

UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

**EDUCATION AND SOCIETY:
OVERCOMING THE GENDER DIVIDE
IN THE NIGERIAN SETTING**

An Inaugural Lecture

By

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DEDICATION

This inaugural lecture is dedicated to the Almighty God who made all my dreams come true

&

To my husband and children, for their unreserved love and support, especially in my critical moments in life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly thankful to God, the Almighty, the Ever-present, who makes a way where there seems to be no way. In spite of all my health challenges and all other disheartening moments, He still made it possible for me to get to the peak of my career and fashioned me today to stand before the audience and testify His goodness in my life. May His name continue to be glorified.

My deep appreciation goes to my parents, Chief Ezigbo and Ezinne Chienyezu Unachukwu for sending me to school at the time it was very common for female children to be given away as house-helpers or left at home to be engaged in house chores with their mothers. For my parents, instead, it was a priority for their children “*to see the light*” as they kept reminding us. Equally, I must not forget to appreciate the contributions of my elder brother, Sir Chief Fred. Unachukwu, of the blessed memory, who took over the entire burden of my academic sponsorship and that of my siblings from my parents during his early years in business. To him, I must get my first degree before getting married, in spite of many suitors around the corner then. His death a few years ago affected my earlier intention to give my inaugural lecture because he planned to be present. With the presence of his wife, Lady Glad Unachukwu and the rest of the family, I am consoled that my late brother’s spirit is present in our mist. I am equally thankful to my other siblings, Mrs Comfort Metu (late), Ezinne Roseline Obidi, and Pharm. Chief Emmanuel Unachukwu (late), who stood by me, especially in times of need.

I wish to express my gratitude to the University of Port Harcourt whose Staff Development Programme enhanced the completion of my Ph.D programme. In addition, my deep appreciation goes to late Professor C. Ake and Dr. Onyige (late), who believed in my

intelligence during my employment interview and recommended my employment in the University of Port Harcourt. I must not forget my mentor, Professor B.A. Eheazu, who I am privileged to be under his tutelage in my career. He introduced and taught Sociology of Education to the first set of Post Graduate students in the Faculty of Education and I happened to be one of them. My acknowledgements also go to other Professors who, in one way or the other, have contributed to enhance my career and joy today. They include Prof. Emeritus Otonti Nduka, Professors D. Baridam, J. Ajienka, E.C. Nduka, J. Enaohwo, E. Efebo, A.I. Joe, Pauline Otti, C. Opara, C. Madumere-Obike, O. Nwanna-Nzewunwa, A. K. Orubite, V. Dienye, S. Maduagwu, U. Nzewi, S. Amaele and K. Nwifo (late), among others.

My Associates will not be forgotten because the knowledge, wisdom, joy and happiness I gain from their relationship are unquantifiable and highly recommended for a successful work in life. They include Drs. C.J. Ugwu, A.J. Onyido, D. Douglas, A. Mumuni, C. Ukala, Nk. Ohia, M. Onuegbu, B. Igweshi, J. Anekwe, C. Ezenwaka and other colleagues and administrative staff in the Faculty of Education. Others are the families of Hon. Sir Ikenna Unachukwu, Lady G. Unachukwu, Mrs Vic. Unachukwu, Hon. Justice O. Nwabunike, Chief Jerry & Mrs. Ada. Ejem, Dr. Joe Okonkwo, Sir J. Otti, Sir B. Okeke, Chief Chukwuma Okeke (late) and Mrs. Obi Eddie-Barber, Mrs. F. Okonkwo Mrs A. Orianwu, to mention a few. Their prayers, concerns and instant assistance in many ways are quite appreciated. May God Almighty grant all of you His GRACE and PEACE always.

I must not forget all my Post Graduate students, who have contributed remarkably to my career growth. The studies we conducted together widened my knowledge-sphere of influence in

my special area. I will always remain grateful for that rare opportunity.

My special gratitude goes to my intimate friend, guardian and husband, who motivates me to embark on tough journeys because he is always there to monitor my progress and advice correctly. Himself, together with our children, Nnenna, Ikeobi, Okenwa and Ugonwa comprise a great force for my achievements till date. I also appreciate the encouragement and peace radiating from my sons-in-law, Nomso and Victor as well as my grandchildren, Chizilim and Jideobi. The home secretariat remains open all day and night for your joint-operation. May our good Lord reward you abundantly for being there for me. Together, we can make it!

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

2:45pm. Guests are Seated

3:00pm. Academic Procession Begins

The procession shall enter the Ebitimi Banigo Auditorium, University Park, and the congregation shall stand as the procession enters the hall in the following order:

ACADEMIC OFFICER
PROFESSORS
DEANS OF FACULTIES/SCHOOLS
DEAN, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
LECTURER
REGISTRAR
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC)
DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR (ADMINISTRATION)
VICE CHANCELLOR

After the Vice- Chancellor has ascended the dais, the congregation shall remain standing for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem. The congregation shall thereafter resume their seats.

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Registrar shall rise, cap and invite the Vice-Chancellor to make the opening Remarks.

THE VICE CHANCELLOR SHALL THEN RISE, CAP AND MAKE HIS OPENING REMARKS AND RESUME HIS SEAT.

THE INAUGURAL LECTURE

The Registrar shall rise, cap, invite the Vice-Chancellor to make his opening remarks and introduce the Lecturer.

The Lecturer shall remain standing during the Introduction. The Lecturer shall step on the rostrum, cap and deliver her Inaugural Lecture. After the lectures, she shall step towards the Vice-Chancellor, cap and deliver a copy of the Inaugural Lecture to the Vice-Chancellor and resume her seat. The Vice-Chancellor shall present the document to the Registrar.

CLOSING

The Registrar shall rise, cap and invite the Vice-Chancellor to make his Closing Remarks.

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CLOSING REMARKS.

The Vice-Chancellor shall then rise, cap and make his Closing Remarks. The Congregation shall rise for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem and remain standing as the Academic [Honour] Procession retreats in the following order:

VICE CHANCELLOR
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR [ADMINISTRATION]
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR [ACADEMIC]
REGISTRAR
LECTURER
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
DEAN, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEANS OF FACULTIES/SCHOOLS
PROFESSORS
ACADEMIC OFFICER

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EDUCATION AND SOCIETY: OVERCOMING THE GENDER DIVIDE IN THE NIGERIAN SETTING

PREAMBLE

Vice Chancellor Sir, our gathering today is an indication that we all share a common interest in knowledge-searching for our common good and development. However, due to our individual/group differences in interest, we are compelled to belong to different disciplines.

Sociology of Education is a branch of Sociology. Sociology is a social science that focuses on the study of society and "... aims at achieving a deeper understanding and knowledge of the self, through a systematic study of social life and activities" (Okeke, 2016:23-24). On the other hand, Sociology of Education applies sociological principles and methods to find solutions to educational problems. In other words, it applies sociological theories, concepts and generalizations developed to provide adequate understanding of different relationships between education and society.

It would not have been good enough for me to give my inaugural lecture immediately after my professorial promotion because of my many unfinished agenda (including the completion of my books titled 'Education and Society' and "Gender Issues and Development" respectively). As Eheazu (1998:1) succinctly notes, a professor's inaugural lecture should focus on "... an address in his area of specialization, ... relating his area of specialization and his contributions therein to the betterment of society". My choice of topic is in my area of specialization that interests me most and I have been consistent in teaching and research for over four decades, in an attempt to discover avenues through which education will positively contribute immensely towards alleviating developmental obstacles arising from gender issues, particularly in Nigeria. Referring to some related perspectives on gender issues, this presentation examines gender inequality and its dimensions, including men's

discrimination against women, resulting to women's marginalization in the formal and informal structures. It equally includes activities in which regulations on the distribution and utilization of the country's resources and political arrangements do not reasonably involve the women. These arrangements constitute a cog in-the-wheel of achieving national development.

My inaugural topic is therefore necessitated on the need to provide authentic information on gender inclusiveness, to enable adequate planning, execution and appraisal of development strides, guided by relevant policies that would lead to full identification, development and utilization of available human resources in our environment for societal progress. Records show a long existing negative skew on the relationship between the male and female population which continues to mar the country's development efforts.

The focus on education is the most relevant attempt to bridge any identified gender gap. Education is among the twelve areas of focus by the Declaration of the Beijing Platform for Action (after the 4th World Conference on women held from 4th to 15th September, 1995), described as an outstanding avenue through which the improvement of women's status would be assured because it (education) aims at empowering them towards achieving full equality with the men.

INTRODUCTION

The success and progress of any given population depend majorly on the ability of members to identify, develop and utilize their varied individual and group potential skills and knowledge and work in collaboration to successfully tackle their day-to-day social, political, economic and environmental challenges, among others. The achievement of this primarily fulfils God's biblical injunction to Christians immediately after the creation of human beings in Genesis 1:28 (Swindoll, 1996, NIV)., to become "... fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over living creature that moves on the ground". It therefore becomes mandatory for all hands to be on

deck, without any discrimination, to accomplish any set societal developmental stride at record time. Men and women must collaborate at all times, each contributing excellently, without any form of restriction or discrimination against the other. Hence, the role of education, in all its ramifications, becomes strategic for the sexes to synergise, become supreme and 'subdue' the earth and its cohorts.

Overtime, regrettably, the human mind and activities in the socio-cultural, economic and political spheres, continue to create ripples in different developmental sectors to the extent that set positive goals are delayed and, sometimes, not achieved, thus giving rise to inequalities in many areas of life, including issues related to social and economic status, education and gender issues, political and health matters, to mention a few. In this regard, and with specific reference to Nigeria, it is common knowledge that existing patriarchal social structure and instituted laws, all of which have continued to shape the country's norms, values, relationships and other activities have highly limited the socio-economic and political activities of the females to the extent that they remain subjugated to the men, without minding that Nigeria, presently, claims to be a democratic country. As Stacey, Kramarae and Lerner (in Makama, 2013) unanimously note, patriarchy "... is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women ...". In other words, it is a social system in which men and women are stratified hierarchically in all areas of endeavour to the extent that men dominate and control the higher positions, while the women occupy the lower positions.

