



Article

COVID-19 Pandemic, Economic Livelihoods, and the Division of Labor in Rural Communities of Delta and Edo States in Nigeria

Francisca I. Omorodion ^{1,*}, Andrew G. Onokerhoraye ², Job I. Eronmhonele ² , Osagie J. Aitokhuehi ², Jones O. Abriku ², Kuukua C. Hanson ¹, Mercy O. Edejehwro ² and Ernest O. Imongan ²

¹ Department of Sociology & Criminology, University of Windsor, 401 Sunset Avenue, Windsor, ON N9B 3P4, Canada; hanson91@uwindsor.ca

² Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED), Benin City 300102, Nigeria; andrew.onokerhoraye@cped.org.ng (A.G.O.); jeronmhonsele@cped.org.ng (J.I.E.); osagie.aitokhuehi@cped.org.ng (O.J.A.); jones.abriku@cped.org.ng (J.O.A.); mercy.edejehwro@cped.org.ng (M.O.E.); ernest.imongan@cped.org.ng (E.O.I.)

* Correspondence: omorodif@uwindsor.ca

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic affected economic, social, health, and political aspects of most global, national, and local populations, including urban and rural communities. Government measures like lockdowns resulted in the closure of schools and businesses, while social distancing preventing group gatherings impacted public and private spaces. Based on key informants' interviews with 36 participants drawn equally from three senatorial districts of Edo and Delta states of Nigeria, we analyzed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the type of work men and women do and division of household activities, such as cooking, child, and family care. The findings show that traditional gender role ideology (GRI) defines and shapes rural men's and women's work, with women more engaged in farming, rearing livestock, and trading while men are engaged in farming, rearing livestock, and carrying out skilled jobs like carpentry, plumbing, and blacksmithing. The lockdown of schools and workplaces resulted in women disproportionately bearing the burden of cooking and caring for children, the elderly, and the sick. A few rural men shared childcare, while women spent more time on housework and childcare activities than in the pre-pandemic period when children were in school for 6–7 h daily. During the pandemic, rural men and women spent more time with the children, such that rural women stayed at home or took children to the farms and marketplaces where possible. Older siblings and the elderly also provided support for women. In conclusion, work and family activities during COVID were, to an extent, difficult to manage as parents had to cope with increasing food insecurity, economic and transportation costs, and social deprivation fostered by social norms, values, and practices that perpetuate gender inequality and marginalization of women.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic; rural communities; Delta and Edo states; gender; work and division of labor



Citation: Omorodion, Francisca I., Andrew G. Onokerhoraye, Job I. Eronmhonsele, Osagie J. Aitokhuehi, Jones O. Abriku, Kuukua C. Hanson, Mercy O. Edejehwro, and Ernest O. Imongan. 2024. COVID-19 Pandemic, Economic Livelihoods, and the Division of Labor in Rural Communities of Delta and Edo States in Nigeria. *Social Sciences* 13: 320. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13060320>

Academic Editor: Nigel Parton

Received: 10 April 2024

Revised: 7 June 2024

Accepted: 8 June 2024

Published: 18 June 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the work men and women do and caused high mortality and morbidity (e.g., [Okeahalam et al. 2020](#)). In 2020, the global data showed 207,173,086 cases of COVID-19 and 4,361,996 deaths, while in Nigeria, data showed 182,503 cases and 2219 deaths ([Okoroiwu et al. 2021](#)). Most countries implemented drastic measures that required social distancing between persons, the closure of schools, and the use of masks and sanitizers to stem the spread of the virus and to control the pandemic ([Iwuoha and Aniche 2021](#)). Additionally, there was mandatory vaccination and tests for international travelers in most countries, including Nigeria. Globally, women bore a more significant burden of care work, about 3.2 times more compared to men, and often these unpaid activities were not recognized. According to [ILO \(2018a\)](#), women, on average, work

201 working days compared to 63 days for men. This pattern is a consequence of social norms that designate women as primary caregivers and men as primary breadwinners, plus the structural barriers that perpetuate gendered inequities and continue to subjugate women to lower education, lower status, unpaid work, and low income and economic downturns during the pandemic. Women were disproportionately affected because they lost their jobs, bore the bulk of child and family care, and most governments diverted a large portion of their resources to combating the pandemic in both developed and developing countries. Past recessions produced a gendered effect on men's and women's work, with more significant effects on sharing household tasks (Shockley and Shen 2016). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO 2018b), the pandemic impacted men and women's jobs because of the measures implemented to control the spread of the virus. These measures impacted labor force participation (e.g., Reichelt et al. 2021; Shafer et al. 2020), domestic or household responsibilities (e.g., Petts et al. 2020), and food security (e.g., Ibukun and Adebayo 2021; Nnaji et al. 2021) and perpetuated gender inequality (e.g., Albert-Makyur 2020; Farré et al. 2020).

Existing studies depict the gendered differential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on income and child and family care (e.g., Iwuoha and Aniche 2021; Lyttelton et al. 2021; Ogando et al. 2021). These impacts highlighted the pre-existing inequities, particularly along gender and racial/ethnic lines, the differential gendered effects on paid and unpaid work (e.g., Kabeer et al. 2021), and the gendering of work carried out by males and females. In sub-Saharan Africa, social norms, including religion, mean that women disproportionately bear the burden of household unpaid work, despite women working outside the home as paid workers, traders, and government workers. During the pandemic, there existed little or no redistribution of household unpaid work (e.g., Aderinto 2017; Adisa et al. 2019; Herrera and Torelli 2013). In Nigeria, women spent more time, about 60%, on childcare compared to men (ILO 2018a) because of school closures and mobility restrictions that led women to bear a disproportionate burden of childcare and family care. Despite women working in paid work, studies show that more women are in the informal sector with lower income because of structural and social barriers that limit women's participation in the Nigerian labor market (e.g., ILO 2018a; Lenshie et al. 2021; van Staveren and Odebode 2007). Accordingly, women suffered more significant financial effects, particularly women with lower education and those living in poor households.

However, there is a paucity of literature focusing on rural Nigeria and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work women do vis-à-vis men. This paper focuses on the nuances that perpetuate the gendered implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper adopts three theoretical frameworks, namely gendered role ideology, social theory, and intersectionality, to highlight the experiences of social groups by gender, type of work, and socioeconomic status. For example, Ogando et al.'s (2021) study depicted how the global South experienced the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at multiple and interrelated levels, including in relation to economics and child and family care. However, this paper contributes to our understanding of how the pandemic affected the gendering of paid and unpaid work in rural communities and its secondary influence on economic livelihoods, division of labor, gendered relations, and inequities. The paper also builds on existing evidence on integrating gender issues into future pandemic programs and policies in Nigeria, mainly in rural Edo and Delta states.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

In this paper, we adopt three theories: the gender role ideology, GRI (e.g., Greenstein 2000), social theory (e.g., Eagly 1987; Eagly and Wood 1999, 2012), and intersectionality (Carbado et al. 2013; Collins 2015). Gender role ideology [GRI] argues that an individual accepts and manifests specific gendered roles for males and females, and it ranges from a traditional/conservative ideology to a more egalitarian ideology. The conservative ideology holds that males are the breadwinners while females are the homemakers and caregivers, while egalitarian ideology holds that both genders share household tasks and responsi-

bilities equally. GRI also addresses the gendered differences in the household division of labor by investigating the participants' views/perceptions of their share of household tasks, division of labor, and how gender role ideology shapes and redefines individuals' engagement in household tasks (Kassah et al. 2023). However, Weziak-Bialowolska (2015) noted the importance of including both males and females to highlight power imbalances and gendered inequity because the common approach focuses on only women. Women holding conservative role ideologies focus on appropriate roles consistent with cultural norms and expectations. Consequently, women's gender role ideology shapes their perceptions of roles and tasks.

