Original Article

POVERTY INDICATORS AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF RURAL WOMEN IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between poverty indicators and socioeconomic status of rural women in Abia State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study which was conducted in Abia State Nigeria, adopted correlational research design. The population for the study consists of all rural women aged 18-60 years residing in rural areas of Abia state. A sample size of 384 women from Abia State was used for the study, the sample was determined using Cochran's formula. The research adopted a multi-stage sampling technique. A structured questionnaire constructed by the researcher was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by 3 experts from 2 from Adult and Continuing Education and 1 from Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha. The data collected for this study was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) for the research questions while linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that there exists strong positive relationship between income level, women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. Subsequently, there was a significant relationship between women income level, access to financial services, and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. The study among other things recommended that Government and educational stakeholder should create, programs, interventions, seminars, and workshops to enlighten the people especially women in the rural areas on the importance of women education and its relevance to their income level for a sustainable and standard living in the society.

Keyword: Poverty, Poverty indicators, Income level, Access to Basic needs, Socio Economic Status, Rural women.

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INTRODUCTION

Poverty refers to the inability to attain a minimum standard of living. It is a social condition characterized by the inadequate access to basic human needs (food and non-food) for the sustenance of a socially acceptable minimum standard of living in a given society. Some of these basic determinants of well-being among others are adequate food, shelter, potable water, health care, education, and employment opportunities. As access to most of these facilities is largely market-determined income or disposable resources available to individuals or households invariably determine who has what (Dia, Oaya & Joshua, 2023). A household or individual without enough income to meet the minimum levels of these needs in a given society is generally said to be poor (Ademola & Abang, 2015; Ike & Uzokwe, 2015).

The rising incidence of poverty has been a major concern in contemporary Nigeria, owing particularly to the fact that it continually poses a threat to peace and security. The concept of poverty and material deprivation is a critical one in contemporary social discussions. Social Sciences' literature is replete with attempts by Economists and other Social Scientists to conceptualize the phenomenon. Poverty has economic, social and political ramifications. The poor are materially deprived, socially alienated and politically excommunicated. Basically, Poverty has been conceptualized as lack of access to basic needs/goods and lack of or impaired access to productive resources.

Poverty as lack of access to basic needs/goods is essentially economic or consumption oriented. Thus, the poor are conceived as those individuals or households in a particular society, incapable of purchasing a specified basket of basic goods and services. Basic goods as used here include; food, shelter, water, health care, access to productive resources including education, working skill and tools, political and civil rights to participate in decisions concerning socio-economic conditions (Ajakaiye and Adeyeye 2021). It is generally agreed that in conceptualizing poverty, low income or low consumption is its symptom.

Poverty level is among the major determinants of the degree of social and health development, economic growth, women and rural development, and welfare of people in rural communities. Yet, the high poverty rate is one of the major challenges facing the world today. This prompted the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to include eradication of extreme poverty and reduction of the poverty levels by half by 2030 as the first Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The high rate of poverty in the world especially among the rural dwellers and developing economies remains a major concern among policymakers, government, and non-governmental organisations globally. Over 80% of extremely poor people in the world live in rural areas, with the majority in developing countries (De La O Campos et al., 2018). More than half of the population in Africa lives in extreme poverty with 82% of the extreme poor living in rural areas (Allen et al., 2018; World Bank, 2019a). Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounts for 56% of the world's extreme poor (Beegle & Christiaensen, 2019; World Bank Group, 2018) and nine out of ten extremely poor people will be from sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 (Barne & Wadhwa, 2018).

The poverty rate in Nigeria is worrisome and disturbing mostly among women and children in rural communities despite several programmes that have been put in place to curtail it by the government. Over 85 million people accounting for 40.1% of the population are poor, with the vast majority in rural areas (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020a). Over 70% of the rural populace in Nigeria are poor

(Emefesi & Yusuf, 2014). Nigeria has the largest proportion of poor people in Africa as it accounts for about one-quarter of Africa's poor people. More than 70% of the Nigeria population lives in rural areas and is widely engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Abia State, like many other states in Nigeria, faces significant challenges in addressing poverty and improving socioeconomic status, especially among its rural female population. Rural women in Abia State are often marginalized and excluded from economic opportunities, education, and healthcare, perpetuating cycles of poverty. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020), Abia State has a poverty headcount rate of 27.4%, with rural areas experiencing higher poverty rates than urban areas. Women in rural Abia State face unique challenges, including limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, which exacerbate their poverty and low socioeconomic status.