From the foregoing, patriarchy perpetuates women's subjugation by men in their daily relationships and interactions in all fabrics of existing societal institutions. Nigeria's female population is over 50% and their varied roles as mothers and in other subsistence socio-economic activities are more than those of the men. However, they are not readily visible in the society's decision-making processes

and other important areas of development institutions as presented by the Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) (Internet) in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1: Global Gender Gap by Rank and Index: Nigeria

Year	2006	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
(Countries)	(114)	(145)	(145)	(144)	(144)	(149)
Rank	94	118	125	118	122	133
Index	0.61	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.62
Change %	-----	-1.21	0.17	0.78	-0.31	-3.12

Key: 1 = No Inequality; 0 = Maximum Inequality

Source: Compiled from Global Gender Gap Report (Internet)

Retrieved from: https://tcdata360.worldbank.org/indicators/846d20f8?country=BRA&indicator=27961&viz=line_chart&years=2006,2018 on 8th March, 2019.

Gender inequality is consistently present in Nigeria, considering the percentage rate of change between 2006 and 2018.

Table 2: Global Gender Gap Sub-index by Rank and Index: Nigeria

S/N0	Year (Countries)	2006	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	World Rank & Index	114 (0.61)	145 (0.64)	145 (0.64)	144 (0.64)	144 (0.64)	149 (0.62)
i	Economic Participation & Opportunity	59 (0.61)	55 (0.71)	61 (0.69)	52 (0.70)	37 (0.73)	79 (0.66)
ii	Educational Attainment	104 (0.82)	134 (0.78)	137 (0.96)	134 (0.81)	135 (0.81)	140 (0.81)
iii	Health and Survival	99 (0.96)	109 (0.97)	133 (0.96)	135 (0.96)	94 (0.95)	132 (0.96)
iv	Political Empowerment	99 (0.05)	102 (0.10)	111 (0.01)	109 (0.01)	135 (0.05)	139 (0.05)

Key: 1 = No Inequality; 0 = Maximum Inequality

Source: Compiled from Global Gender Gap Report (internet)

Retrieved from:

https://tcdata360.worldbank.org/indicators/846d20f8?country=BRA&indicator=27961&viz=line_chart&years=2006,2018 on 8th March, 2019.

- Nigeria ranks just slightly above average in the effort to achieve gender equality on the global gender gap ranking, from 2006 to 2018;
- Gender inequality occurs in different magnitude in different fabrics of endeavour such as economic participation, educational attainment, health survival and political empowerment;
- In spite of all efforts by the government such as her support for Education for All as well as the Universal Basic Education, gender inequality still persists;
- Gender inequality is most serious in political empowerment;

Table 3: Gender Inequality Distribution in Nigeria in 2018

S/No.	Economy/Education/Politics	Female %	Male %
(i)	Economic participation & opportunity		
	Labour force	50.3	59.9
	Legislatures & Senior managers	22	78
	Professionals & Technical Workers	38.9	61.3
(ii)	Educational attainment		
	Literacy rate	41.4	61.3
	Enrolment in Primary	58.1	69
	Enrolment in Secondary	46.6	53.4
	Enrolment in Tertiary	8.3	12.0
(iii)	Political Empowerment		
	Women in Parliament	5.6	94.4
	Ministerial Position	12.0	88.0

Global Gender Gap Report (Internet)

Retrieved from: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2018/data-explorer/#economy=NGA> on 8th March, 2019.

- Men have higher labour force participation than women (59.9% and 50.3% respectively);
- Men have higher literacy rates than women (61.3% and 41.4% respectively);
- Only 8.3% of women enrol in tertiary education as compared to 12.0% of men;
- Only 5.6% of women occupy the parliamentary position compared to 94.4% of men.

Okeke (2014:1) believes that everything being equal, “man’s control of his environment is dependent on the quality and level of education acquired”. The long-standing patriarchal structure, coupled with existing formal and institutional structures, among others, continue to constitute “a strong wedge on the education of the female population, thus creating a shadow that envelops the identification, development and application of the female ingenuity” (Okeke, 2014¹:1).

Based on the foregoing, it is strongly believed that, without any preference, the entire population should be exposed to the acquisition of educational knowledge that upholds integration, interrelationship and collaboration by providing empowerment programmes through their maximum exploitation and deployment of their God-given potentials. In other words, if the curriculum contents and methods of education are adequately programmed and executed, without any gender bias, the present gender divide in the country's truncated match towards societal development will be bridged.

This is in line with the present Gender-and-Development approach that targets the female population and devises different programmes to equip them to measure up with men for their effective integration to become partners in the country's development system, not just empowering them for its own sake. Presently, in spite of increasing efforts of the women, Makama (2013) observes that they are still seen to be far from being considered as equal to men, his reason being that equal rights in employment and other essential departments have not been achieved as a result of their major engagement in domestic affairs and other low status activities, high prevalence of illiteracy level, poverty and discrimination in employment pay packets. In addition, Salam (in Makama, 2013) recalls another female employment space considered as "corporate prostitution" in some organisations. This is a situation where young and elegant female adults are only employed because they are expected to use their feminine body features to attract business for their companies. If these shortcomings mentioned are taken into consideration in the education programme intended, the identified gaps will be closed.

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Education

Over the years, in spite of different conceptions of education among and between individuals, groups and nations, there is a unanimous agreement that education provides a fundamental basic channel for a firm establishment and progress of societal members in different

strategic positions, through the enlightenment of the mind and knowledge acquisition. As part of the consequences of the evolution of societies from agrarian to industrial and information-driven society, education of the mind, initially strictly transmitted orally in the family/community, has evolved to the western style. In this presentation, education is considered as a process of acquiring the right knowledge, values, skills, beliefs, as well as the right societal attitudes and behaviours. Hence, it prepares one to fit and participate fully in the social, cultural, economic, political and moral spheres of life. It is therefore considered to be essential for an all-round development of individuals for achieving progress.

Based on the foregoing, the principles of education rest on providing the entire society with unlimited opportunities to educational access and knowledge in all areas of need, thus leading to self-actualization and societal development. In Nigeria, the main principle rests on "... equipping every citizen with such knowledge, skills' attitudes and values to enable him/her to derive maximum benefits from his/her membership in society, leave a fulfilling life and contribute to the development and welfare of the community" (www.ibe.unesco.org). The national educational goals (FRN, 2013:2-3) at all levels of education are:

- (a) Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
- (b) Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
- (c) Provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education within and outside the formal school system;
- (d) Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity; and
- (e) Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society.

In pursuit of the foregoing national educational goals at different levels over the years through varied educational expansion, policy changes and the continued dwindling economy, some obvious disparities such as the difference between urban and rural schools, public and private schools, male and female students' enrolment figures, dichotomy between admission figures and available teaching resources, to mention a few, appear to be the order of the day. Human resource development is at the apex of the factors of production which enable every nation to move forward.

In economic terms, the major factors of production namely, labour, capital, land and entrepreneurship are considered essential for producing quality goods and services for the satisfaction and progress of society (Investopia, 2018). Among these factors, labour and entrepreneurship directly involve the human population. Labour involves both the mental and physical human endeavours purposefully devoted for profit generation, while entrepreneurship involves the human input of his/her skills and abilities, without minding all the risks in the effort to organize and utilize other components involved in societal development. As Okeke (2016:24-25) rightly posits:

... education is the specialized training given ... with the basic aim of equipping the individual with the knowledge of reading, writing and calculation, as well as specialized skills of interest and ability. The acquisition of these enables one to achieve self-development and contribute effectively towards societal development.

Similarly, Salami in Okeke (2016:25) observes that "... educational achievement or success not only provides access to specialist knowledge and increases the individual's grasp of the world around him. It also confers occupational status on the individual and improves his life chances". These laudable achievements through education prompt Thorndike in Farooq (2012) to assert that education represents growth, while growth involves many sided developments. He opines that the latter represents different things

for different individuals, ranging from an opportunity for job prospects to improved quality of life, become literate, create and evoke critical thoughts. In agreement with Anyalebechi (2016), the acquisition of literacy education is the surest avenue through which the women will gain control of their lives for self-actualization and equal participation with men in all aspects of nation building.

Since the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948 which also affected education, there has been continuous increase in female enrolment at the primary and secondary school level. However, the males still dominate the enrolment into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Chinasa (internet) noted that the period (1970 to 1994) witnessed 30% and 80% of girls and boys in primary education respectively. Worse still, girls' enrolment in mathematics, technology, science and engineering (STEM) as well as other related subjects was still recorded lower than boys. In addition, Chinasa reported a higher rate of drop-out among girls than boys. At the tertiary, secondary and primary levels, in cumulative terms, the percentage of female students was 57, compared with that of 71% for males in 2002. Earlier in 1990, among the female disabled students, it was 37%, against 57% for disabled male students. Similarly, it was reported that the literacy rate for the adult males was 74.4%, compared with 57% for the adult females.

4: Projected Men and Women Population from 2007 to 2015 (Age Group and Sex)

Age Group	Sex	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1-14	Man	31,402,417	32,371,709	33,370,920	34,400,974	35,462,821	36,557,445	37,685,856	38,849,098	40,048,245
	Woman	29,146,881	30,046,552	30,973,061	31,930,061	32,915,640	33,931,640	34,979,002	36,058,691	37,171,708
15-64	Man	39,532,504	40,752,745	42,010,652	43,307,387	44,644,147	46,022,169	47,442,726	48,907,131	50,416,737
	Woman	40,007,871	41,242,786	42,515,819	43,828,146	45,180,981	46,575,573	48,013,212	49,495,226	51,022,985
65+	Man	2,612,774	2,693,422	2,776,559	2,862,263	2,950,612	3,041,688	3,135,575	3,232,360	3,332,133
	Woman	2,064,022	2,127,732	2,193,408	2,261,112	2,330,905	2,402,852	2,477,021	2,553,479	2,632,296
	Total	144,766,469	149,234,947	153,841,352	158,589,942	163,485,106	168,531,368	173,733,391	179,095,985	184,624,105

Source: 1991 Population Census (See Appendix for illustration and computation).

Table 5: Projected % Age-Specific Distribution by Highest Level of Education Attained by Sex (2001 and 2015)

Characteristic	Sex	15-17	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55
None	Men	21.19	23.82	34.32	43.49	52.17
	Women	32.43	46.14	60.38	71.28	79.65
Primary	Men	24.27	17.50	18.39	19.52	16.70
	Women	21.46	14.64	13.47	11.02	6.96
SSS/Tech? TTC	Men	6.23	29.82	18.42	10.31	6.79
	Women	5.19	19.01	10.01	4.98	2.73
University	Men	0.00	1.57	3.74	3.11	2.39
	Women	0.00	0.64	1.05	0.71	0.48

Source: Nigeria, 1991 population census

Tables 4 and 5 comprise the projected male and female population between 2007 and 2015 according to age group and the highest level of educational attainment respectively. From every age group indicated among the illiterate population, the females still ranked higher than males. For the attainment of highest level of primary and university respectively, the percentage of females is still lower than males in every age-group.