- *RQ1. Does gender role ideology affect the household division of tasks performed pre-, during, and post-COVID-19 pandemic?*

Social role theory (Eagly 1987) holds that individuals' biological sex primarily defines and shapes the roles of men and women in a society. Social role theorists argue that people perceive their engagement in gender-consistent roles in comparison with others, like peers and social groups (Eagly and Wood 2012). Obioma et al. (2021, 2022) noted that accepted societal status, power relations, norms, and values influence individuals' perceptions of who performs specific tasks and functions in the family and community (Eagly and Wood 1999, 2012). Such influence depicts women as more communal (care and people-oriented) than men, while men are more agentic (assertive and leadership-oriented) than women (Eagly 1987; Hernandez Bark et al. 2014; Obioma et al. 2021). Invariably, repeated engagement and performance of specific and distinct roles sustains gendered segregation of household tasks (Eagly and Wood 1999). According to West and Zimmerman (1987), doing gender suggests that individuals behave consistently with stereotypically normative expectations of their gender identity.

Consequently, women and girls are primary agents of domestic labor and perform more routine housework such as cleaning, cooking, and laundry, while men and boys engage in non-routine housework like outdoor maintenance/repairs (Craig and Powell 2018). Existing studies depict that both men and women may claim to bear the bulk of household tasks while their perceptions come short of the reality of their engagement (Coltrane 2000; Mikelson 2008). For example, Mikelson (2008) reported that men may perceive themselves as more engaged in housework while women would not overestimate their involvement in household activities. Accordingly, this paper investigates the gender differences in household division of labor pre-, during, and post-COVID-19 pandemic.

- *RQ2. Are there gender differences in the tasks males and females do in the household division of labor pre-, during, and post-COVID-19 pandemic?*

Intersectionality is an analytical tool, which provides an in-depth understanding of how social divisions or categories (e.g., based on gender, ethnicity, age, ability, class, and occupation) define and shape the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic in rural communities of Edo and Delta states, Nigeria. Intersectionality, rooted in Black feminism and Critical Race Theory, addresses the challenges and relationships between social divisions in shaping experiences and social inequalities (Carbado et al. 2013; Collins 2015). Social divisions resulting from social stratification and class create power relations and positions that privilege some, like men, and marginalize others, like women, who get oppressed (Yuval-Davis 2015). Consequently, most societies privilege men over women because of social norms, traditions, patriarchy, and paternalistic practices that designate roles by gender (Aderinto 2017; Adisa et al. 2019). However, intersectionality cautions against using a single-axis analysis, such as examining gender and excluding other social divisions, such as class and ethnicity/race. The best approach uses a double-axis framework, which allows us to interrogate the gendered experiences of participants based on at least one other social factor. This paper highlights the experiences of rural women and men and adolescent/young girls and boys living in rural communities of Edo and Delta states, Nigeria. Accordingly, it accounts for intersecting social divisions such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, and class. To contextualize these experiences, we explore how power

structures informed by sexism and ageism shape lived experiences. Additionally, the paper examines how other social divisions and gendered experiences shape unpaid child and family care. We conceptualize unpaid care work as the “provision of services for family and community members outside of the market”, including meal preparation, cleaning, fetching firewood and water, and caring for children, the elderly, and the sick, among others, without monetary compensation (Folbre 2013; Ibukun and Adebayo 2021; Kassah et al. 2023; Mūrage et al. 2022; Okumagba 2011; Onyebu 2016). The paper also highlights the nuances that shape experiences of marginalization and social inequalities, which are invisible and ignored due to a culture of silence, which calls for social and policy actions that can ameliorate these inequalities, facilitate inclusion, and result in transformative changes.

- *RQ3: In what ways is the impact of lived experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic on care work mediated by gender and other intersecting social attributes and locations?*

3. Study Contexts

Nigeria, the most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa, has about 48% of the population living in rural communities and about 52% in urban settings. Much of the population (40%) lives below the national poverty line and bears a disproportionate burden of diseases (Mobolaji and Akinyemi 2022; Josephson et al. 2020). Nigeria has 36 states plus the federal capital territory, Abuja. Our project focuses on rural communities in Edo and Delta in the south-south region, part of Nigeria’s crude-oil-producing states. Despite the richness in crude oil, both states remain undeveloped due to corruption, poor leadership, government programs, and policies, and the high dependence on crude oil as a source of revenue due to less emphasis on agriculture and other raw products that the states were known for in the past, such as natural rubber and palm oil.

In sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria has one of the highest overall gender gaps of 0.635 in 2020 (World Economic Forum 2021). There is an underestimation of the gender gap because it does not capture the marked gender inequality in rural and impoverished communities. Women in Nigeria’s rural areas are the principal food producers and preparers for the rest of the family. Food preparation involves gathering the wood for fires and carrying the water they need. Rural women in some parts of Nigeria spend up to five hours daily collecting fuel, wood, and water and up to four hours preparing food. Dependence on the availability of natural resources is especially evident in women’s daily livelihood and household responsibilities. When climate change makes these scarce, it can affect the assets (such as time, security, and money) required for women to perform these tasks. Insufficient water sources can require women and girls to travel farther to collect water at risk of violence and the social repercussions resulting from sexual assault. This extra work also requires time that detracts from time that women would otherwise spend on productive activities, sometimes decreasing agricultural productivity, household food security, and overall household income (Afolayan and Adeyeye 2013; Akanle and Oluwakemi 2012).

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted women in two ways. First, the closure of schools, which increased the unpaid burden of child and family care for the elderly and sick family members. Second, similarly, school closure and having to stay home increased unequal division of domestic tasks because women disproportionately cared for children. Invariably, gender-differentiated exposure influenced the mental health of women as they engaged in paid and unpaid work (King et al. 2020). However, rural women are “invisible” actors in Nigeria’s development as their contributions are poorly understood and often underestimated because work in the household is part of a woman’s duties as a wife and mother rather than account for an occupation in the national economy (Afolayan and Adeyeye 2013; Atim and Awodola 2020).

The project focuses on Edo and the Delta States based on three considerations. First, the rural areas of the two states reflect the prevailing patterns of gender inequality and poor women’s access to essential health in rural Nigeria. Second, the Center for Population, Environment, and Development (CPED) has conducted a rapid assessment in Delta State,

which the project builds on. Finally, CPED has good working relationships with policy-makers and various non-state actors in the two states where CPED implemented action research projects over the past ten years. Edo and Delta states are collectivistic, but differ in geographical, historical, and cultural contexts. In 1991, the federal government of Nigeria split the former Bendel state into Delta and Edo states. The two states maintained a close and cordial relationship with interstate trading and political relationships and are part of the oil-producing Niger Delta region. The geographical location of Delta State makes it a riverine area, with many inhabitants engaged in agriculture and fishing, while those in Edo state, primarily on the mainland, are engaged in agriculture, bronze casting, and trading as economic livelihoods.

In many collectivistic cultures, gender identity is strongly connected to self-identity, gender role ideology, and societal roles, while the reverse prevails in individualistic societies of the North or Western world (Obioma et al. 2021). The collectivistic nature of Nigerian society, particularly the studied rural communities, displays closed kinship and interdependent social networks. The collectivistic nature of these rural communities perpetuates multigenerational households with extended family networks sharing the same residential abode, making child and family care the responsibilities of family members, particularly women (Aderinto 2017; Oladeji 2011). Similarly, the elderly and the young, in turn, also assist with childcare.

