 4,699 women that were selected from the seven Local Government Areas that make up Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. One research instrument was used for this study namely: Roles of Women and Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals Questionnaire (RWASDGQ).

A draft copy of the instrument was submitted to the supervisor and three experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar to vet the items for face validity. To ascertain the reliability of the instruments, Cronbach alpha reliability method was used. The reliability coefficient estimates realized from the result were within the range of .72 to .95

Presentation of results

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between leadership role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, in terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6). The two variables in this hypothesis are leadership role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State was measured in terms of terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6). To test this hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of correlations between the leadership role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State (N=4186)

Variables	X	S. D	r	p-value
Leadership role of women (X_1)	15.17	2.057		
Attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3) (Y_1)	15.74	2.231	.678*	.000
Attainment of gender equality (SDG5) (Y_2)	16.13	2.724	.543*	.000
Attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6) (Y_3)	15.37	2.583	.225*	.000
Overall attainment of SDG3,5 & 6. (Y_{1-3})	47.24	5.727	.624*	.000

*Significant at P<.05 df=4184

Table 1 shows the correlation coefficients between leadership role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State in terms of terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6). The result shows that the correlation coefficients ranged from .225 (p< .05) for attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6), .543 (p< .05) for attainment of gender equality (SDG5), to .678 (p< .05) for attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3). The correlation coefficients were statistically significant for all attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State sub-scales and for the overall attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State .624 (p<. 05). Based on this result, hypothesis one is rejected on the overall attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State and in terms of the attainment of each of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) variables of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), gender equality (SDG5), and access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6). This implies that there is significant relationship between leadership role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State

H_{O2}: There is no significant relationship between advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, in terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6).

The two variables in this hypothesis are advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State was measured in terms of terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment

of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6). To test this hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of correlations between the advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State (N=4186)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S. D	r	p-value
Advocacy role of women (X_2)	15.48	2.040		
Attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3) (Y_1)	15.74	2.231	.414*	.000
Attainment of gender equality (SDG5) (Y_2)	16.13	2.724	.752*	.000
Attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6) (Y_3)	15.37	2.583	.416*	.000
Overall attainment of SDG3,5 & 6. (Y_{1-3})	47.24	5.727	.707*	.000

*Significant at P<.05 df=4184

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients between advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State in terms of terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6). The result shows that the correlation coefficients ranged from .414 (p< .05) for attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), .416 (p< .05) for attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6), to .752 (p< .05) for attainment of gender equality (SDG5). The correlation coefficients were statistically significant for all attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State sub-scales and for the overall attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State .707 (p<. 05). Based on this result, hypothesis one is rejected on the overall attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State and in terms of the attainment of each of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) variables of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), gender equality (SDG5), and access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6). This implies that there is significant relationship between advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Discussion of findings

The analysis of the first hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between leadership role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, in terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6), revealed a significant relationship between leadership role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross

River State, in terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6). This implies that women participation in leadership has a direct significant relationship with the extent of attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. This result suggests that the extent to which community women are mobilized to take up positions in the leadership development of their communities determines the extent to which communities in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State attain sustainable development goals (SDGs). This result further suggests that the roles women play in community leadership in Calabar Education Zone has a direct association with the extent to they are able to influence socio-economic practices towards the smooth attainment of sustainable development goals in the Zone. The overall significant high positive correlation of .624($p< .05$) explains that improvement in the extent to which women are mobilized to take part in community leadership will lead to improvement in the extent of their participation in developmental activities of their communities, which will result in the attainment of sustainable development goals.

The positive correlation between leadership role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) realized in this analysis is very obvious in that as women take up leadership roles in the society, they tend to influence societal practices regarding their rights and autonomy. For instance, in different communities in Nigeria, it is no more news that women are not given opportunities to assume leadership roles due to certain belief and traditional practices which sometimes subject women to servitude and force labour in attempt to deliver their roles in the families and in the communities. The high levels of gender discriminatory practices in the societal prevent women from taking active part in the leadership of their communities. But with continuous awareness of feminine roles in governance, more and more women started to venture into leadership positions and thus influence certain practices that originally discriminated against them. This implies that this result is not far from the real situation in the society in that as women are given opportunities to display their leadership potentials, they become enlightened and can compete favourably with their male counterparts to enhance the development of their communities.