From the foregoing, there is consistent disparity between the education received by the male and female population. In Alex-Oni's explanation in 2014 (legit.ng, delivered by Google), the identified disparity "... was due to the ideals imposed on women, during colonialism, about gender". The females' inferiority mindset limited women's role to just child-bearing and home-keeping, hence traces of these still linger till date; some lack parental support and encouragement. As a result, hence some drop out or do not aspire to study for a long period. No doubt, these scenarios, among others, must have contributed to differences in the choice of academic programme/profession preferred, according to sex. In this regard, Alex-Oni (legit.ng) in 2014 provided the statistics of women engaged in some workplace as follows:

"Media Practitioners ... 18.3%; Architecture ... 2.4%; Lawyers/Jurists ... 25.4%; Lecturers ... 11.8%"; Obstetricians and Gynaecologists ... 8.4%; Paediatricians ... 33.3%. In recent time, it has been indicated that "... less than 2% of the women in some

Nigerian States are gainfully employed in the labour force” (legit.ng).

It therefore becomes more worrisome that the social arrangements through established norms, values and beliefs have given rise to social and cultural inequality and the effort to achieve equality in which many people in society commonly refer to as ‘women struggle’. However, the National Council of Education Research and Training –NCERT (2006: iv) succinctly considers gender situation as,

... not woman’s issue; it is a people’s issue. ‘Femininity’ does not exist in isolation from ‘masculinity’. The construction of power of one determines the construction of power of the other. Gender relations are neither ‘natural’ nor given; they are constructed to make unequal relations seem ‘natural’ and can be naturalized only under the duress of socialization.

From the foregoing expressions, the resulting unequal gender relations in society deny men and women their freedom to identify and fully develop their human capabilities. It is therefore necessary to design options that will assist in bringing about cooperation and improve on the present unequal gender relations. This should be a priority in Nigeria where majority of the human and material resources still remain untapped, hence require to be identified and developed. All societal institutions are therefore urgently called to strategize towards the transformation to a more just and equal society. The achievement of these will, no doubt, provide a strong bridge to level up the gaps created by lack of cooperation in different magnitudes between the male and female population.

Types of Education

Obanya (2007:2-3) succinctly identified four types of education namely, “Incidental”, “Informal”, “Non-formal” and “Formal”. Incidental, as the name implies, relates to an unplanned knowledge

which is acquired by chance but Informal Education refers to the knowledge which is acquired through learning experiences that are unconsciously built into the normal activities of society. This is contrary to the non-formal education which is purposefully planned and disseminated outside an uncontrolled classroom environment. In other words, it may not necessarily be in the normal school environment. Lastly, Formal Education or modern education is planned. All the activities take place in the school and are geared towards embarking on purposeful learning, accompanied with rules and regulations, all of which are directed towards providing opportunities for acquiring planned knowledge. In this situation, all the activities in the school are organized and directed by qualified teachers with different ranks in their respective professions.

Gender

Generally, society views the term 'gender' as a concept that only relates to the female sex, creating a negative social impression due to prevailing societal norms and values. She is seen to be weak in the socio-economic and political spheres. Reporting Agbalajobia, Anyalebechi, (2016) considers this perception to be caused by "... the nature of our societies which celebrate men as being unique, stronger and fit for the public space while women are feeble and weak meant to stay within the confluence of the private space". Consequently, the women are marginalized, hence require to be assisted in these identified areas of life in society to enable them become partners in progress with men. To correct the false impression of this concept therefore requires a close consideration of the outcome of different male and female relationships, all of which lead to their respective associated/assigned societal roles or responsibilities.

Put simply and in consonance with Riley's assertion, reported by the National Population Commission (2001:3), "Gender is a social construct that establishes and differentiates statuses and roles between men and women particularly in the way they contribute to,

participate in, and are rewarded by the economy and the prevailing social systems". This goes to show that gender concerns men and women. It goes beyond the biological differences between the sexes to include the socially determined characteristics, thus resulting to societal perception of the individual and his/her assigned roles. Consequently, in agreement with Okeke and Onwubiko (2014:), gender comprises "... the roles, behaviours and activities which a society perceives as appropriate for male and female, with time and space". Both populations comprise the human capital considered as key components in societal development.

In other words, all must be gainfully developed and fully integrated in all fabrics of development activities, without any bias. Any differentiation due to biological and social components will be directed towards creating differences, or what could be considered as divide in this presentation. Areas this could manifest include the social ranking according to the multiple ways of human perception in relation to masculinity and femininity due to their importance and values (Sjorberg, 2010).

Different assigned responsibilities due to gender result in different levels of compensation/reward, thus giving rise to different socio-economic status. According to Okeke (2014:2):

The stereotyping associated with patriarchal culture consistently supports the males and females to live up to societal expectations of masculinity and femininity respectively. Accordingly, therefore, while the young males are pressurized to be courageous, fearless, warriors, unemotional, adventurous, breadwinners and the like on one hand, the young females are on the other hand, equally pressurized to become gentle, and unadventurous.

Okeke's submission implies that as men continue to dominate the economic, political and the social world, the women seem to be withdrawn from developing and utilizing their full potential, hence

contribute minimally towards developing themselves and their environment. In many cases, their contributions are undervalued. The full knowledge of gender therefore implies examining the chances and obstacles associated with their social relationship and power structure within their cultural environment.

In line with Riley (in NPC, 2001) therefore, gender remains one of the important benchmarks for measuring institutional and national advancement. Its resultant social arrangements lead to hierarchical ranking. In patriarchal society, males are usually assigned more serious responsibilities that are considered masculine, thus earn more wages, while the females engage in feminine roles which attract less wages. The implication of such scenario will be gender inequality which, in most cases, is in favour of the male population.

Nigeria, being one of the countries where patriarchy has long been in existence has witnessed the foregoing situation of male-dominance, often enshrined in the development policies, customary laws and socio-cultural practices. For instance, Ciroma (2006: xi) reports that despite the country's effort in her gender policy to tackle the problem of male-dominance, "... sexual stereotyping of social role and cultural prejudice continue to militate against employment of rights and full participation of women in national development". This observed scenario has failed to recognize the women's importance in the country's human population.

With regard to power-sharing and participation in decision-making, very little and sometimes, non-participation of women was clearly reported by the National Bureau of Statistics in Kale (2016) summarised as follows:

About half of the population of Nigeria are women with right to vote and hold public offices in almost all states of the federation. However, women continued to be under-represented at the national, state and local government levels. At the national parliament in 2015, 94.3 percent of seats were occupied by men compared to 5.7 percent

occupied by women. At the state and local government levels, women seem not to appear in the power equation. However, men dominate the judiciary at the state level. Among high-ranking government administrators with decision making powers, women were equally under-represented.

Gender Inequality

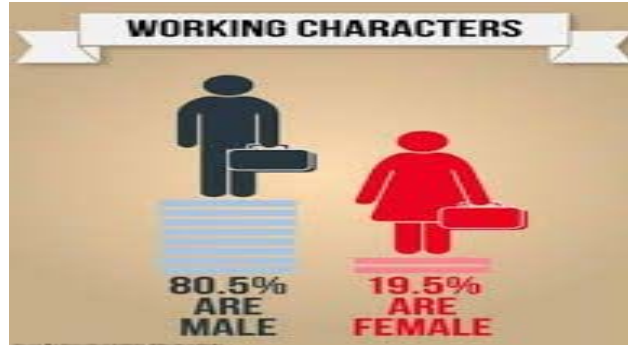


Fig. 1 Gender Inequality Image

Source: Retrieved from:

https://www.google.com/search?q=pictures+showing+gender+inequality&tbm=isch&tbs=rimg:CSKQYn8nasRIjidpEGTRMQfEVSONn_1mYgHsdtDq19AvAbZKZ_1CVLca7IWco2wt97ySZfMtGIq1Fpt9ueLf3ibv8RSoSCZ2kQZNExB8REVshdGshn_-_19KhIJVI42f-ZiAewRKN6oP-s2GbgqEgl20Ooj0C8BthFaHuYSBvC_1PyoSCUpn8JUtxrshEclAGN4U7-KIKhIJZyjbC33vJjkRLy usdvvJMqEgl8y0YiqUWm3xFmdLevZis8XyoSCW54t_1eJu_1xFEZdkRQdtul73&tbo=u&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiUkbWm4tzgAhUG3OAKHWGIDO0Q9C96BAgBEBg&biw=1366&bih=657&dpr=1#imgrc=lpBif7ydqxFWYM on 27th February, 2019.

Gender equality is all about non-discrimination of any kind, due to male and female relationships in all available opportunities as well as justice and freedom in a given environment. Conversely, Okeke (2018:405-406) notes that gender inequality connotes "... the supremacy of the male sex over the female sex in society's development structural settings ...a situation where the women are considered to be 'disadvantaged'". The occurrence in societies is in many dimensions and varies in different magnitudes. Earlier in the

United States, for instance, Riley (in NPC, 2001) noted that the government rarely recognised the efforts of the women as they were mainly considered to be home carers, while those who gained employment outside the home were not compensated equally with the males who were assigned to similar responsibility,

Riley's report provides an understanding of the existing gap between the women and men, resulting from different institutional arrangements in a given environment. Men assume the position of bread-winners because of their full engagement at workplace and positions in the government, while the women become home carers or "fired", without much due process when employed by their male counterparts. Sometimes, the women are not allowed to seek employment in some organizations and positions. These experiences make them not to share equal socio-economic status and power with men. In many countries of the world, women are not opportune to acquire land, education and husband's property, among others. hence do not have the same level of economic and political power. Culturally, they are not in control of their time to marry and conceive or determine family size. Consequently, despite recent efforts made, huge success to reposition women has not been achieved at different levels in the present Nigeria, Makama (2013) posits "... that womanhood is reduced to a mere infidel and second-class citizen, hence, there is the commonality of general belief system that the best place for women is in the 'Kitchen'".