4. Method

The paper uses a descriptive research design to explore men's and women's work and the division of labor among rural households in Edo and Delta states. This qualitative paper using key informant interviews is part of a larger project titled "Gender Inequality and Rural Women's Health in post-COVID-19 Nigeria: Working with Policymakers and non-state Actors to promote inclusive and Sustainable Rural Women's Health in Nigeria" with men and women living in rural communities of the three senatorial districts of Edo and Delta states. Qualitative data provides opportunities to hear the voices of women/girls and a deeper understanding of the issues raised by informants (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) maintain that qualitative research is best when the method is congruent with the nature of the research problem and when used to explore areas with minimal knowledge, which is the case in this study. We collected data from convenience and purposively (Suri 2011) and recruited participants 18 years and above using town criers, social influencers, and flyers (Ristock and Grieger 1996). We obtained informed consent before each interview, followed by gathering socio-demographic data to provide background information on the participants to ensure they met the study criteria. We conducted six key informant interviews from each senatorial district, eighteen from each state, with a final total of thirty-six participants from the two states (See Figure 1).

Females and males participated in the key informant interviews to provide an understanding of the processes, relationships, and networks that exist between themselves, their peers, and other members of the rural community. The interviews focused on capturing the economic activities of males and females, their experiences of gender inequality, and their lack of inclusion, offering insight into women/girls' lives and social and cultural engagement in society. Second, we captured experiences of gendered inequality, barriers, and socioeconomic and cultural inclusion challenges. Finally, the paper documents the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on paid and unpaid economic activities, division of labor, and the processes of negotiating the gendered culture.

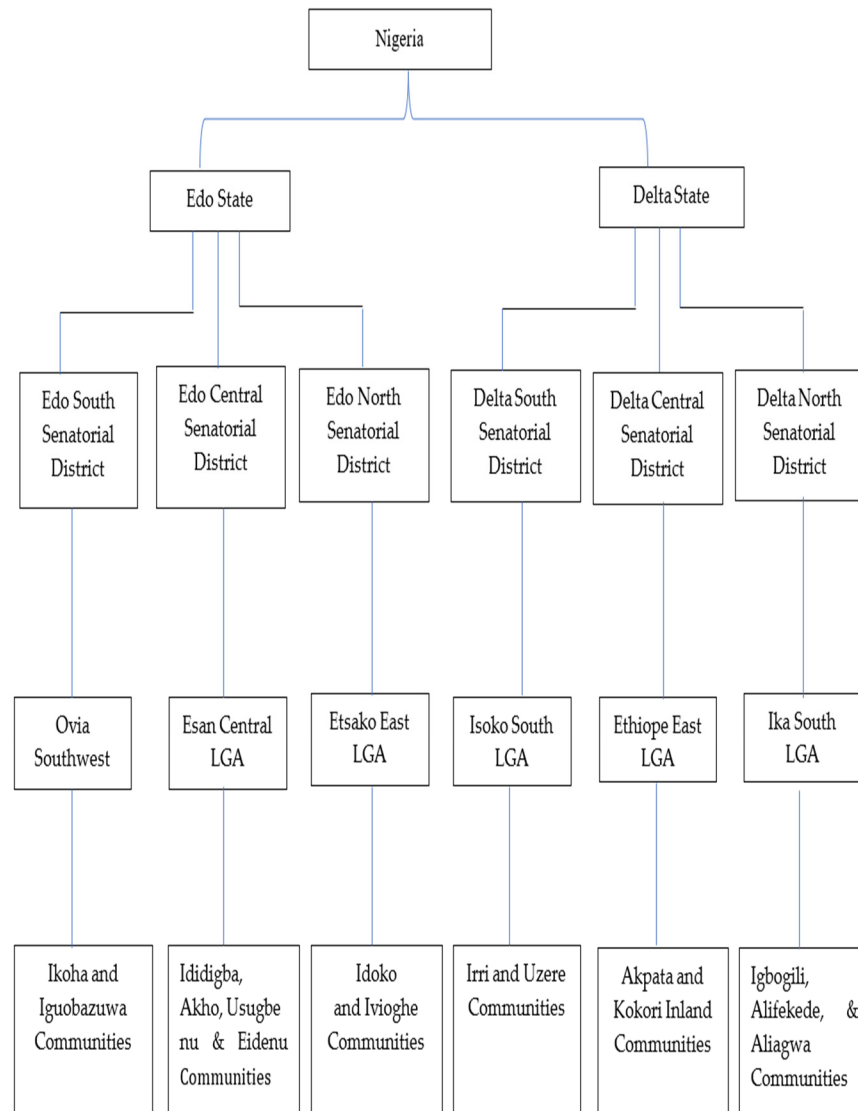


Figure 1. Chart of locations of data collection (key informant interviews).

Each interview lasted between 30 and 90 min and was audio-recorded with the participant's permission and transcribed verbatim. We coded the transcripts using an iterative process. We assessed the trustworthiness of the results using [Lincoln and Guba's \(1985\)](#) protocols that include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. We used thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and detect reporting patterns within the qualitative data ([Braun and Clarke 2006](#)) and followed the six-step process provided by [Braun and Clarke \(2006\)](#) to analyze the data. First, the research assistants transcribed the interviews to increase familiarity with the data, and one investigator and graduate student read the transcripts, re-read the data, and noted preliminary ideas. Next, we generated initial codes primarily based on the interview questions across the entire data set by collating data relevant to each theme. The third step involved organizing the themes and gathering all data pertinent to each theme. The fourth step involved reviewing and refining the themes. We collated and read all the extracts for each theme to check for their coherent pattern. Next, we refined each theme to represent the overall story depicted by the analysis. We defined the themes and named them to capture these overall stories. The final step involved the final write-up of the findings and discussion. We use pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

The project obtained ethics approval from Nigeria and the University of Windsor to ensure we followed the ethical code of conduct for research on human beings, including

gender issues. All data collection was in English or pidgin English and audio-recorded for retrieval to ensure we reported the participants’ voices. We discussed the withdrawal process with the participants and our respect for their anonymity and confidentiality. The key informant interviews took place between March and April 2023.

5. Results

5.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Key Informants

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the key informant interview participants. Our study had 36 participants, 6 from each state senatorial district, for the key informant interviews. The average age of participants in Delta State is 43 years, and in Edo State, it is 45 years, with an average age of 44 for both states. The mean number of children for Delta state participants is four, and for Edo state four, for an average of four children from both states. The average age of children in Delta State is 14, and in Edo state it is 16, while the mean age for both states is 15. Although the participants from Delta State lived longer, for 33 years, in their communities, and Edo state participants lived for 26 years, the average stay in their communities in both states is 30 years. The minimum income in Delta State is 96,000 Naira, and in Edo State, it is 120,000 Naira. The highest income is 1,344,000 Naira in Delta State and 2,400,000 Naira in Edo State. Accordingly, the average income for participants in Delta State is 614,444 Naira, and in Edo State, it is 603,694 Naira, with an average of 609,069 Naira for both states.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of community mapping participants.