Poverty indicators such as income level, access to basic needs, unemployment, accesses to financial services, human development indicators and women's vulnerability are critical in understanding the multidimensional nature of poverty among rural women in Abia State. Income level is a widely used indicator of poverty that measures the financial resources an individual or household has access to over a specific period. It reflects an individual's or household's ability to generate and manage monetary resources, which is critical for meeting basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education. Income level refers to the amount of money an individual or household earns within a specific period, typically measured annually or monthly (World Bank, 2022). It encompasses various sources of income, including salary or wages from employment, self-employment income, investments, government transfers, and other regular receipts (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020).

Income level is a critical determinant of socioeconomic status, as it affects access to resources, opportunities, and overall well-being (Bourdieu, 2019). It is often categorized into different groups or ranges, such as low income, lower-middle income, middle income, upper-middle income, and high income (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2020). Low-income households, typically earning below the poverty line or a certain percentage of the median income, struggle to meet basic needs and are vulnerable to economic shocks (World Bank, 2022). Lower-middle-income households, while slightly above the poverty line, still face challenges in making ends meet and achieving economic stability (OECD, 2020). In contrast, middle-income households enjoy a comfortable standard of living, able to meet basic needs and afford some discretionary spending (UNDP, 2020). Upper-middle-income households have higher earning potential, enabling them to afford luxuries and save for the future (Bourdieu, 2019). High-income households, significantly above the median income, possess substantial disposable income and economic security (World Bank, 2022). In the context of rural women in Abia State, income level is a vital poverty indicator, influencing their economic situation, access to education and healthcare, and overall socioeconomic status (African Development Bank, 2020).

Access to basic needs is a fundamental poverty indicator, encompassing the ability of individuals or households to meet their essential requirements for survival, dignity, and well-being (Sen, 2018). This concept assesses whether people have sufficient access to fundamental necessities, including food security, which ensures access to nutritious food to maintain good health and energy levels (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2020), safe and clean drinking water, essential for human consumption, hygiene, and sanitation (World Health

Organization (WHO), 2019), adequate shelter, providing protection from the elements, a sense of security, and privacy (United Nations Habitat, 2020), essential healthcare services, including preventive, curative, and palliative care, to maintain physical and mental well-being (WHO, 2019), Quality education, enabling personal development, empowerment, and socioeconomic mobility (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2020), Proper sanitation facilities, ensuring hygiene, dignity, and preventing disease transmission (WHO, 2019) and Adequate clothing and footwear, providing protection, dignity, and enabling social participation (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2020). By assessing access to these basic needs, researchers and policymakers can identify areas where individuals or households are struggling, allowing for targeted interventions to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality, and improve overall well-being (UNDP, 2020).

The socioeconomic status of rural women in Abia state is characterized by significant challenges and limitations. These women often have restricted access to essential resources, opportunities, and services, hindering their ability to improve their lives and communities. Limited education and skills training hinder their employment prospects, leading to low income and financial insecurity. Furthermore, inadequate access to healthcare, clean water, and sanitation exacerbates their vulnerability to health issues and poverty. Rural women in Abia state also face significant barriers in accessing land and assets, limiting their economic autonomy and decision-making power. Their workload is often heavy, with multiple responsibilities in domestic and farm activities, leaving little time for personal development or community engagement. Additionally, they frequently face gender-based violence and discrimination, further entrenching their lower socioeconomic status. Overall, the socioeconomic

status of rural women in Abia state is marked by substantial disparities and inequalities, necessitating targeted interventions to address these challenges and promote gender equality and empowerment.

Discussing the socioeconomic status of rural women in Abia state in relation to poverty indicators could provide valuable insights into the complex challenges they face. A study examining their income level, access to basic needs, unemployment rates, access to financial services, human development indicators, and vulnerability to poverty would reveal areas where they are most vulnerable and may enable targeted interventions to address these disparities. Analyzing these poverty indicators could inform policymakers and stakeholders about the specific needs of rural women, ensuring that initiatives are designed to address their unique challenges. Moreover, recognizing the challenges rural women face could empower them to advocate for change and access resources to improve their lives. A comprehensive understanding of poverty indicators may provide a holistic approach to addressing poverty, enabling effective solutions that consider the unique experiences of rural women. Ultimately, examining the socioeconomic status of rural women in Abia state through the lens of poverty indicators could inform initiatives that enhance human development, improve overall well-being, and promote gender equality, empowering women to break the cycle of poverty.