Sibani (Internet) refers to gender inequality as "... a socio-cultural phenomenon that divides people into various categories such as male and female with a very high bias placing one specifically less than the other". Referring to Nigeria, she considers the state of women as "sorry and pitiable" because of their "... marginalization and suppression from the men in a bid to continually exercise undue superiority over them". In Nigeria, it is not common for a woman to prevent the husband from marrying more than one wife. In addition, she cannot determine her family size alone nor how to space the

births. The husband's property is not easily handed to the wife at every reported death of the husband. In some cases, the wife is seriously accused of being responsible for the husband's death, even when the man's relations are knowledgeable of the true cause of the man's death. Anyalebechi (2016) further confirms that in Nigeria, men are consistently excluded from participating in "domestic chores such as cooking, sweeping, fetching water and firewood, which are exclusively left for men". In the present political environment, it is not very common for women to vie for elective positions, with their increasing educational participation and qualifications. These conditions no doubt, affect the quality of life and the economic and political conditions of the population.

These differences should not exist unattended to, especially for a developing country like Nigeria, otherwise, the achievement of national development would be a dream. This assertion rests on the fact that no country can achieve full development, without adequate and effective engagement of both sexes. This is unequivocally the situation in Nigeria, especially where a higher percentage of the population comprises the females. It therefore becomes pertinent that all manner of discriminations among and between the human population should be discouraged and challenged.

What is Gender Divide?

In this presentation, the term 'gender divide' relates to gender inequality. It refers to the gap created by unequal relationships between the males and females due to different human engagements/undertakings that differentiate men and women, thus contribute immensely towards the definition of different assigned roles in their environment to reflect masculinity and femininity respectively.

For instance, gender divide is visible in the salary structure of male and female employees in an industry as determined by their gender role assignment, in spite of their equal educational qualifications. It

is equally reflected in different socio-economic, cultural and political affairs of men and women in society as presented earlier in different sections of this presentation, with regard to gender inequality.

Indicators of Gender Divide in Nigeria

(i) Male domination of economic engagements

For over a long period, men continue to dominate the country's major economic structures and processes, thus subjecting the majority of women to menial jobs and the informal sectors with little earnings. Such menial jobs include street-sweeping, office cleaning, gardening, child-care in primary schools and office messengers. In such places, the adequate working conditions, including regular salary payment and the security of workers are not fully guaranteed. Sometimes, these workers are threatened by their male employees of promotion and salary denials or withdrawn employment due to minor offences like lateness to work and irregular attendance. The result is that these women live in fear and in very poor conditions/unsecured environments only to remain the sources of cheap labour. Due to existing cultural norms, the women cannot easily own any property, including their husbands' own. They lack sufficient funds to train their children or purchase any property for themselves for commercialization or start any business of their own.

(ii) Laws and Human Rights violation against women

Presently, some existing laws related to both sexual and domestic offences have some gender biases against women. For instance, Makama (2013) observes that the definition of rape as presented by law is biased in such a manner to avoid male-inclusion. To him, rape is considered as "carnal knowledge" or sexual intercourse with a woman or girl without her consent or under duress". Generally, many rape incidences are not reported or recorded, hence many female victims do not benefit from the law.

Similarly, women's rights to their bodies and health, especially with regard to reproductive health, such as safe motherhood and safe sex, among others, are not guaranteed. In safe motherhood, the concerns are on the mother and the fetus, as well as the infant. The focus is to exploit all adequate avenues to achieve the best care for the mother and baby. These include providing a high-quality attention to family planning, pre-and post-natal care and all the gynaecological concerns involved. Unfortunately, in many cases, it is difficult for women to exercise their rights to dictate to their husbands what the family size should be or how to space child-births. Some are subjected to sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, multiple pregnancies and high mortality death rates, to mention a few.

Similarly, Makama (2013) argues that the biological characteristics of women associated with their assigned roles as mothers and wives restrict them from being empowered. As a result, in addition to existing local laws and cultural norms, they are excluded from decision-making and participating effectively in the economic sphere of the country, thus perpetuating their lower economic status. Consequently, the already existing divide in the Nigeria society continues to widen.

(iii) *Low female political participation*

Put simply, politics is all about the execution of coherent planned arrangements towards the organisation of relationships among and between stakeholders within an existing structure of power formation. Unfortunately, politics has been misconstrued to represent planned and executed events or activities where societal resources are assigned or shared in the public among members, thereby restricting the women to remain in their family circles, looking after their respective home environments. In addition, violent activities characterize politics in Nigeria. Women generally will not like to be associated with such scenario hence, they would rather stay at home for the men to be involved deeply in it.

Men generally frown at few women who dare step out to join politics as they are seen to be wayward. This position by the men discourages them from considering electing the women into political positions, without minding the size of their population in society. Presently, the percentage of women in politics is still quite low, compared to male representation hence, the common voice of the former is not usually heard. However, it is likely that the women who have their husbands' support succeed in politics and those without their husbands make it when they decide to join the race.

(iv) Socio-cultural factors

The nature of the long-standing existing traditional, social and cultural structures, to a large extent, seems to negate any alteration in favour of women in Nigeria. These include early and sometimes forced marriages which do not allow the women to mature enough to tackle the challenges encountered in marriage, thus subjecting them to be fully dependent on their husbands. Others include obnoxious widowhood practices, including non-transfer of the husband's property to his widow, stereotyping of gender roles and self-identity in the family and society at large, thus institutionalizing feminity and masculinity.

'Feminist' and 'Feminism'

These are relative recent concepts applied when considering different activities of individuals and groups of men and women in their efforts to tackle women's poor position and varied discriminations they suffer in the hands of men. Generally, feminism is a social movement of concerned women and men referred to as feminists, to achieve gender equality. The movement started about the 18th Century However, Offen (in Legates, 1994:494) notes that "... the ideas and the growth of organized movements for women's emancipation preceded the birth of the words, and consciousness of women's oppression through their subordination to men, ... preceded both." For Webster (1986:837), feminism could be considered as "the theory of the political, social, and economic

equality of the sexes". To him, this could be relevant to some African countries in recent times but not to countries, especially in traditional society where morality provided the basic measure of status and class for men and women. Consequently, in consonance with Legates, feminism could be better considered as social movements in favour of women towards improving their status and class.

The advocacy is not limited to either male or female. Both are involved in addressing the problem of women's subordination by men. This scenario became more pronounced after the French and Industrial revolutions in Europe in the 19th Century, although earlier started in the 18th Century. Some areas of concern include voting rights, tax payment, negative socio-cultural attitude, race, job employment and adequate salary compensation, voting power and inclusion in decision-making, among others.

There are different types of feminist movement such as radical, Marxist and social feminisms, as well as liberal feminism. The radical feminists see men as the oppressors who have kept the women in their subordinate status as seen in patriarchy, hence the latter must liberate from the male oppressors only through revolutionary change (Pamela, 2005). With regard to Marxist and Socialist feminisms, Sylva (in Sibani, Internet) upholds Capitalism as the main source of women's suppression by the men. In other words, the females are being exploited as they are not adequately rewarded like their male counterparts, due to their gender. Consequently, the Liberal feminists aim at achieving societal change and equal opportunity by overhauling society's economic, political and social systems for men and women. The proposed areas of change include the judiciary, education, payment for house work, and adequate representation in government offices.

AN OVERVIEW OF FEMINISM IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, women and interest groups have always organised themselves, mostly without any name label, to tackle different acts of discrimination and subordination suffered in the hands of men as far back as the 19th Century till date. The main areas of concern include their effort to improve their social and political status, based on their rights and privileges at different levels in the community. The early stages witnessed very slow and difficult general acceptance by the men who felt that the movements were acts of sabotage and revolutionary against the societal norms and values. In spite of this negative response from the men, the women sustained their effort and remained resolute in their activities to achieve their collective goal. Succinctly put, Abdul, Adeleke, Adeyeye, Babalola, Eyo, Ibrahim, Ighorodje and Onose (2011:6) maintain as follows:

Feminism in Nigeria emerged out of the demands to improve women's status and eliminate debilitating factors that deprive women of employing their full human rights. (Such include) ... culture of patriarchy, male chauvinism and anarchy, exploitation, and marginalisation of women in the affairs of development.

Such movements in Nigeria are usually non-violent, non-confrontational, not prolonged but focused to achieve a defined purpose. Contributors include Mrs Fumilayo Ransom-Kuti, Margaret Ekpo, Chimamando Adichie, Molara Ogundipe, Bilkisu Yusuf, Ifi Amadiume, Nwando Achebe, Chioma Opara and Elizabeth Okeke, among others.

Table 6: Some Agencies (Feminist Groups) for Achieving Gender Equality in Nigeria

S/N	Name	Founding Year	Mandate
1.	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD)	1989 (Decree No.30)	# “To advice the government on gender and children issues and issues affecting persons with disabilities and the elders. ... Initiates policy guidelines and leads the process of ensuring gender equality and mainstreaming at both the national and international levels”.
2.	International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) (1944)	1982 (Nigeria)	Through legal means, FIDA focuses on the promotion, protection and preservation of the rights and interest of all females in Nigeria, ensuring their total freedom and non-violent relationships with the male population.
3	National Council for Women’s Societies (NCWS)	1958	Advocates and collaborates with the government and the entire society on welfare matters of women and men, irrespective of class, religion and ethnicity.
4.	WimBiz Foundation (WF)	2002	Focuses on leadership capacity building training for women in business and workplace to progress.
5.	Women-in-Nigeria	1983	Advocates for radical change in women’s socio-economic and political rights.
6.	Boaobab for Women’s Human Rights	1996	Promotion of women’s knowledge acquisition, and exercise of customary, statutory and religious rights.
7.	Alliances for Africa (AFA) (1996 – UK)	1996 (Nigeria)	Advocacy for women’s rights to political participation and peace building.
8.	Nigerian Women Fund (NWF)	2011	Increasing representation of women in appointive and elective governance to achieve gender balance.
9..	Women’s rights advancement and Protection Alternatives (WRAPA)	1999	Advocacy and campaign on violence against women; supports bills on women’s rights, political participation and protection.
10.	Women’s Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON)	1995	Advocacy against human trafficking in Nigeria; focuses on status of human rights; equally focuses on ending violence against women in the Niger Delta region; organises advocacy on women’s peace and rights.
11.	Female in Nigeria (FIN)	2015	Online organisation for the women to share their experiences related to problems arising from gender relations.
12.	Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC)	2000	Promotion of social justice for women, including advocacy on women’s peaceful coexistence; focuses on the identification and documentation of information on violence against women in the Niger Delta