Participant	Gender	Age	Education	Marital Status	No. of Children	Age of Children	Religion	Yrs. in Community	Economic Activities	Annual Income [Naira]
Delta State										
Delta Central/Akpata										
DC1	M	46	M.SC	Married	4 [2M, 2F]	10, 8, 6, 3	Christian	34	Public servant Farming	1,152,000
DC2	M	52	OND	Married	4 [3M, 1F]	28, 26, 21, 18	Christian	42	Trading Farming	312,000
DC3	F	47	SSCE	Married	4 [2M, 2F]	22, 19, 16, 14	Christian	47	Farming Tailoring	360,000
DC4 Kokori Inland	F	30	B.Sc.	Married	3 [3F]	8, 6, 4	Traditionalist	30	Public servant	1,344,000
DC5 Kokoro Inland	F	35	B.Sc.	Married	4 [3M, 1F]	13, 9, 7, 5	Christian	26	Teaching Farming	1,176,000
DC6	F	37	SSCE	Married	2 [1M, 1F]	8 and 6	Christian	37	Trading Farming	360,000
Delta North/Alifekede										
DN1 Igbogili	M	70	B.SC.	Married	5 [4M, 1F]	46, 44, 42, 40, 32	Christian	50	Pensioner Farming secondary	1,200,000
DN2 Igbogili	M	65	M.Sc.	Married	6 [4M, 2F]	34, 31, 29, 27, 22, 22	Christian	40	Pensioner Farming	960,000
DN3	F	38	NCE	Married	4 [3M, 1F]	10, 8, 6, 4	Christian	15	Farming Trading	540,000
DN4	F	57	HND	Widow	3 [1M, 2F]	30, 27, 25	Christian	47	Farming Trading	720,000
DN5 Aliagwa	F	38	ND	Married	5 [3M, 2F]	16, 13, 11, 8, 4	Christian	35	Petty trading	96,000
DN6 Aliagwa	F	45	Primary school	Married	6 [3M, 3F]	24, 22, 19, 16, 13, 6	Christian	9	Farming Traditional Birth Attendant	240,000
Delta South/Irri										

Table 1. Cont.

Participant	Gender	Age	Education	Marital Status	No. of Children	Age of Children	Religion	Yrs. in Community	Economic Activities	Annual Income [Naira]
DS1	F	28	NCE	Married	2 [3M, 3F]	4 and 2	Christian	40	Farming/ Pensioner	480,000
DS2	F	36	OND	Married	5 [2M, 3F]	9, 7, 5, 3, 1	Christian	36	Teaching Farming	300,000
DS3	F	39	B.Sc.	Married	4 [3M, 1F]	15, 13, 10, 8	Christian	24	Trading Farming	600,000
DS4	F	39	SSCE	Married	4 [1M, 3F]	11, 10, 8, 4	Christian	30	Farming Trading	360,000
DS5	F	29	OND	Married	2 [1M, 1F]	3, 1	Christian	23	Trading/farming	260,000
DS6	F	45	B.Sc.	Married	4 [3M, 1F]	11, 7, 5, 3	Christian	30	Business Farming	600,000
Edo State										
Participant	Gender	Age	Education	Marital status	Number of children	Age of children	Religion	Yrs. in community	Economic activities	Annual income [Naira]
Edo Central/ Ididigba										
EC1	M	35	NCE	Married	3 [2M, 1F]	6, 4, 2	Christian	30	Teaching [PT] Politics	360,000
EC2 Akho	F	41	SSCE	Married	7 [2M, 3F]	22, 19, 17, 15, 13, 11, 9	Christian	6	Trading Cleaning	240,000
EC3 Usugbenu	F	56	SSCE	Married	3 [1M, 2F]	34, 30, 26	Christian	30	Farming Catering	No response
EC4 Eidemu	F	55	Primary School Certificate	Widowed	2 [1M, 1F]	35, 28	Christian	55	Trading Farming	120,000
EC5 Usugbenu	F	43	Master's degree	Married	1 [1M]	15	Christian	6	Teaching [Principal]	2,400,000
EC6 Usugbenu	F	50	Post Graduate Diploma [PGD]	Married	5 [4M, 1F]	23, 20, 17, 12, 9	Christian	17	Teaching	600,500
Edo North/Ivioghe										
EN1	M	43	B.Sc. Economics	married	4 [3FM 1F]	14, 11, 7, 4	Christian	43	Marketer Farming	624,000
EN2	M	40	RN Midwife	Married	3 [1M, 2F]	9, 7, 5	Muslim	12	Nursing Business	1,800,000
EN3 Ivioghe	F	50	Diploma in Community Health	Married	4 [1M, 3F]	31, 28, 25, 21	Christian	3	Economic health worker Farming	1,008,000
EN4	F	38	NCE	Married	2 [1F, 1F]	5, 2	Christian	13	Teaching	144,000
EN5	F	48	School certificate	Married	2 [1M, 1F]	21, 18	Christian	38	Teaching Farming	120,000
EN6	M	52	HND	Married	2 [1M, 1F]	13, 7	Christian	52	Trading [Building materials] Farming	260,000
Edo South/Ikoha										
ES1	F	43	Primary school certificate	Married	3 [1M, 2F]	21, 19, 17	Christian	43	Farming	780,000
ES2	M	40	O'Level [Secondary]	Married	4 [1M, 3F]	8, 7, 4, 1	Christian	40	Farming	600,000
ES3	M	68	Secondary	Married	6 [3M, 3F]	39, 37, 33, 31, 39, 23	Christian	50	Farming	550,000
ES4	F	38	Secondary	Married	5 [4M, 1F]	18, 12, 11, 8, 4	Christian	12	Gardner	480,000
ES5	F	42	Secondary	Married	6 [4M, 2F]	19, 16, 12	Christian	5	Business Farming	300,000
ES6 Iguobazuwa	F	34	National Diploma	Married	5 [3M, 2F]	11, 9, 7, 5, 1	Christian	12	Trading/Farming	480,000

5.2. Social Norms and Access to Community Resources

5.2.1. Access to and Control of Resources

The data from the key informant interviews indicate that men control significant resources like land in the studied communities. In most communities, women only inherit land if given to them under a witness and by purchase, which, in most cases, they cannot buy due to high cost. Women can own most of the livestock, which they rear for commercial purposes, while the men dominate the farming of yams. Women grow cassava and dominate the market as they are more engaged in trading. However, limited access to essential resources such as capital and seedlings affects their productivity and available funds to invest into their economic livelihoods. Below are some of the excerpts from the participants.

In this community, the men have more access to resources and labor. Both men and women have access to crops. When it comes to spare time to relax, men have more time to relax. When the men return from work after taking their bath, they sit down and wait for the woman to enter the kitchen, make food, and bring it for them to chop. DN5 Aliagua, Female, Married, Trading, 38 years.

Most of the time, women cannot access resources such as land and capital. In this community, the men cut pieces of land for the women to farm on and even create the market space for the women in the community. EC4, Eidenu, Female, Trading and Farming, Widowed, 55 years.

The man has more access to land since when lands are divided between the family, the men are the primary beneficiaries. The custom of land ownership believes that the woman will eventually be married out of the family. Crops are primarily accessed by the farmers, who are mainly women. The men have more access to time and forests. Both have access to livestock, water, and a market. DS6, Uzere, Male, Married, Businessman, 45 years.

Men have more control over land, crops, and labor than women because the man tells the woman when the crops will be harvested and sold at the market. Men also have more control over labor and time. ES4, Iguobazuwa, Female, Married, Gardner, 38 years.

Delta and Edo states are traditionally patriarchal and paternalistic, which promotes and perpetuates gender inequality through the gendering of roles and inheritance systems that favor men by granting them the ownership and rights of inheritance to land. Men are also the primary decision-makers, with the rights and privilege to enact rules, laws, and practices that place women in subordinate positions to men. Two female participants from Delta State captured this situation in the excerpts below:

Because of the hereditary preferences of the local tradition, men have more access to and authority over lands. They both have control over the type of crops they want to plant and vendors that supply crop seeds. [. . .] The men control the markets because they are mainly involved in constructing the market and determining its location. They also collect taxes from sellers on market days. Men control forests since they oversee lands and properties in the community. DS1 Irri, Female, Married, Trading, 28 years.

The men control resources in this community because tradition favors them. They also control labor and forests. The men control [household activities] more than the women because they are the head of the house and give instructions on what should be done. Men also control markets because the committee, through the majesty, apportions stores to the traders and collects taxes from each trader. Men also control forests and labor. DS5, Irri, Female, Married, Trading, 29 years.