Similar studies have been conducted to this effect. For instance, Olowookere (2017) studied the "Socioeconomic Status of Rural Households in Nigeria: An Empirical Analysis" was conducted in Osun State, Nigeria and found that the average monthly income of rural households was ₦43,000 (approximately $112 USD). Furthermore, Majority (70%) of rural households had a low socioeconomic status, with income below ₦30,000 (approximately $78 USD) per month. Additionally, the main sources of income were farming (60%), trading (20%), and

artisanal work (10%). Also, education, occupation, and farm size were significant determinants of socioeconomic status while rural households faced challenges such as limited access to credit, markets, and infrastructure. A similar study by Abdu and Muhammad, (2020) on assessment of the socioeconomic status of rural dwellers in Katsina State, Nigeria revealed that average monthly income: ₦34,000 (approximately $88 USD), majority (70%) of rural households had a low socioeconomic status. Income, education, and occupation were significant determinants of socioeconomic status while limited access to credit facilities, markets, and infrastructure were major challenges facing rural households. Furthermore, a study by Oyekale and Oladosu, (2018) on Access to Basic Needs and Socioeconomic Status of Rural Dwellers in Oyo State Nigera revealed that rural households in Oyo State face significant challenges in accessing basic needs, with only 70% having access to safe water, 60% to electricity, 50% to healthcare facilities, and 40% to sanitation facilities. The study also found that 60% of households had a low socioeconomic status, while 20% had a medium and 20% had a high socioeconomic status. Education, occupation, and access to basic needs were identified as significant determinants of socioeconomic status. In the same vein Sule and Audu (2020) studies access to basic needs and socioeconomic status of rural dwellers in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study revealed that rural households in Kogi State face significant challenges in accessing basic needs, with only 55% having access to safe water, 45% to electricity, 35% to healthcare facilities, and 25% to sanitation facilities. The study also found that 50% of households had a low socioeconomic status, while 30% had a medium and 20% had a high socioeconomic status. Education, occupation, and access to basic needs were identified as significant determinants of socioeconomic status.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Rural women in Abia state should have equal access to quality education and the necessary skills to improve their livelihoods and break the cycle of poverty. They should also have access to affordable and quality healthcare services, ensuring their physical and mental well-being. Furthermore, they should have control over land and assets, financial services, including savings, credit, and insurance, would also support their economic activities and provide a safety net during times of uncertainty.

In addition, rural women in Abia state should have opportunities for economic empowerment, including entrepreneurship, employment, and income-generating activities, and a voice in decision-making processes at household, community, and policy levels. Protection from gender-based violence, discrimination, and marginalization is also essential, alongside having access to social protection programmes, including social security, pensions, and safety nets, to support their well-being and provide a foundation for economic stability. Their contributions to the rural economy, including unpaid care work and domestic responsibilities, should be recognized and valued, and supportive policies and programmes should be in place to address the unique challenges they face, including infrastructure, transportation, and communication.

Unfortunately, the reality for rural women in Abia state is far from this ideal. They face significant barriers in accessing quality education and skills training, leaving them without the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their livelihoods. Healthcare services are often scarce and unaffordable, forcing them to rely on traditional remedies or travel long distances for medical care. Moreover, their limited control over land and assets increases their vulnerability to dispossession and marginalization. Financial services are also out of reach for many rural women, denying them access to savings, credit, and insurance that could support their economic activities.

Entrepreneurship and employment opportunities are scarce, and income-generating activities are often limited to subsistence farming or menial jobs. Their voices are rarely heard in decision-making processes, and their perspectives and needs are often ignored or dismissed.

Rural women in Abia state also face alarming rates of gender-based violence, discrimination, and marginalization, which erode their safety and dignity. Social protection programs are inadequate or non-existent, leaving them without a safety net during times of uncertainty. The lack of infrastructure, transportation, and communication exacerbates their isolation and marginalization, making it difficult for them to access markets, services, and opportunities. Furthermore, their contributions to the rural economy are often unrecognized and undervalued, perpetuating their poverty and exclusion. Unpaid care work and domestic responsibilities are shouldered disproportionately by women, limiting their time and energy for economic activities.

The cumulative effect of these challenges is a cycle of poverty and vulnerability that is difficult to break, perpetuating the socioeconomic disparities faced by rural women in Abia state. The intersection of gender and rural location exacerbates their vulnerability, making it essential to investigate the socioeconomic status of rural women in Abia state and identify areas for targeted interventions. This study aims to explore the relationship between poverty indicators and the socioeconomic status of rural women in Abia State, Nigeria.