13.	International Association for Gender Equity (IAFGE)	2008	Advocates for women empowerment and gender fairness, justice and fair play; embarks on research to provide aggregate data on gender issues.
14.	Women's Aid Collective (WAC)	1997	Focuses on young people in need; provides information and legal protection on violence against the female population; advocates research on gender equality
15.	Project Alert (PA)	1999	Advocacy and education of the human population on the forms and prevalence of violence against females; renders protection to the young female victims.
16.	Girls Power Initiative (GPI)	1993	Focuses on women empowerment through the provision of leadership and communication skills training programmes for girls aged 10-18.
17.	Women Against Rape, Sexual Harassment and Exploitation (WARSHE)	1998	Focuses on the elimination of sexual abuse and violence against females; provides support to victims of rape and abuse; conducts research to provide reliable data for their mission.
18.	The Nigerian Feminists' Forum (NFF)	2006	Embarks on the provision of conducive environment for dialogue on a variety of women issues and challenges. Provides feminists' knowledge, supports leadership training and the formation of other feminist groups.
19.	Women's Centre for Peace and Development (WOPED)	1997	Advocates for infrastructural development; elimination of all forms of violence, peace-building and conflict resolution; supports peace education. Collaborates with FIDA.
20.	Niger Delta Women's Movement for Peace and Development (NDWPD)	2005	Advocates and empowers the Niger Delta women and the most vulnerable people in the region; ensures access to safe and healthy environment; and supports seeking for solutions to women's vices.
21.	The Centre for Citizen's Emancipation and Empowerment (CCEE)	2002	Liberation of women in purdah, particularly in the North. Provides legal advice to the oppressed and underprivileged women.
22.	Foundation for Female Empowerment (FFE)	2007	Advocates and empowers females in the Niger Delta region.

Source: Compiled from: <https://www.legit.ng/116142-agencies-responsible-protection-women-rights-nigeria.html> on 18th March, 2019

#Retrieved from: <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/nigeria/1989/federal-ministry-of-women-affairs-and-social-development> on 18th March, 2019.

APPROACHES TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER INEQUALITY

This inaugural topic is anchored on three perspectives namely, the materialist, radical and postmodernist gender perspectives. These approaches provide different avenues to examine different relationships between the women and men that result in creating a great divide, leading to the former's exploitation and subjugation/oppression by the latter. The two groups comprise the human population considered essential for achieving national development.

The **Materialist Perspective** traces the major cause of women's exploitation and oppression by men to their assigned child-rearing and domestic chores, without adequate compensation. These are dependent on the existing capitalist patriarchal society, thus making it very difficult to quantify the entire women's labour in monetary form, To Makama (2013), therefore, this regrettable women's position that is materially-based is the result of "capitalism especially in a class society that is structured in hierarchical relations". The materialists therefore believe that continued relegation of women to the patriarchal assigned roles will perpetuate their low socio-economic position and negligence by men (Ferguson, 1994). As a result, they advocate for equal consideration of the socio-economic roles of women and men, without any discrimination. The materialist's ideal state therefore emphasises that men should recognize that "all domestic work or housework is productive labour and a hidden source of profit for capitalism" (Dalla and James in Makama, 2013:119).

Put succinctly, the **Radical Feminists** strongly uphold that "... male power is constructed and maintained through institutional and cultural practices that aim to bolster male superiority through the reinforcement of female inferiority" (www.radfemcollective.org). The institutions are all socially based and their practices encourage gender inequality and such manifestations like violence against

women, early marriage, female genital mutilation, female child trafficking and obnoxious widowhood practices. In relation to gender inequality therefore, the radical feminists hold the patriarchal arrangement of society that orders and upholds males' supremacy over the females, due to the latter's assigned sex role in society to be the main cause of female subordination and subjugation. They therefore call for immediate elimination of male supremacy through feminists' group action.

The **Postmodernists** rely on some societal cultural gender practices as the main cause of female oppression by their male counterparts. For instance, among other things, the feminists (in Makama, 2013) uphold that "... the use of words and language affects our psyche on the definition of men and women ... (hence) shape our thoughts and desires". They therefore demand for the eradication of such practices to enable the equal operation and interrelationships of men and women, without any bias.

These perspectives are interrelated in providing clear interpretation to active human existence, development and positive partnership towards achieving or retarding societal survival and progress both locally and internationally. The evolution, survival and progress of any society are all hinged on the human population that must be developed and effectively integrated into the activities of every existing societal institution. At no time should a male or female group be side-lined when planning for the training and active participation in development programmes and activities. Doing so will tantamount to under-development of the society in question. This emphasises the significant importance of the social environment in the development of any society

In support of Lopez-Claros and Zihidi in Agomuo and Ndirika (2018:63), "... a country that educates its citizens is bound to have its economic productivity rise, maternal and infant mortality rates fall, fertility rates decline, and the health and educational prospects of the next generation improve". Hence, 'Education For All',

without any discrimination should be the goal of every country, including Nigeria.

CAUSES OF GENDER DIVIDE IN NIGERIA

(i) Legislative and Constitutional lapses



Fig. 2: Women's agitation for Poor Legislative Representation

Source: Onyeji (2018). FACT SHEET: Women 'poorly represented' in Nigeria's 19 years of democratic rule – CDD Retrieved from:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=number+of+women+in+senate+in+2015+in+Nigeria&oq=number+of+women+in+senate+in+2015+in+Nigeria&aqs=chrome..69l57.25610j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> on 26th Feb, 2019

Recognizing the women's importance in the country's growth and development, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has a constitution that supports equal rights, including governance. However, most of the rights have not been effectively pursued for some reasons, occasioned by some localised laws most of which are not in favour of the females. For instance, the localised community laws on succession/inheritance which men strictly adhere to positively influence a woman's dispossession of her husband's property after his death. A similar situation is reported by Ogwu (1996), in relation to the experiences of the Muslim women, who, under the Islamic law, have the right of ownership of their husbands' assets at the point of death but, in practice, are dispossessed.

Furthermore, Nigeria, among some African countries, is a signatory to the 1995 United Nations' declaration of equal opportunity to be given to men and women. To achieve this, 30% must be for female

representation in governance. While some of these countries like Mozambique, Cameroun and Uganda have already progressed, though not at the same pace, it is regrettable that Nigeria still hopes to achieve this mandate. Anyalebechi (2016), summarizing the present Nigeria's efforts, especially on women representation in the government, notes that,

... successive Nigerian government ... have undertaken legislative and administrative reforms that would give women full access to economic and productive resources (but) ... has no provision for gender equality. There is nothing in the constitution redressing the disparities existing along gender lines. In other words, the Federal character principle which is meant to ensure equitable representation of states and ethnic groups in National appointments, actually places women at additional disadvantages by implying that they can only represent their states of origin... For women, they have sincerely left their future in the hands of uncompromising brothers and husbands.

From Anyalebechi's summary, the efforts of the government so far comprise a misrepresentation of formal attempts towards achieving gender equality in Nigeria, although existing laws and administrative steps attempt to guarantee women involvement in some development institutions. Makama (2013) claims a similar view, with regard to the country's political institution, such as "... increase in participation with certain standards like the number of women who vote in elections; the number of public offices held by women; number of women related policies implemented by government ...", to mention a few. It follows that the observed increase does not, in any way, compare with the men's involvement since the latter still far outnumber the females in these institution, despite the assumed equal rights with the men in decision-making processes", Specifically, referring to the 1999, section 10 of the Nigeria's

constitution, among others, Makama notes that everyone, sex notwithstanding, "... shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests ...", in a true democratic society which Nigeria claims to be. Equally, there is an existing National Gender Policy which is supposed to be adhered to for true women's representation. Tables 7, 8 and 9 show the results of elections conducted in different years in Nigeria within the Democratic period.

Table 7: Comparism of Women Representation in 2003, 2007 and 2011 General Elections.

Position	No. of available seats	No. of women elected in 2003	No. of women elected in 2007	No. of women elected in 2011
Presidency	1	0	0	0
Senate	109	3(2.27%)	9(8.26%)	8(7.34%)
House of Reps.	360	21(5.83%)	25(6.94%)	12(3.33%)
Governorship	36	0	0	0

Source: Gender Audit and IPU PARLINE database (2012).

Table 8: Current Trends of Women Representation in 2018 (2nd July)

Position	No. of available seats	No. of women elected	%age of women
Presidency	1	0	0%
Senate	109	73(6.42%)	6.42%
House of Reps.	360	22(6.1%)	6.1%
Governorship	36	0	0%

Total 469 Legislators:

% Female Representation....6.18%; Male Representation 93.8% State Assembly: Total 990 Members

Female Representation 51 (5.2).

Source: Compiled from Onyeji (2018). FACT SHEET: Women ‘poorly represented’ in Nigeria’s 19 years of democratic rule – CDD Retrieved from: <https://www.google.com/search?q=number+of+women+in+senate+in+2015+in+Nigeria&oq=number+of+women+in+senate+in+2015+in+Nigeria&aqs=chrome..69i57.25610j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> on 26th Feb, 2019

9: Women’s Representation by Geopolitical Zone: Deputy Governor Position

Table 1: Women’s representation by geopolitical zone: Deputy Governorship Position

Geo-political zone	Number of States	Number of States with Women as Deputy Governor	Percentage
Northern Region			
North Central	6	0	0%
North West	7	0	0%
North East	6	0	0%
Southern Region			
South-South	6	2	33.3%
South West	6	3	50%
South East	5	1	20%

Source: CDD 2018

Data analysis

1. Percentage of women occupying deputy governorship seats in Nigeria is 16.7% nationally.
2. There are 6 States (including Osun, Lagos, Ogun, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Enugu States) with female deputy governors. All these States are in Southern Nigeria.

Source: Onyeji (2018). FACT SHEET: Women ‘poorly represented’ in Nigeria’s 19 years of democratic rule – CDD Retrieved from: <https://www.google.com/search?q=number+of+women+in+senate+in+2015+in+Nigeria&oq=number+of+women+in+senate+in+2015+in+Nigeria&aqs=chrome..69i57.25610j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> on 26th Feb, 2019

From all indications, no woman has ever occupied the presidential nor the governorship position, despite the provisions in the country’s

constitution that enable them to contest for such positions. However, their highest representation is found at the Deputy Governorship position as represented in Table 9. With their representation at the Senate and Federal House, there has never been any period that the women made up to 7% representation. This is equally the case with their representation at the State House of Assembly.