Participants reported that ethnic conflicts and indiscriminate grabbing of farmlands from local people by Fulani herders create insecurity because they rape women and girls, which makes it unsafe to engage in daily economic livelihoods like farming. In Edo state, women reported their helplessness, with insecurities, lack of agency, and the incapability of men to protect them. Similarly, girls/women's insecurity also exists in Delta state because ethnic conflict affects access to basic needs and women's economic livelihoods. According

to the men in Delta state, girls/women are more prone to violence and displacement due to harassment from illegal occupants in their farmlands, which further reduces farming activities and production of staple food crops like cassava and yams for subsistence. Generally, the participants from Edo noted the role of land ownership and rights to land for agriculture. Women and girls commonly noted that females typically have no right to land and face difficulty accessing farmland except by renting, buying, or sharing with spouses/children.

On the other hand, Delta men voiced that the intended use of land and the ability to buy or pay for the land influence the family and community allocation of land to individuals. However, Delta and Edo women noted that though men and women have the same rights regarding what they want to produce on the land, in some cases, there is a division between what women and men can grow. The excerpts below support the above positions on access to land.

According to men from Edo state, women face challenges due to discriminatory inheritance laws, patriarchal customs, and limited credit and resources that affect access to land. Farming and livestock rearing also help with the household's upkeep. Male participants in Delta State mentioned that individuals need an income to secure land, and, in some cases, women can also buy their land. For example, women can access land within a household through their partners/parents. Additionally, the men consider the women's intentions to use the land to permit them.

On the contrary, women in some communities in Edo North noted that because families own the land, they have the freedom to plant what they want, and men and women have equal access to farming and livestock rearing. However, the crops and livestock owned by men and women differ by gender. Furthermore, female participants in some Edo communities also talked about sharing land to plant short-term crops in case the owners need the land for alternative use.

5.2.2. Gender Roles and Economic Livelihoods

Although men and women work outside the home primarily as farmers and traders, crops grown and items sold vary by gender. Commonly, men grow crops like yams and cassava and engage in hunting and blacksmithing, while women grow mainly cassava and are traders and caregivers. A female participant from Delta's central senatorial district captured this, noting that the work and crops grown by men and women differ.

Women in Kokori plant specific crops. Women plant cassava, melon, corn, and pepper, while the men often plant yams. Any of the sexes mainly carries out livestock, but fish farming is considered a men's job here, especially going to the river to harvest fish. Men mostly do hunt, while both do traditional medicine. Blacksmithing, especially the forging of iron and aluminum, is carried out by men. Others, like mechanics, cobblers, bike riders, taxi, and carpentry jobs, are done mainly by men. Women engage in hair plating and trading (of fried garri, tomatoes, and pepper). DC4, Kokori Inland, Female, Married, Public Servant, 35 years.

There are variations in some communities. For example, in some Edo and Delta states communities, hunting and traditional medicine practices are explicitly for men. At the same time, women tend livestock and plant specific crops like cassava, okra, pepper, vegetables, and melon. Men dominate in other economic activities such as commercial driving, blacksmithing, welding, carpentry, bricklaying, and working as artisans who use aluminum for roofing, doors, and windows. In contrast, women dominate the following businesses: hairdressing, makeup artistry, catering, and petty trading. Below are some of the participants' positions.

The women are primarily farmers but sell their farm produce to feed their families. Very few men are into farming, with many men working as artisans, carving, pottery, blacksmithing, and doing other jobs. EC5, Usugbenu, Female, Teaching (principal), Married, 43 years.

Men's roles attract more economic power than women's role because men farm on high-income crops like yams and are also skilled workers, either in middle-class jobs or in skilled jobs from which they earn more money. On the contrary, women work, farm, and trade in crops like cassava and other complimentary crops like melon and pepper, which generate low income. Additionally, men have control over personal earnings, which they spend on family and their own leisure pursuits, such as cigarettes, alcohol, and girlfriends/concubines, while women either hand over their income to men or use it on family necessities. Men's role as the heads of their families and control over household income perpetuate male dominance over women/wives who play submissive roles. A participant from Delta State captured this in this excerpt:

Men are hunters and farmers. They mainly plant yams, while women plant cassava. Men primarily practice traditional medicine. The economic livelihood activity reserved for women is selling at our market. If you check the market, you will find up to three or four men there, and what they sell is palm wine that they tap. DN3 Alifekede, Female, Married, Farming, 38 years.

5.2.3. Division of Labor

In all senatorial districts, women primarily bear the burden of domestic chores and childcare and work outside the home as farmers, traders, and caterers while men work to garner wealth as farmers, skilled workers, and public servants. Women tend to engage in multitasking, combining several activities. Although women are seen as working harder than men, their roles are inferior to those of men because they bring less cash into the households. However, some participants also mentioned that the burden of household responsibilities is shared between men and women. Participants depicted this perception of gender roles as follows:

The women work harder than the men. The men go to the farm, come back, and relax, while the women go to the farm, come back and still do other things. The work women do at home is to clean the house, take care of the children, and cook. The men only have a little work at home, although a few assist their wives when there is work. Few help women take their children to school. Some men help the women to peel cassava. Men and women are not equal. Men are higher than women. The women make farms and plant cassava. They sometimes harvest the cassava and process it into 'kapu' and 'gari.' The men plant yam and cassava. The role men play is that they gather from time to time to discuss the community. When there is a quarrel between people, the men also summon the people involved and settle the case. EC3, Usugbenu, Female, Farming, and Catering, 56 years.

For the role of women in this community, when they wake in the morning, they sweep the compound, prepare food for the husbands and children to eat, and prepare the children for school before they move down to their various farms. The situation has been so for generations. For the man, it is to wake up and prepare himself for work to provide for the family, but this does not stop the man from assisting the woman with chores so that the burden will not be much on the woman. The way things are now in our community, women do much work; they go to the farm, just as the men do; they work hard, and when women get home, they still go to the kitchen to prepare food for the family. ES3, Ikoha, Male, Married, Farming, 68 years.

Men and women view unpaid household work as women's responsibility. In certain instances, men step in to help women with the household activities, while men's role is to provide for the family. Some female participants in Delta State believe that household work should be a shared responsibility. On the other hand, some male participants in Delta believe that some duties, like childcare, should be shared while others, like cooking, are categorically for women. Female participants in Edo state expressed that women are also involved in farming activities with the support of their husbands. Male participants in Edo suggested that men do the heavy tasks while women do the lighter activities. However,

some men valued women's roles in Edo North and saw them as complementary and vital to family sustenance and survival. A male participant noted:

From what I have experienced, the women are help mate to the men. They accomplished what they were doing. I will use my wife as a case study if not for the support of my wife; she contributes immensely to the home while I provide school fees. My wife plays a vital role in the home regarding feeding. My wife oversees the reproductive role. My wife does the unpaid duties like cooking, washing clothes and other house chores. At times, I help in cutting the grasses. In the community, the men are the kingmakers saddled with the responsibility of directing activities and playing their role in the new yam festival in the community. The women do not play any vital role in the community. They believe they have played their role at home but are involved in cooking activities when the community has something to do. EN1, Idoko, Male, Married, Marketer, 43 years.

Furthermore, some participants portrayed a more egalitarian relationship because of the liberal attitudes of men to assisting their wives in childcare. However, men are the primary decision-makers. A male participant from the Delta South senatorial district reported the following:

Education and civilization have taken over many things in this community. Specifically, when a woman wakes up in the morning, her first assignment is supposed to be sweeping the house. Others should include cooking for the family, bathing the little children, and going to the market. Civilization and education have changed things. Men are now also involved in all these roles. For instance, in the morning, the husband usually bathes the children while the wife sweeps and cooks for them, so things are fast, and the children do not go to school late. Otherwise, we will be doing the children a disservice, and they will go to school late. The men, through the elders' council, are primarily involved in decision-making in the community. That does not mean the women do not occupy positions. For the first time, a woman is the vice-president of Akpata executive. DC2, Akpata, Male, Married, Trader, 52 years.