This result agrees with opinion of Hassan and Silong (2008) who noted that women have long been the mainstay of communities, and are heavily involved in community initiatives in various forms, and that though often the unsung heroes of community action, women's role in community development have become increasingly important. The researcher stressed that in some communities, they have established themselves as leaders in community development and acquired the skills that have brought positive change to their communities. In line with this result, Hoare and Gell (2009) argued that women's equal participation and leadership in decision-making processes at every level and in every sector is therefore fundamental to attempts to eliminate gender-based poverty, and that in order to challenge the unequal and ultimately unsustainable economic and social systems in which we live, and to secure the essential resources they need for dignified and rewarding lives, women need 'to be visible

politically as women and be empowered through training to act in that capacity, because they have needs and attitudes on vital issues which differ from those of men. The researchers further stated that as women function in elected bodies and in economic institutions, they tend to be more equitable policy outcomes in the society because it is likely to encourage policy makers to give more attention to issues affecting women, such as equal pay, better conditions of employment, child-care, violence against women, and unpaid labour. These theoretical expressions buttress the overall high positive correlation ($r=628$, $p< .05$) between the leadership of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State realized in this analysis.

The analysis of the second hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, in terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6), revealed a significant relationship between advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, in terms of attainment of wellbeing and healthy lives (SDG3), attainment of gender equality (SDG5) and attainment of access to clean water and sanitation (SDG6). This implies that the advocacy role of women in communities has a direct significant relationship with the extent of attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. This result suggests that the extent to which community women are mobilized to advocate for other women and also for the development of their communities, determines the extent to which communities in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State attain sustainable development goals (SDGs). This result further suggests that the roles women play in community advocacy in Calabar Education Zone has a direct congruence with the extent to which they are able to influence socio-economic and socio-cultural practices towards the smooth attainment of sustainable development goals in the Zone. This is seen in the overall significant high positive correlation of $.707(p< .05)$ between advocacy role of women and sustainable development in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State which explains that improvement in the extent to which women are mobilized to play advocacy roles in communities will lead to improvement in the extent of their involvement in developmental activities of their communities, which will result in the attainment of sustainable development goals.

The positive correlation between advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) realized in this analysis is very obvious. As women fight for their right and the freedom and liberation of women folk from certain societal practices that tend to put women at the extreme of community development, the gain their freedom and thus are able to participate in community devlopment activities which help to their socio-economic statuses, as well as boost their quality of lives and social wellbeing. For instance, Clara Zetkin, an early German Communist and women's rights advocate who was the pioneer of women empowerment and gender equality professed that social justice was possible through equal

opportunities for men and women (Stephen, 2017). This leads to the first women's conference organized during her social activism for women, and created a platform to observe a day for women which the United Nations drew ideas on these lines and in December 1977, UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace. This advocacy role of Clara Zetkin led to women liberation and gender equality issues that are being addressed by all nations of the world today.

This result agrees with theoretical expression of Sandler (2007) who explained that gender equality promotes universal primary education, reduces child mortality, improves maternal health, reduces vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and influences poverty reduction directly through women's greater labour force participation, productivity and earnings, and that Women's Network and Groups Worldwide have taken action to promote gender equality and women empowerment through different advocacy programmes. In the same direction with the present result, Okafor and Akokuwebe (2015) also noted that Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Mrs Margaret Ekpo were the two women leaders who spearheaded the 1929 Aba Women's Riots in South-Eastern Nigeria and were the precursors and roles model of the two better known female political activists in Nigeria. Hoare and Gell (2009) who noted that in order to challenge the unequal and ultimately unsustainable economic and social systems in which we live, and to secure the essential resources they need for dignified and rewarding lives, women need 'to be visible politically as women and be empowered through training to act in that capacity, because they have needs and attitudes on vital issues which differ from those of men. Similarly, Ntiwunka (2013) noted that the late Mariam Babangida played an advocacy role when she established the Better Life for Rural Women in 1986 to stimulate and motivate rural women towards achieving better living standards; educate women on simple hygienic family planning, the importance of childcare and the increased literacy rate; and inculcate the spirit of self-development particularly in the field of education, business, the art and agriculture. This implies that there is a strong link between advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) as men can boost the extent of attainment of sustainable development goals as supported by the overall high positive correlation ($r=707$, $p< .05$) between the advocacy role of women and attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State realized in this analysis.