At the Deputy Governorship position, the women's representation is only found in the south where they constitute only 16.7% nationally, while the north has never experienced such. These findings demand that a more serious effort be made to increase women's representation in governance, in order to effectively address their societal needs and integrate them more in the country's institutional systems. As Okere (Internet) rightly notes, "... structural problems like the patriarchy and restricted economic opportunities for women are mainly responsible..." for the women's continued under-representation in governance the Nigeria. Worse still, he emphasises that "Nigeria has one of the lowest rates of female entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa"

(ii) Societal Ideologies

The long existing patriarchal beliefs from the traditional period of the Nigerian society, on the position of women as the weaker sex, made them not to be integrated fully into the country's different fabrics of development systems. This has continued to constitute a serious challenge to societal change and progress as the country attempts to effect changes in her value and belief systems. For instance, the idea of fully engaging women in the labour market is never a priority to many men, in spite of their educational and enlightenment attainment levels. Some men would prefer their wives to remain at home to provide care, while they themselves would fend for the family's income, part of the reason being that the men would not fully control their wives once they are let out from the home.

(iii) Inadequate Execution of the National Gender Policy (NGP)

The NGP approval which was given by the Federal Executive Council in 2006, while the implementation plan was approved in 2008 is a framework of actions that would have assisted the achievement of "... a just and gender equitable society where men and women will contribute their maximum quota to development at all levels of governance" (Kura and Yero, 2013). The policy is crucial due to the identified widening gender gap in many areas of life, especially in the areas of opportunity to access and control available economic resources, legislature and governance. Regrettably, the women still lag behind in these areas. Achieving sustainable societal progress and development would require equal participation without any discrimination. For this to be a reality, Coker (Internet) emphasizes that women should "be treated not as subordinates to men, but equal partners and participants in the shaping and building of a nation". This means that no nation can achieve national development, without eliminating existing gender gaps in the nation's socio-economic, political and related spheres.

From the foregoing, the pursuit of equal human rights which earlier occupied many countries' debate, including Nigeria, was not enough to alleviate many obstacles related to societal socio-cultural and religious practices that have continued to hinder development. Interestingly, women's status is strategic in determining the level or standard of a nation's wealth.

The NGP contains the following seven guiding principles (FRN, 2008:6-7):

- Making gender analysis an integral part of all policy articulation, implementation and evaluation undertaken by only Government at all tiers and within all arms, but also by all stake holders.
- All stakeholders, including government, the private sector, civil society organizations, and community based organizations, development partners, and individual women

and men have a role to play in the achievement of gender equity and equality.

- Instituting a gendered culture that brings about cooperative interaction of women and men, recognizing human rights of all persons and culture which respects women's and men's capabilities and entails cooperation and interdependence.
- A cultural re-orientation that will be supported by policies and programmes of gender education, sensitization, dialogues, incentives, motivation and responsiveness, rather than only through legislations.
- Transformation of the policy environment within which gender equity programmes are to be implemented, supported by resources – financial, and technical, demonstrating political will.
- Reforming of the existing structures of the national gender management system with a view to strengthening their capacity for a more robust mandate.
- Promoting the empowerment of women through the bridging of existing gender gaps will be considered integral to the achievement of gender equality, and using policies and legislation of affirmative action if necessary and would no way be deemed discriminatory.
- The Policy builds on existing structures and practices as well as draws from international experiences and practices.

Deriving from the foregoing guiding principles, and in agreement with Kura and Yero (2013:11-12), the main goal of NGP is:

... to establish a clear vision and framework to guide the process of developing laws, policies and practices that will ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres and structures of government, as well as in the work place, the community and the family.

The foregoing, no doubt, points to the understanding that no nation, including Nigeria successfully plans and executes any tangible national development programme, without involving peaceful joint effort of the male and female population (Okeke, 2002). It becomes imperative that all recognized gender gaps or divide must be removed, without any delay. Since the NGP takes a holistic approach, it is expected to achieve reorientation and transformation of the prevailing high poverty situation to sustainable development and equality of opportunity. It is therefore expected to reposition the country's values, norms, cultural and socio-economic efforts towards the achievement of the common good of every Nigerian, thus eliminating all conflicting views that seem to perpetuate gender inequality and its resultant adverse relationships, all of which constitute obstacles to national development.

Table 10: NATIONAL GENDER POLICY: STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Outcome ² 1	Indicators	Responsible Agencies	Timeline
Changes in public perception of the roles of women and increasing respect for women and child rights	<p>Changes in primary and schools curricula to integrate changing roles of women and men in society.</p> <p>A 50% increase of released locally produced home videos focusing on changing roles of women/gender equality.</p> <p>At least 50% of resources going to the National Orientation Agency are to promote mass campaigns on the empowerment of women.</p>	<p>Federal Ministry of Education.</p> <p>National Board of films National/States Orientation Agencies.</p> <p>Office of the Special Adviser to the President on the MDGs.</p>	December 2013

Outputs³	Indicators	Responsible Agencies	Timeline Strategic Interventions
Schools curricula reviewed and changed (primary and secondary) to reflect changing and empowering gender roles for women and men.	<p>Number of strategic meetings between FMoWASD and Federal Ministry of Education</p> <p>Revised curricula available for use by primary and secondary schools that have incorporated changing gender Role/empowerment of women</p> <p>Revised curricula indicating changing gender roles available for use by primary and secondary schools</p>	<p>Federal Ministry of Education</p> <p>Nigerian Education Research & Development Council (NERDC)</p>	<p>March 2009 Task Force on the review of curricula to incorporate changing gender roles.</p> <p>April 2009 Task force on the review of curricula to incorporate changing gender roles.</p> <p>June 2009 – Develop revised curricula</p> <p>December developed and testing in 2010 schools, review of impacts etc.</p> <p>January 2011 Implementation of the revised school curricula on changing gender roles begins.</p>
Nigeria's popular culture reflects a new awareness of changing gender roles that support empowerment of women.	At least 50 (10 annually) locally produced/commissioned home videos to reflect the empowerment of women, promotion of women/child rights and new gender roles for women and men	<p>Federal and State Ministries of Women Affairs</p> <p>National Films Board</p> <p>Federal/State Ministries of Culture</p>	<p>April 2009- Produce/commission 10 November local home videos to reflect 2012 the empowerment of women, promotion of women/child rights and new gender roles for women, men, girls and boys.</p>

² Outcomes are results that the whole country is working towards and not achieved only as a result of the National Gender Policy.

³ Outputs are the actual results expected from the implementation of the National Gender Policy over a period of 5 years

Source: Compiled from Federal Republic of Nigeria (August, 2008:11). National Gender Policy Strategic Framework (Implementation Plan) 2008 – 2013. Retrieved from <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/nig151427.pdf> on 18th February, 2019.

The result of the Strategic Development Results Framework represents a plan of action for review five-yearly. The policy attempts to tackle the problems emanating from existing gender divide including economic participation and opportunities in the areas such as employment and remunerations, educational opportunity and attainment, including access and possible chances for continuity, opportunity to health facilities, availability of good nutrition and wellbeing (Kura and Yero, 2013). For Kura and Yero, the indices of good health for women include income, social status, education, literacy, employment and working condition, among others.

In spite of the hopes of the NGP, the implementation has been faced with a number of problems, ranging from lack of proper monitoring due to the inability of the implementation to focus on result-based, rather than process-implementation. Equally, it has been difficult to challenge the long existing structure of biased gender relations in different spheres, including indiscriminate violation of their existing policies and human rights laws.

(iv) Discriminatory Cultural Traditions/Laws

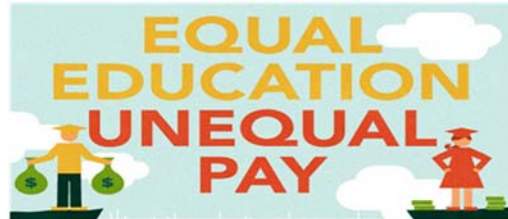


Fig. 3: Gender Inequality at Workplace Despite Equal Education

Source: Retrieved from:

https://www.google.com/search?q=pictures+showing+gender+inequality&tbn=isch&tbs=rim:g:CSKQYn-8nasRljidpEGTRMQfEVSONn_1mYgHsdtDqI9AvAbZKZ_1CVLca71Wco2wt97ySZfMtGIqIFpt9ueLf3ibv8RS0SCZ2kQZNExB8REVshdGshn-_19KhIJVI42f-ZiAewRKN6oP-s2GbgqEgl20Ooj0C8BthFaHuYSBvC_1PyoSCUpn8JUtxrshEclAGN4U7-KIKhIJZyjbC33vJJkRLy-eusdvvJMqEgl8y0YiqUWm3xFmdLevZis8XyoSCW54t_1eJu_1xFEZdkRQdtul73&tbo=u&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiUkbWm4tzgAhUG3OAKHWGIDO0Q9C96BAgBEBg&biw=1366&bih=657&dpr=1#imgcr=IpBif7ydxqFWYM on 27th February, 2019.

For over a long period, it has become the way of life in Nigeria that leadership is meant for the males. Agbalajobi (in Anyalebechi, Internet) notes,

... the key point that leads to discrimination against women has its roots in the nature of our societies which celebrate men as being unique, stronger and fit for the public space while women are feeble and weak meant to stay within the confluence of the private space.

The foregoing shows that any attempt to change this long-time belief or tradition is highly resisted among the males. Similarly, Anyalebechi (2016) observes that it is exclusive for men to bail or surety somebody in the police custody. In other words, women in Nigeria cannot exercise the same reported right. In some cases, the women themselves have equally imbibed the idea that many of them would rather resist any attempt to give them such an opportunity, their educational qualification notwithstanding. Sometime, while some women would go further to stop their fellow women who may aspire for leadership position, some would reject due to the fear of being condemned by their male partners or are not satisfied that they are being headed by their fellow women.

(v) Religion

While religion teaches morality, Chinasa (legit.ng), observes that education helps to maintain peace. It is not surprising that the rules of every religion must be strictly adhered to by its members. Among other things, the culture and the interpretations of different religious texts like the Christian Bible and the Muslim Quran contribute immensely towards establishing women's social position in many countries including Nigeria. Different religions assign some roles according to gender. Aitchison (2007:10) rightly notes: "All world religions today maintain male social dominance within a social structure". In Islam, a woman can never become *Imam* and there are some family roles that are solely for men.