Women bear the most of unpaid household work because of customs and traditions. It is said that it is a woman's nature to do unpaid household work. The only exception to this is that men should help women with these tasks. Additionally, Delta female participants stated that while women embrace this responsibility, men must be faithful to their wives. Despite the current changes and gender roles, according to Delta male participants, some women still feel it is their responsibility to do most of the unpaid household activities. These male participants also suggested that women should not fight for equal responsibility in domestic work. It is also important to note that in recent times, women have not only focused on unpaid household tasks but also on other income-generating activities, which male participants in Edo state mentioned.

Most participants agreed that men should also be involved in unpaid household work since it would ease the burden and help women's well-being. Some participants in Edo state suggested that men do not need to support women with domestic work. According to male participants in Edo state, there is the perception that if men accept doing unpaid household work, women will no longer have respect for men. Furthermore, Delta female participants believe that men can help by taking on the role of provision. However, if they help, they said men risk being called names.

5.2.4. Gender Inequality

Most participants reported gender inequalities in rural communities because of traditionally gendered roles, as men and women engage in differential roles. These roles are valued differently, with more status given to men's roles as breadwinners and community workers. Men are the primary decision-makers, playing prominent roles in the families and community.

In our community, tradition places men in leadership roles from birth while women engage in domestic roles. For example, in a family, the boys take care of the compound

while the girls cook and do other household chores. Nevertheless, the woman suffers deprivation in the process. Based on a personal experience with a sister of almost the same age, we both started school together in 1964, but she stayed at home doing the house chores while the younger male child and I continued schooling. DN2, Igbogili, Male, Teacher, Married, 65 years.

Similarly, a female participant from Delta State also reported that gender inequality pervades the community. The participant said the following:

The role of women in this community is to cook for their husbands and take care of their children, and men are the breadwinners, caring for the family, but sometimes it is the women who do this. Some women now perform the role of a man and a woman in the family. The position of a man in the community is higher than that of a woman. Women do not even have a specific position in the community. Women only have a significant role if invited to community gatherings. [But] women can relay anything they have to say, through their husbands to the community. . . DN4, Alifekede, Female, Widowed, Farming, 57 years.

[. . .] Women in this community spend more time caring for the family, doing unpaid housework, and even going on farming activities than men. In short, women in this community are more into farming than men. ES3 Ikoha, Male, Married, Farming, and 68 years.

Men do more work as they work to garner wealth, while women bear disproportionate household responsibilities. A professional male participant reported the following:

The men are higher than the women. They work more. The women do most of the housework. They wash clothes, cook, bath the children, and maintain the house. The men do more work to make money. The men are the ones that do work for the community. Women need more work to do for the community. ES4, Iguobazuwa, Female, Married, Gardner, 38 years.

A female participant noted that gender inequality remains the same in Edo State, as shown in this excerpt below:

The position of a man or a woman in the community [also] depends on their ability and the way the person carries his or herself. Women do almost all the housework. For example, women cook, wash, and clean the house. Some men support their wives in a sweep. Compared to women, men do the work that provides money [as breadwinner] and less work that does not give money [caregivers]. Some men work at the local government council, others work as farmers, and some have skills. The community's men meet with the elders to resolve the community's issues. ES6, Iguobazuwa, Female, Married, Trading, 34 years.

Women face several barriers in these communities, which range across social, economic, and political issues that affect their everyday activities. The issues named across states between men and women ranged from lack of finance, lack of farm input, some communities not having a market, and lack of decision-making positions to climate change, unemployment, lack of education, lack of access to land, and women doing the domestic work, childbearing, and childcare.

Additionally, women and girls find these economic, social, cultural, and environmental barriers challenging due to many different reasons across states and between men and women. For instance, men from Edo state attributed the challenges to the increased cost of transporting their produce to markets in other communities and the lack of government finance and support. Despite these challenges, women work hard to break these barriers and find new opportunities and spaces to improve their productivity.

Moreover, women in Edo stated that the barriers are challenging to women in such a way that women cannot meet some personal and family needs. Therefore, women must work extra hard when they lack support. Natural disasters also affect women's

farming and economic livelihoods. According to the men, the effects associated with the challenges/barriers that women face also impact income-generating activities and nurture unsafe feelings and helplessness in women. Natural disasters such as flooding and changing weather further worsen the economic deprivation facing women and men. Additionally, herders displace the local people from their land, destroying farmland and crops and increasing financial burdens and domestic work for women.

6. Discussion

Our findings reported the significant role of land ownership in rural women's agricultural work, including farming and animal husbandry/livestock. The findings also highlighted the gendered variations in farm crops, as women in some communities can only grow certain crops. Underpinning the gendering of rural work is social inequality and marginalization of women in many areas, which is the product of hierarchical power that privileges rural men and marginalizes women and girls. Social positioning is not only a product of gender but also of class, age, occupation, ethnicity, geography, and agency. More importantly, we found that women farmed crops differently from men and more of what they could manage, as noted in another context in southwestern Nigeria. Past studies from other Nigerian ethnic groups bear credence to our findings (e.g., [Pierotti et al. 2022](#)). Based on patriarchal hegemony ([Aderinto 2017](#); [Adisa et al. 2019](#); [Makama 2013](#)) and intersectionality ([Carbado et al. 2013](#); [Collins 2015](#)), these social factors intersect to define and shape individuals' experiences in the pre-, during, and post-COVID-19 pandemic periods. Accordingly, it is paramount to understand how actors influencing social posting and local nuances intersect with the pandemic to shape experiences in the rural Edo and Delta states of Nigeria.

Another area of impact was the household division of labor. Globally, available studies show the general expectation that the pandemic would involve more men in domestic work than in the pre-pandemic era. They also documented the failure of the pandemic to promote an egalitarian context where men and women undertake domestic work equally. In our findings, most participants reiterated that commonly, women undertake cooking, child and elderly care, and care for the sick and those with a disability, which other studies also noted (e.g., [Kabeer et al. 2021](#); [Mürage et al. 2022](#)). There were very few cases of men assisting with some household activities such as childcare. As in existing studies, women disproportionately bear the burden of household activities, which has been classified as unpaid work ([Aderinto 2017](#); [Adisa et al. 2019](#); [Herrera and Torelli 2013](#); [Ogando et al. 2021](#)). Our findings reported increased social support for the elderly, while another study ([Ekoh et al. 2020](#)) noted diminishing social support for the elderly in Nigeria. The findings also highlighted the role of social norms, values, and practices, which are barriers to women carrying the burden of unpaid work ([Lenshie et al. 2021](#)). In the absence of social support, programs, and policies by the government to cushion the gender inequality and burden women bear, the post-pandemic era does not look promising because of the severe consequences of the structural barriers and inequity that rural women face.

Our findings show that women commonly had no legitimate access to land except personally purchased land. In both states, women had no right to land inheritance, but in some communities, a man can give a daughter a piece of land while alive but must have a witness for its validity. Otherwise, the family and community are the rightful landowners who apportion the land to individuals, primarily men. Men can apportion land to female family members to use but control the crops grown on such land. The crops grown on the farmlands are also gendered, with men commonly growing yams while women grow cassava and complimentary crops like pepper, melon, and eggplant. In some leased land, the crops grown are dictated by the owner, with women growing only annual and not perennial crops. Other studies on other ethnic groups (e.g., [Aderinto 2017](#); [Adisa et al. 2019](#)) reported similar land ownership structures and processes. Patriarchy and the paternalistic context of these Nigerian communities account for the gendered nature of land ownership because the social norms, values, and practices perpetuate male dominance

over women and disenfranchise women from accessing land, making it difficult for many to purchase land (e.g., [Nnaji et al. 2021](#)). Land purchase is more expensive than inherited land or land apportioned free or with minimal cash by the community group overseeing community land.