1.3   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between Poverty indicators and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1.   determine the relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State

2.   determine the relationship between women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1.   what is the relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State

2.   what is the relationship between women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State

1.5   HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses are formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significant.

$H0_1$:   There is no significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State

$H0_2$:   There is no significant relationship between women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was a correlational survey research design. The area for the study is all the rural communities in Abia State Nigeria. Abia state in Nigeria is an ideal location for studying poverty indicators and the socioeconomic status of rural women because state's economy is largely dependent on agriculture, which is a significant source of livelihood for rural women. However, these women face numerous challenges, including limited access to basic amenities such as healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. The target population of study consist of all rural women in Abia State. A sample size of 384 women from Abia State was used for the study, the sample was determined using Cochran's formular. This is because the population size is unknown. The Cochran formula is an appropriate method because the formula accommodates the unknown population size. Additionally, it allows for specifying the desired level of precision and confidence level, ensuring reliable findings. The research adopted a multi-stage sampling

technique. A structured questionnaire constructed by the researcher was used for data collection. The questionnaire titled "Poverty Indicators Questionnaire (PIQ) and Socio-Economic Status Index (SES Index) Questionnaire. The PIQ was divided into 2 clusters designed to identify poverty indicators among rural women in Abia State: Cluster 1: Income levels, Cluster 2: Access to basic needs. The Socio-Economic Status Index (SES Index) focused on the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. The response format for Poverty Indicators Questionnaire will be a 4 point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) (4 points); Agree (A) (3 points); Disagree (D) (2 points); Strongly Disagree (SD) (1 point) while the response format for Socio-Economic Status Index (SES Index) Questionnaire will be will be a 4 point rating scale of Very High (VE) (4 points); High (H) (3 points); Low (L) (2 points); Very Low (VL) (1 point).

The researcher administered the instrument with the assistance of 3 briefed research assistants who are familiar with the research environment. The research assistants were briefed on how to assist respondents for the purpose of the study. The assistant helped in covering the respondents. The data collected for this study was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) for the research questions while linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The strength of relationship was established using Creswell (2014) correlation coefficient. $\pm.70 - 1.00$ (Very Strong/very high correlation) $\pm$ .40 – 69 (Strong/High correlation); $\pm.30 - 39$ (Moderate/Medium correlation) and $\pm.00 - 29$ (No correlation/ weak/Low relationship). More so, null hypotheses were accepted as the alternative will be rejected if the F-ratio is less than the F-tabulated.

RESULT PRESENTATION

The results were presented in tables as follows.

Research Question One

What is the relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State?

Table 1 Correlation Matrix of Relationship between principals' incentive motivational strategy and teachers' productivity.

Correlation		SES	WIL
SES	Pearson Correlation	1	.768**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	381	381
WIL	Pearson Correlation	.768**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	R²	.590 (59%)	
	N	381	381

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). SES = Socio-economic Status; WIL = Women's Income Level

The result in table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient obtained between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State was 0.768 and is within range of $\pm.\mathbf{70} - \mathbf{1.00}$ indicating strong positive relationship. This means that there is a strong positive relationship between income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. Table 1 also shows that, the coefficient of determination (R^2) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.768 was .590. This coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that 59% of the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State is influenced by their income level. To test the

significance of the relationship between income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State, the following hypothesis was tested as follows:

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State

Table 2 Regression Analysis of Relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	46.732	1	46.732	543.395	.000^b
1	Residual	32.503	379	.086		
	Total	79.236	380			

a. Dependent Variable: SES

b. Predictors: (Constant), WIL

The result in Table 2 shows that an F-ratio of 544.914 with associated exact probability value of 0.000 was obtained. This probability value of 0.000 was compared with 0.05 set as level of significant for testing the hypothesis and it was found to be significant because 0.000 is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis, which stated that; there is no significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State, is therefore rejected. Inference drawn was that, there was a significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State?

Table 3 Correlation Matrix of Relationship between women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State.