A similar situation is found among Christians where some non-religious responsibilities/roles are shared according to gender, no matter the ability or knowledge of the females among them. No wonder Sibani (Internet) observes that women remain voiceless in many religions because of the patriarchal foundations of such societies that own the religions. Such environments do not support many of the new changes arising from the new religions.

Furthermore, in religious circle, the interpretations given to some passages in the religious books provide ample opportunity for women's total submission to men. As this is the norm, it becomes very difficult for the men to accept any shift from their strong belief. Specifically, such Bible quotations (in Swindoll, 1996). include the following:

Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you".

1st Corinthians 14:34

"Women should remain silent in the Churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission as the law says".

Titus 2:4-5

... urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to her husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

1st Peter 3:5-6

For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear".

Ephesians 5:21-24

Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ. Wives, submit yourself to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the Church submit s to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything”.

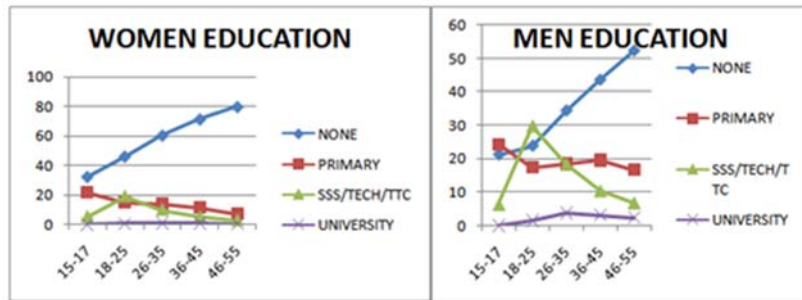
The maintenance of male dominance in all the religions is a common feature in both the social structures of developed and developing countries of the world. Aitchison (2007) posits that this is especially the situation, if a religion emerges from patriarchal setting where the culture of female dominance by the male is already in practice.

(vi) Lack of Educational Knowledge

Simply put, educational knowledge is considered as the awareness or being informed of both the theoretical and practical aspects of a given subject. In this circumstance, it involves the total understanding of the meaning and the implications of gender, with regard to human relations and all-round development of society. Over time, men have failed to see the need to educate women, thus neglect the identification and development of the female potential that would have constituted an important societal development tool.

Table 11 represents graphically the percentage of educational attainment, according to gender and different age-groups in Nigeria (Kelechi, 2015). Comparing the two groups,

Table 11: Educational Attainment of Women and Men



Source: pubs.sciepub.com/ajams/3/1/3/index.html 24th March, 2018

KELECHI, A. C. (2015). A Perspective on Women Gender Equality in Nigeria: Level, Differentials and Prediction. *American Journal of Applied Mathematics and Statistics*, 3(1), 12-16.

Women continue to lag behind in different age groups and various levels of educational attainment in the country. This scenario, if allowed to persist, does not augur well with the development strides of the country, especially in this era of science and technology. Among other things, Okeke (2016:220) argues that insufficient or lack of knowledge “limits or delays consensus among and between various groups in a multicultural environment ... in the effort to achieve social integration. Specifically, Chinasa (legit.ng) upholds “... that for optimum production, efficiency, and economic growth, women need to get their hands dirty”. It becomes necessary that educational knowledge should be organized for the female population to enable them become empowered to utilize their hands effectively in every area of the country’s development strides. The United Nations Human Development Report (in Makama, 2013) considers Nigeria to be “a low development country” due to unequal educational access

Worse still, it is common knowledge that existing educational facilities are grossly inadequate and the curriculum contents continue to be queried. In 2005, the literacy rates for adult male and female were recorded as 74.4% and 59.4% respectively. For the total

primary, secondary and tertiary school enrolments, the rates were 71% and 57% respectively. No wonder in the same year, the total estimated male and female incomes were USD 1,495 and USD 614 (UNDP, 2005) respectively. In 2018, the educational enrolment rates were 41.4% and 61.3% for females and males respectively.

(vii) Parental Preference

This factor is related to cultural practices and the provision of educational knowledge by the parents. Depending on a parent's priority, he may decide to select the children he would like to sponsor and the type of education to be offered to the selected children. In many cases, the females are negatively affected due to the obnoxious belief that they would eventually marry out to other families outside their home. These females are preferred to be given out in early marriage, while some are denied education as they are expected to assist in the economic pursuit of the family for their upkeep. By so doing, the funds spent in training them are considered wasted by their immediate families (Alita, in Anyalebechi, 2016).

(viii) Colonial System of Education

In the effort to satisfy the manpower needs of the colonial masters, emphasis was laid on educating the males in different strategic job assignments outside the home. This attracted higher pay due to their newly acquired specialized skills. However, very little or no effort was made to educate the females who were found to be useful at home, while the men were away in pursuit of their economic endeavours. The females therefore comprised the majority poor (Omolewa, 2002), since they were not to work in the formal sector that would have attracted a higher pay. Referring to statistical records, Makama (2013), in support of Omolewa's claim notes:

78 % of women are mostly engaged in the informal sector, which are farming and petty trading. Despite this, their contribution is not commensurate monetarily. The women's unpaid labour is twice that of men, and its economic value is estimated to be up to 30% of the nation's Gross National Product.

CHALLENGES OF INEQUALITY

(i) Prevalence of Violence against Women and Men



Fig. 4: Violence against Women & Men

Source: Retrieved from:

https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+domestic+violence+in+nigeria&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiUy8iy6dzgAhUITBoKHQ9FB1UQ_AUIDigB&biw=1366&bih=657#imgcr=KICui5N-oiu2XM on 27th Feb., 2019.
https://i.ytimg.com/vi/rV48xLlo_JA/hqdefault.jpg 9th March, 2019

Women's long standing low status in many societies, including Nigeria, continues to earn them high disrespect among many levels of authority, including the family, to the extent that men and some grown-up children interact with and sometimes attack their wives and mothers respectively in the home, without showing any sign of remorse. In some cases, the women are attacked physically and they sustain wounds of different magnitudes. Some men purposely abuse them just to lower their morale on certain issues, including the ones that concern them directly. Such experiences, no doubt, psychologically affect the women and they choose to remain silent, even in matters they know too well that concern them and their

families (Okeke, 2000). In some cases, the men are attacked violently by the women due to a long-standing endurance and frustration the women must have suffered. In these events, injuries of different magnitudes are sustained and in some cases, the violence could lead to death, permanent physical deformation, or psychological trauma, all of which sometimes are never reported, while the affected family suffers. Lamenting on the damaging effect of gender inequality at home, with regard to discipline, Akiyode (in Anyalebechi, 2015) upholds that the women are not protected by any law on domestic violence and related incidences, including widowhood challenges.

(ii) Under-exploitation, Under-development and Under-utilisation of the Female Potentials

The country's prevailing social arrangements and some cultural practices that still promote male's supremacy of actions and decision-taking in matters, some of which involve women, still pose some challenges to progress, with regard to full identification and development of the female potentials (Okeke, 2003¹). For instance, the males still lead in many, if not all clans and communities, without minding the importance of unlimited assistance and pieces of advice given to them by their female counterparts. This prompts Nicholson (in Sibani, Internet) to refer to the women as *Oriaku*, meaning "the consumer of wealth". In addition, the men still own essential resources such as land and family property in many families, despite their legalization in the country. These conditions, among others, continue to weaken women's zeal to identify and effectively integrate their potentials in development efforts. No wonder Nmah (2003), appraising women's right in Igbo land, opines that,

... the resultant weakness of gender inequality has deprived women of the strength to rise up and insist on a change in their environment for the sake of their families and children. Women fear the difficulties of living without a male companion in a man's world.

Economically, the marginalization of women has left them to be underdeveloped and non-gainfully engaged. Hence, their economic status continues to be quite low and this highly limits their participation in politics which requires a lot of funds in Nigeria. Equally, the poorly compensated menial jobs outside the home in which many women engage themselves continue to perpetuate their low standard of living. They have very low purchasing power of their daily needs and majority of them cannot cope, without the assistance of their male counterparts. Generally, it is not easy for women to be seriously engaged in substantial financial matters due to their minimal opportunities and poor compensation received in their daily societal involvements.

(iii) Socio-cultural Under-development of Women

Some longstanding obnoxious cultural practices are held responsible for women's underdevelopment. For instance, the societal norm that an African man is always 'right' when in judgement against a woman equally applies to Nigeria as a country. This practice robs the women of their right to justice, hence belittles their efforts to prove their mettle (Okeke and Nria, 2013). They therefore subscribe to such societal norm, without thinking about the consequences of their actions. In many of such scenario, they choose to remain ignorant and in some cases silent about the true situation. Otherwise, they stand to be ridiculed by the men. Similarly, the male-child preference syndrome is another cultural factor considered as a challenge to women development in Nigeria. In many occasions, the mothers are side-lined or rusticated from their matrimonial homes due to their inability to have male children. Other malpractices include early marriage, female child-trafficking and child-labour.

(iv) Socio-religious Underdevelopment of Women

Generally, many religions shun assigning some responsibilities to women in their organizations. Specifically, there is still a strong opposition on women's ordination to priesthood in the Catholic Communion (Cowell, 1994; Sibena, 2013; Steinfels, 1995). Some

quotations from the Christian Bible buttress this claim. For instance, Colossians 3:18 (NIV) states: “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord”. Similarly, 1Timothy 2:12 (NIV), states: “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent”. Many Christians dwell much on these and similar statements from the Bible in determining their daily gender relationships in many affairs. The continued adherence by men to these statements and their respective interpretations do not expose the women nor grant them the freedom to exercise their full knowledge and application of the religious principles. Instead, they continue to be subservient to the men.

(v) Socio-political Underdevelopment of Women

The prevailing cultural environment which continues to subject the women from attaining equal rights with men in the society has become an obstacle in their effort to get more involved in politics. In spite of increasing advocacy and women’s participation in education, there is still no full confidence, partly from the women themselves to fully respond positively to the advocacy and partly from the men who would not fully support full integration of the women into the political arena. For instance, Anya (2003) posits that many women who are interested in politics are considered as “rebels” and “prostitutes”, hence they decline from being involved. In contemporary era, Sibani (internet), referring to the reported scenario notes that “...it is becoming clearer that the discrimination most Nigerians and African had against women has contributed to keeping them in the dark all these years from manifesting their talents and leadership qualities”. With popular democracy which is presently preferred in the pursuit of sustainable development in many countries of the world, Kira (in Anyalebechi, 2016), referring to Nigeria, notes that “... women are unjustifiably discriminated against (and) ... democracy remains elusive for women”.