Moreso, our study highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work men and women do in rural communities of both Edo and Delta states of Nigeria, unlike other studies, which reported that Yoruba traders were less likely to report the economic effects of the pandemic and more likely to access government benefits. For example, the studies in Lagos ([Nnaji et al. 2021](#); [Yusuff and Ajiboye 2014](#)) linked the situation to population exposure, clientele networks, political power, influence, and being a dominant ethnic group. Our study also contributes to our understanding of the nuances shaping the experiences of girls/women by highlighting the inequality and structural inequity existing in the studied communities. Consequently, our study contributes to our understanding of the unequal gendered impacts of the pandemic on rural work and the division of labor. The findings depict the importance of supporting girls/women, as well as the marginalized and the less privileged, to reduce power differences and create an egalitarian society.

Furthermore, there is a need to reduce the gendered effects of the pandemic on rural work, division of labor, and unpaid domestic work through the best policies and programs to promote gender equality and women's work, as recommended by other studies (e.g., [Lenshie et al. 2021](#); [Mūrage et al. 2022](#), [Nnaji et al. 2021](#)). From the pre- to post-pandemic periods, women are primarily responsible for child and family care. With children of school age in schools in the pre-pandemic period, this cushioned the unpaid work at home that women did. However, during the pandemic, the involvement of men and women in farming, trading, and animal husbandry/livestock rearing was significantly impacted. Existing studies highlight how the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria resulted in food insecurity ([Ibukun and Adebayo 2021](#); [Nnaji et al. 2021](#)).

7. Conclusions

This paper highlights the contextual nuances that perpetuate the gendering of work in the studied communities and how the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated gender inequality, with rural women disproportionately bearing the burden of household chores. Our study identifies the contextual factors affecting gender roles and the negotiation of these roles. The significant factors perpetuating inequality in land use and positionality in rural communities include lack of capital/financial assistance, social norms, values, and practices. Both rural men and women, particularly women, needed financial assistance to boost their capital for farming, trading, businesses, and investments like men.

To address these issues, we must promote campaigns that drive cultural, social, political, and policy changes to foster egalitarianism. These campaigns include establishing more equitable norms regarding land ownership that would privilege both men/boys and women/girls and increasing the engagement of boys/men in unpaid household tasks. Eliminating discriminatory norms, values, and practices that perpetuate gender and social inequality would significantly improve the social positioning of women and girls.

Furthermore, the rising transportation costs due to poor intercommunity and interstate road networks impacted rural work and income by hindering the ability to transport farm produce to the markets, process farm crops, and trade in local and non-local markets. Governments at all levels must improve road networks to reduce transportation costs. Additionally, to boost women's productivity and participation in the formal and informal sectors of paid and unpaid work, state and local governments are to provide and monitor childcare options where women can keep their children under quality care.

Importantly, future pandemic responses should be culturally and socially relevant to the Nigerian context rather than adopting Western-driven policies and measures such as social distancing and extended lockdowns ([Iwuoha and Aniche 2021](#)), which are not sustainable in a country lacking welfare support. Integrating gender considerations into pandemic policies is crucial for ensuring equitable impacts on all members of society.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.G.O. and F.I.O.; methodology, A.G.O. and F.I.O.; formal analysis, A.G.O., F.I.O., J.I.E. and K.C.H.; investigation, J.I.E., O.J.A., J.O.A., M.O.E. and E.O.I.; data curation, J.I.E., O.J.A., J.O.A., M.O.E., K.C.H. and E.O.I.; writing, F.I.O.; writing—review and editing, F.I.O. and K.C.H.; supervision, J.I.E.; project administration, A.G.O. and F.I.O.; funding acquisition, A.G.O. and F.I.O. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received external funding from IDRC- International Development Research Centre, grant number 1100017.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The research obtained ethical approval from the Research and Ethics Committee, College of Medical Sciences, University of Benin with Protocol Number of Ethical Clearance-CMS/REC/2023/061 and the Human Ethics REB Committee, University of Windsor with Awards File No. 41257. All respondents in this study were either given pseudonyms and no names were recorded. Participants in the study used pseudonyms as identifiers in any publication or reported from this study. We had no penalties or loss of benefits for refusal to participate in the study or withdrawal from it.

Informed Consent Statement: We obtained consent from rural women in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria and the objectives of the study were well communicated to them. Participation was purely voluntary and there was no inducement or undue influence on participants. The study respected the confidentiality and privacy all the participants during the study and assured all participants that their identity and information given will be kept secret and will not be disclosed.

Data Availability Statement: The data used in this research are not available for the public due to the privacy agreement with the study participants; however, the data will be made available on request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Aderinto, Adeyinka Abideen. 2017. Patriarchy and culture: The position of women in a rural Yoruba community, Nigeria. *The Anthropologist* 3: 225–30. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Adisa, Toyin Ajibade, Issa Abdullaheem, and Sulu Babaita Isaika. 2019. Patriarchal hegemony: Investigating the impact of patriarchy on women's work-life balance. *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 34: 19–33. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Afolayan, Adeyinka Titilope, and Adekunle Olusola Adeyeye. 2013. Determinants of rural women's participation in income-generating activities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Extension* 17: 103–15.
- Akanle, Olayinka, and Ejiade Omolara Oluwakemi. 2012. Traditionalism and household chores in Ibadan, Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 38: 203–24.
- Albert-Makyur, Susan Doofan. 2020. Gender socioeconomic perspective of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* 8: 1–9. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Atim, Grace, and Bosede Awodola. 2020. Gender justice and empowerment: Evaluating women's unpaid care work in Nigeria. *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies* 8: 27–34. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3: 77–101. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Carbado, Devon W., Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Vickie M. Mays, and Barbara Tomlinson. 2013. Intersectionality: Mapping the movements of a theory. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 10: 303–12. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2015. Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology* 41: 1–20. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Coltrane, Scott. 2000. Research on household labor: Modeling and measuring the social embeddedness of routine family work. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62: 1208–33. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Craig, Lyn, and Abigail Powell. 2018. Shares of housework between mothers, fathers, and young people: Routine and non-routine housework for oneself and others. *Social Indicators Research* 136: 269–81. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Eagly, Alice H. 1987. *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Eagly, Alice H., and Wendy Wood. 1999. The origins of sex differences in human behavior: Evolved dispositions versus social roles. *American Psychologist* 54: 408–23. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Eagly, Alice H., and Wendy Wood. 2012. Social role theory. In *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology: Volume 2*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd., pp. 458–76. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ekoh, Prince Chiagozie, Patricia Ujunwa Agbawodikeizu, Chukwuemeka Ejimkaronye, Elizabeth Onyedikachi George, Chigozie Donatus Ezulike, and Ikechukwu Nnebe. 2020. COVID-19 in rural Nigeria: Diminishing social support for older people in Nigeria. *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine* 6: 1–7. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