Conclusion/ Recommendations

Based on the result of this study, it was concluded that leadership role of women, advocacy role of women and family planning role of women, community mobilization role of women have significant relationship with attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

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

1. Government should apply critical measures that will encourage women to participate in leadership training programmes. This will equip women with requisite leadership

competences to enhance the attainment of sustainable development goals in Calabar Education Zone through their leadership roles in their communities

2. There should be adequate measures put in place to encourage women to carry out community development advocacy. This will help communities to secure necessary resources needed to boost the attainment of sustainable development goals.

References

Abaka, E. (2018). Participation without a voice? Rural women's experiences and participation in local governance activities in the Abura–Asebu–Kwamankese district of Ghana. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 4, 1-19.

Bayeh, E. (2016).The role of empowering women and achieving gender equality to the sustainable development of Ethiopia. *Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2,37-42

Bullough, A. M. (2008). Global factors affecting women's participation in leadership. An unpublished Ph.D dissertation submitted to Department of Business Administration, Florida International University

Chinwokwu, E. C., & Arop, S. K. (2018). Gender equality and women empowerment towards sustainable national development in Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Policy*, 4(1), 42-57.

Gell, D. (2009). Unwanted fertility among the poor: An inequity? *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 85(2), 100–107.

Hassan, Z., & Silong, A. D. (2008). Women leadership and community development. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 23(3), 361-372.

Hoare, J., & Gell, F. (2009). *Women's Leadership and Participation: Case studies on learning for action.* Oxford: Oxfam House

Hora, E. A. (2014).Factors that affect women participation in leadership and decision making position. *Asian Journal of Humanity, Art and Literature,* 1(2), 97-118.

Kassa, S. (2015). Challenges and opportunities of women political participation in Ethiopia. *Journal of Global Economics*, 3(4), 162-168.

Kobani, T. (2014). The concept of sustainable development: from its beginning to the contemporary issues . *Zagreb International Review of Economics & Business,* 21(1), 67-94

Ntiwunka, G. (2013). Gender and national development: The role of Ogun State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. *Journal of Research and Development*, 1(6),1-10.

Nyamweya, F., Ogwora, E., & Nyamwange, C. (2018). The impact of cultural perceptions on women's participation in leadership among the Abagusii: A case of Kitutu Masaba constituency, Nyamira County, Kenya. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Information Technology*, 4(10), 52-71.

Nyong, S. F. & Archibong, E. F. (2018). Women community managing roles and contribution to social development in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Thought*, 7(2), 459–468.

Nzewi, H. N., & Ojiagu, N. C. (2014) women august meeting and socio-economic development of selected communities in Anambra State: A perception analysis. *International Journal of Research in Business Management,* 2(9), 47- 56.

Ogbogu, C. O. (2012).The role of women in politics and in the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Social Science,* 3(18), 182-191.

Okafor, E. E., & Akokuwebe, M. E. (2015). Women and Leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *Developing Country Studies*, 5(4), 1-10

Orisadare, M. A. (2019). An assessment of the role of women group in women political participation, and economic development in Nigeria. *Frontier of Sociology,* 4 (52), 1-10

Ozor, N., & Nwankwo, N. (2008). The role of local leaders in community development programmes in Ideato Local Government Area of Imo State: Implication for extension policy. *Journal of Agricultural Extension,* 12 (2), 64-65.

Sahu, T. K. & Yadav, K. (2018). Women's education and political participation. *International Journal of Advanced Education and Research*, 3(6), 65-71.

Sandler, J. (2007, December). Gender equality is key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Women and girls are central to development. UN Chronicle Volume 44

Stephen, A. P. (2017). Women and sustainable development goals: A conceptual brief. A paper presented ay UN women's Day International Conference held at Visakhapatnam

Vixathep, K. (2011). Women's Participation in Community Development Projects: The Case of Khmu Women in Laos. An unpublished M.Sc thesis submitted to Department International Rural Development, Lincoln University