Correlation		SES	WABN
	Pearson Correlation	1	.708**
SES	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	381	381
	Pearson Correlation	.708**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
WABN	R^2	.501 (50%)	
	N	381	381

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); SES = Socio-economic Status; Women Access to Basic Needs

The result on table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient obtained between women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State was 0.708 and is within range of $\pm.\mathbf{70-1.00}$ indicating strong positive relationship. This means that, there exists strong positive relationship women access to basic needs and their socio-economic status in Abia State. Table 3 also shows that, the coefficient of determination (R^2) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.708 was .501. This coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that 50% of the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State is influenced by their access to basic needs. To

test whether there is a significant relationship between women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State, a corresponding hypothesis was tested as follows:

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State

Table 4 Regression Analysis of Relationship between women access to basic needs and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	39.732	1	39.732	382.038	.000[b]
1	Residual	39.504	379	.104		
	Total	79.236	380			

a. Dependent Variable: SES

b. Predictors: (Constant), WABN

The result in Table 4 shows that an F-ratio of 544.914 with associated exact probability value of 0.000 was obtained. This probability value of 0.000 was compared with 0.05 set as level of significant for testing the hypothesis and it was found to be significant because 0.000 is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis, which stated that; there is no significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State, is therefore rejected. Inference drawn was that, there was a significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF STUDY

From the data analysis and interpretation of the results, the following findings emerged;

1.   There exists strong positive relationship between income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. 59% of the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State is influenced by their income level. Subsequently, there was a significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State.

2.   There exists strong positive relationship between women access to basic needs and their socio-economic status in Abia State. 50% of the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State is influenced by their access to basic needs. Consequently, there was a significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study are discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses raised in the study. They are discussed with research findings in literature reviewed.

The findings of the study, as presented in Tables 1 and 2, revealed a strong positive relationship between income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. 59% of the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State is influenced by their income level. Subsequently, there was a significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. This is in line with the study of Olowookere (2017) on "Socioeconomic Status of Rural Households in Nigeria: An Empirical Analysis" was conducted in Osun State, Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that the average monthly income of rural households was ₦43,000 (approximately $112 USD). Furthermore, Majority (70%) of rural

households had a low socioeconomic status, with income below ₦30,000 (approximately $78 USD) per month. Additionally, the main sources of income were farming (60%), trading (20%), and artisanal work (10%). Also, education, occupation, and farm size were significant determinants of socioeconomic status while rural households faced challenges such as limited access to credit, markets, and infrastructure. The study further aligns with the findings of Abdu and Muhammad, (2020) conducted a study titled assessing the socioeconomic status of rural dwellers in Katsina State, Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that average monthly income: ₦34,000 (approximately $88 USD), majority (70%) of rural households had a low socioeconomic status. Income, education, and occupation were significant determinants of socioeconomic status while limited access to credit facilities, markets, and infrastructure were major challenges facing rural households. Both studies focus on rural areas in Nigeria.

The finding of the study as presented in Table 3 and 4 show that there exist strong positive relationship women access to basic needs and their socio-economic status in Abia State. 50% of the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State is influenced by their access to basic needs. Consequently, there was a significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. This is in tandem with the findings of Oyekale and Oladosu, (2018) on Access to Basic Needs and Socioeconomic Status of Rural Dwellers in Oyo State Nigeria which revealed that rural households in Oyo State face significant challenges in accessing basic needs, with only 70% having access to safe water, 60% to electricity, 50% to healthcare facilities, and 40% to sanitation facilities. The study also found that 60% of households had a low socioeconomic status, while 20% had a medium and 20% had a high socioeconomic status. Education, occupation, and

access to basic needs were identified as significant determinants of socioeconomic status. The study further validates the findings of Sule and Audu on access to basic needs and socioeconomic status of rural dwellers in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study revealed that rural households in Kogi State face significant challenges in accessing basic needs, with only 55% having access to safe water, 45% to electricity, 35% to healthcare facilities, and 25% to sanitation facilities. The study also found that 50% of households had a low socioeconomic status, while 30% had a medium and 20% had a high socioeconomic status. Education, occupation, and access to basic needs were identified as significant determinants of socioeconomic status.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn from the study

1.   There exists strong positive relationship between income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State. 59% of the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State is influenced by their income level. Subsequently, there was a significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State.

2.   There exists strong positive relationship between women access to basic needs and their socio-economic status in Abia State. 50% of the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State is influenced by their access to basic needs. Consequently, there was a significant relationship between the income level and the socio-economic status of rural women in Abia State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and educational implications of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1.   Government and educational stakeholders should create, programs, interventions, seminars, and workshop to enlighten the people especially women

in the rural areas on the importance of women education and its relevance their income level for a sustainable and standard living in the society.

2. Financial management, multi-skills acquisition, entrepreneurial skills, communication skills, digital literacy, time management skills should be given top priorities in the school curriculum. School administrators should prioritize these skills and ensure they are integrated into the normal school program. Resource personnel in all these skills should be invited to train the learners on these multi skills acquisition

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