- Farré, Lidia, Yarine Fawaz, Libertad González Luna, and Jennifer Graves. 2020. *How the COVID-19 Lockdown Affected Gender Inequality in Paid and Unpaid Work in Spain*. IZA Discussion Papers 13434. Bonn: Institute of Labor Economics (IZA). Available online: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3643198 (accessed on 30 June 2023).
- Folbre, Nancy. 2013. The care economy in Africa: Subsistence production and unpaid care. *Journal of African Economies* 23: 1128–56. [CrossRef]
- Greenstein, Theodore N. 2000. Economic dependence, gender, and the division of labor in the home: A replication and extension. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62: 322–35. [CrossRef]
- Hernandez Bark, Alina S., Jordi Escartín, and Rolf van Dick. 2014. Gender, and leadership in Spain: A systematic review of some key aspects. *Sex Roles* 70: 522–37. [CrossRef]
- Herrera, Javier, and Constance Torelli. 2013. Domestic work and employment in Africa: What is the trade-off for women? In *Urban Labor Markets in Sub-Saharan Africa*. In African Development Form. New York: The World Bank, Chapter 7. pp. 221–49.
- Ibukun, Cleopatra Oluseye, and Abayomi Ayinla Adebayo. 2021. Household food security and the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. *African Development Review* 33: S75–87. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- International Labour Organization. 2018a. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*, 3rd ed. Report No. 13.01.3. Geneva: ILO.
- International Labour Organization. 2018b. *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*. Report No. 08.17.1. Geneva: ILO.
- Iwuoha, Victor Chidubem, and Ernest Tooichi Aniche. 2021. COVID-19 lockdown and social distancing policies and the sustainability of small businesses in south-eastern Nigeria. *Politikon* 48: 517–29. [CrossRef]
- Josephson, Anna Leigh, Talip Kilic, and Jeffrey David Michler. 2020. *Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 in Four African Countries*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Kabeer, Naila, Shahra Razavi, and Yana van der Meulen Rodgers. 2021. Feminist economic perspective on the COVID-19 pandemic. *Feminist Economics* 27: 1–29. [CrossRef]
- Kassah, A., H. U. Muhammad, and J. H. Tsado. 2023. Income generating activities of rural women in Kaduna State Agricultural Zone III, Nigeria. *African Scholar Journal of Biotechnology and Agricultural Research* 28: 35–44.
- King, Tania, Belinda Hewitt, Bradley Crammond, Georgina Sutherland, Humaira Maheen, and Anne Kavanagh. 2020. Reordering gender systems: Can COVID-19 lead to improved gender equality and health? *Lancet (London, England)* 396: 80–81. [CrossRef]
- Lenshie, Nsembe Edward, Mark Ma'aku Joshua, and Christian Ezeibe. 2021. COVID-19 pandemic and informal women workers in peri-urban communities in Nigeria. *Local Environment* 26: 754–69. [CrossRef]
- Lincoln, Yvonne S., and Egon G. Guba. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Lyttelton, Thomas, Emma Zang, and Kelly Musick. 2021. Telecommuting and gender inequalities in parents paid and unpaid work before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 84: 230–49. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Makama, Godiya Allanana. 2013. Patriarchy and gender inequality in Nigeria: The way forward. *European Scientific Journal* 9: 115–44.
- Mikelson, Kelly S. 2008. He said, she said: Comparing mother and father reports of father involvement. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 70: 613–24. [CrossRef]
- Mobolaji, Jacob Wale, and Akanni Ibukun Akinyemi. 2022. Complementary support in later life: Investigating the gender disparities in patterns and determinants among older adults in Southwestern Nigeria. *BMC Geriatrics* 22: 1–12. [CrossRef]
- Mürage, Alice, Amy Oyekunle, Uche Ralph-Opara, Patience Agada, Julia Smith, Kate Hawkins, and Rosemary Morgan. 2022. Gendered and differential effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on paid and unpaid work in Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences* 8. [CrossRef]
- Nnaji, Amaka, Nazmun N. Ratna, and Alan Renwick. 2021. Gendered access to land and household food insecurity: Evidence from Nigeria. *Agricultural and Resource Economics Review* 51: 45–67. [CrossRef]
- Obioma, Ihuoma F., Tanja Hentschel, and Alina S. Hernandez Bark. 2021. Gender stereotypes and self-characterizations in Germany and Nigeria: A cross-cultural comparison. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 52: 764–80. [CrossRef]
- Obioma, Ihuoma Faith, Ameeta Jaga, Mahima Raina, Wakil Ajibola Asekun, and Alina S. Hernandez Bark. 2022. Gendered share of housework and the COVID-19 pandemic: Examining self-ratings and speculation of others in Germany, India, Nigeria, and South Africa. *The Journal of Social Issues* 79: 907–34. [CrossRef]
- Ogando, Ana Carolina, Michael Rogan, and Rachel Moussié. 2021. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and unpaid care work on informal workers' livelihoods. *International Labor Review* 161: 171–94. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Okeahalam, Charles, Victor Williams, and Kennedy Otwombe. 2020. Factors associated with COVID-19 infections and mortality in Africa: A cross-sectional study using publicly available data. *BMJ Open* 10: e042750. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Okoroiwu, Henshaw Uchechi, Christopher Ogar Ogar, Glory Mbe Egom Nja, Dennis Akongfe Abunimye, and Regina Idu Ejemot-Nwadiaro. 2021. COVID-19 in Nigeria: Account of epidemiological events, response, management, preventions, and lessons learned. *GERMS* 11: 391–402. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Okumagba, Paul Oghenero. 2011. Family Support for the Elderly in the Delta State of Nigeria. *Studies in Home Community Science* 5: 21–27. [CrossRef]
- Oladeji, David. 2011. Family care, social services, and living arrangements factors influencing psychosocial well-being of elderly from selected households in Ibadan, Nigeria. *Education Research International* 2011: 421898. [CrossRef]
- Onyebu, C. M. 2016. Assessment of income generating activities among rural women in Enugu State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Business, Economics and Accountancy* 4: 32–38.

- Petts, Richard J., Daniel L. Carlson, and Joanna R. Pepin. 2020. A gendered pandemic: Childcare, homeschooling, and parents' employment during COVID-19. *Gender, Work, and Organization* 28: 515–34. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Pierotti, Rachael S., Sophia Friedson-Ridenour, and Olubukola Olayiwola. 2022. Women farm what they can manage: How time constraints affect the quantity and quality of labour for married women's agricultural production in southwestern Nigeria. *World Development* 152: 1–12. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Reichelt, Malte, Kinga Makovi, and Anahit Sargsyan. 2021. The impact of COVID-19 on gender inequality in the labor market and gender-role attitudes. *European Societies* 23 Suppl. 1: S228–S245. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Ristock, Janice, and Lois Grieger. 1996. *Joining Together against Violence: An Agenda for Collaborative Action*. Toronto: Canadian Mental Health Association.
- Shafer, Kevin, Casey Scheibling, and Melissa A. Milkie. 2020. The Division of domestic labor before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada: Stagnation versus shifts in fathers' contributions. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 57: 523–49. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Shockley, Kristen M., and Winny Shen. 2016. Couple Dynamics: Division of Labor. In *The Oxford Handbook of Work and Family*. Edited by Tammy D. Allen and Lillian Turner Elby. London: Oxford University Press, Chapter 10.
- Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. 1998. *The Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.
- Suri, Harsh. 2011. Purposive sampling in qualitative research synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal* 11: 63–75. [[CrossRef](#)]
- van Staveren, Irene, and Olasunbo Odebode. 2007. Gender norms as asymmetric institutions: A case study of Yoruba women in Nigeria. *Journal of Economic Issues (JEI)* 41: 903–25. [[CrossRef](#)]
- West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. Doing gender. *Gender & Society* 1: 125–51. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Weziak-Bialowolska, Dorota. 2015. Differences in gender norms between countries: Are they valid? The issue of measurement invariance. *European Journal of Population = Revue europeenne de demographie* 31: 51–76. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- World Economic Forum. 2021. *COVID-19: The Road to a Global Recovery*. New York: World bank.
- Yusuff, Olabisi Sherifat, and Emmanuel Olanrewaju Ajiboye. 2014. Social change and traditional gender roles in Lagos State, Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues* 17: 58–68.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2015. Situated intersectionality and social inequality. *Raisons Politiques* 58: 91–100. [[CrossRef](#)]

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.