OVERCOMING GENDER DIVIDE IN NIGERIA: SUGGESTIONS

Various attempts to redefine women’s position and involvement in development, no doubt have gained some grounds, though not in totality. For instance, some women are not specifically in the home any longer but have gained access to become petty traders, literate

class and middle-class women. However, these attempts, among others, have not fully provided a strong bridge, thus closing the gap between the men and women in forming a strong alliance to achieve national development. Today's inaugural lecturer would like to suggest the following avenues to be exploited further:

(i) Gender Education

Simply put, gender education refers to the essential aspects of the curriculum contents that equip males and females with the knowledge of their body constituents that necessitated their being differentiated as masculine and feminine, resulting to their role differentiation and assignment, all of which continue to affect their self-concepts, social relationships, choices, placement of priorities, among other things.

With gender education, the women will be bold enough to develop self-control, care for their health, defend and safeguard themselves in the company of men without much dependence. In other words, the knowledge of gender education equally exposes men and women to sexuality education (Okeke and Anucha, 2007).



Fig. 5: Gender Education

Source: Retrieved from:

https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+gender+education+in+Nigeria&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=nPkhNq6Obml8KM%253A%252C1Xt9nrH_RUxdVM%252C_&usg=AI4_-kTS1xQnt3mnI4mnuTpKI9z8tyqsw&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjMjuHk79zgAhXk2OAKHTCvCvgQ9QEwAHoECAUQBA&cshid=1551303489953704&biw=1366&bih=657#imgdii=iYyrCv8Wt8trWM:&imgcr=nPkhNq6Obml8KM: on 27th Feb., 2019.

In accordance with UNFPA (Internet pdf. 1), “Sexuality education aims to develop and strengthen the ability of children and young people to make conscious, satisfying, healthy and respectful choices regarding relationships, sexuality and emotional and physical health”. Through this arrangement, the individual acquires knowledge, skills and values about his/her sexual characteristics and how to relate socially as well as knowing alternative ways to protect oneself in any environment he/she finds himself/herself. In addition, the individuals are opportune and “better equipped to protect themselves against coercive or abusive sexual activities, unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections” (Internet pdf. 2). Cases of illegal abortion and unwanted pregnancies are reported regularly, though not all, due to shame. These are known to have taken many lives of the female population, while the males who are responsible, sometimes go into hiding, especially when the pregnancy is considered illegal.

Sexuality education varies with the age of the recipient, values, norms and beliefs of the environment in consideration. Furthermore, the views of every stakeholder such as the “parents, school administrators, teachers, non-governmental organisations, religious leaders, and faith-based organisations” (Internet pdf. 1) present in the locality are important in the planning of the contents and methods of disseminating the intended programme.

The process of sexuality education therefore is targeted in stages to impart factual and informed knowledge to support the individual as well as effectively protect his/her sexual development. Hence, it becomes necessary that both the male and every individual should be subjected to it.

Different research reports in many countries of the world unanimously found a number of benefits for the recipients. These include safe sexual relationships between and among male and female population as well as non-deprivation of information on

sexuality as UNFPA (Internet, pdf.2) posit that it is “scientifically accurate”, “age-appropriate” and “non-judgemental”.

Similarly, AHI in Adepoju (2005) believes that sexuality education “... fosters the acquisition of factual information, the formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values as well as the development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human sexuality”. There is no gain-saying therefore that sexuality education is a worthwhile enterprise and highly recommended for a developing nation like Nigeria where ignorance in such related matters still hold sway and continues to perpetuate gender divide.

Furthermore, for a successful gender education, the following are required:

- (a) Review of existing curriculum contents at all levels of education to expunge all items that reflect gender bias. Introduce relevant items that emphasize gender neutrality, reflect the needs and interest of the people and ensure adequate gender inclusiveness (Okeke, 2001).

Existing government policies such as the National Policy on Education (NPC), Gender Policy in Basic Education (GPBE), National Gender Policy (NGP) and Universal Basic Education (UBE) should be equally reviewed. Gender education recommended in this lecture is beyond the Federal Government’s National Policy on Gender in Basic Education which emphasises the attainment of “full and equal access to quality education” (Zhawa, in FME, 2006). In this effort, some areas of focus should include other recommendations listed in this lecture.

- (c) The methodology of the teacher and all instructional materials and illustrations should not be gender biased. In addition, aspects of existing local laws and socio-cultural

practices that encourage gender bias should be discouraged, using the teachers' methodologies and instructional materials

- (d) All the teachers should be retrained to ensure their adequate knowledge of gender education and the relevant approaches for successful delivery of the new knowledge.
- (e) There should be effective evaluation of what happens in school and the reports should be adequately documented by the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education.
- (f) The teachers and the clientele should attend workshops, seminars, conferences and public lectures to keep abreast of knowledge.
- (g) There should be regular monitoring and assessment of the implementations of the NGP mandates, in order to face the realities on ground and effect adjustments where necessary. Hence, gender analysis should be anchored on data collected regularly from the field. Some supporting institutions to assist in this exercise include Gender and Equal Opportunity Commission, Federal Ministry of Women and Social Development (FMWSD) and Gender Equality Departments. The progress assessment in every organisation should be headed by the Gender Equality Department and reporting to the FMWSD

(ii) Review of Existing Local Customary Laws

In recognition of the need to incorporate everyone in development programmes, the government should press further to establish a gender office in every established operating institution. All existing customary laws that operate against the government's constitutions on maintaining gender equality, including those related to violence

against women and marital rape, should be revisited. Immediately. The high female percentage population in Nigeria cannot be neglected, hence will be a daunting task to achieve development without their integration and acceptable representation in the country's development programmes (Okeke, 2004).

In addition, such laws limiting a woman to have a maximum of four children as stated in the National Population Policy should be equally extended to men because, it does not prevent a man from having children from more than one woman. Instead, the woman is the only one restricted to a specific number of children, without her consent, thus limiting her reproductive rights. The existence of the Penal Code particularly in the North that encourages a husband to beat his wife, should be revisited. Other violent practices by men against women include marital rape and domestic violence.

(iii) Re-orientation of the Men and Women's Sense of Direction

The onus is on the men and women to do the needful, in other to reverse their social relations. Unionism, in this situation becomes paramount for the women and men to discover the problems associated with their prevailing situation. In Nigeria, with an increasing awareness among the women to be educated, the concrete efforts which they started on their own have presently earned them more seats at the Parliamentary and Ministerial positions respectively. This effort is highly recommended as women constitute the majority of the country's human population and their contributions will go a long way towards achieving national development. In the words of Anyalebechi (2015):

Women must see the need to come up strong and active as a single tree can never make a forest, women must resolve collectively to change their condition for good so that they can provide the basis for the future of the coming generation.

For men, they should begin to see the reason for supporting women fully. The traditional days are long over and with the globalising world, the keyword, 'interrelationship should be preached during workshops, conferences and in the mass media. These efforts will, no doubt, establish the urgent need for the women and men to bury their differences and champion their course through all available means to overcome any divide.

(iv) Religious Intervention

Nigerians are dependent on religious belief in their everyday life. It is expected that different religious organizations in the country will contribute immensely to the advocacy for women liberation and freedom from men's subjugation. The view that all men and women are one/equal in the presence of their creator should be preached, advertised, practicalized, and vigorously pursued. As Paul claims in Galatians 3:28 (NIV): "There is neither male nor female for all are one in Jesus Christ". In pursuit of this, more women should be encouraged to be ordained priests/clergy. This effort will add to the positive voices and attract more followers to believe their preaching and interpretation of the spiritual book. It is a truism as Sibani's (2015) confirms that presently, "... women in Nigeria are becoming General Overseers and founders of Ministries due to their calling from God and they are doing exploits". This should be vigorously encouraged because more women will likely be convinced that they can discover their potentials and utilise them for self and societal development.

In addition, Dorr (in Sibani, 2015) suggests that "... crucial steps should be taken to eliminate gender discriminatory language from all public prayers and church reading; also, a determined effort must be made to enable women play equal part in decision taking in the church". In the effort to achieve this, preachers should avoid the use of offensive language during preaching and Bible teaching. This will help to create a friendly environment where all will become agents for peaceful coexistence.

Religious education should not be limited to the family, school, community, group gathering and church. It should extend to the understanding of more than one religion to enable members see the similarities in their beliefs to enhance cooperation, collaboration and respect for one another. Consequently, this calls for the cooperation of different religious organisations to impart religious education, with a particular aim of achieving gender equality, through teaching, preaching and evangelism, seminars and organised conferences as well as public talks at strategic places, like the rural areas and market places.

The concepts of inequality, inferiority and discrimination, among others, should be examined and discussed fully in relation to their effects on human inter-relationships, drawing examples from various holy books and daily experiences. In doing so, emphasis should target the need for integration, cooperation and solidarity between and among members.

(v) Political Intervention

It is a welcome idea for the UN General Assembly to set up in 1979, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which was instituted in 1981 and Nigeria is a signatory. Nigeria should therefore seriously pursue the implementation of the recommendations, especially with regard to the following as reported by Sibani (2015):

Recommendation No.5 called upon States parties to make more use of temporary special measures such as positive action, preferential treatment or quota system to advance women's integration into education, the economy, politics and employment, while general recommendations No.8 stipulates that state parties should take further measure to ensure to women an equal term with men and without discrimination, the opportunity to represent their government at the international level. General recommendation No.12 called upon States parties to include in their reports

information on measures taken to deal with violence against women, while general recommendation No.14 called for measures to be taken to eradicate the practice of female circumcision and general recommendations No.21 is concerned with equality in marriage and family relations.

Considering the recommendations, the political challenge to achieving gender equality will be a thing of the past, if they are fully articulated and implemented. After all, Olubi (in Okeke, 2014:4) rightly observes that "... leadership traits are not genetically acquired and have nothing to do with gender. Women can effectively participate in policy making and governance, if given the chance". It is a rewarding experience to note that presently, more women are coming up to form different non-governmental organizations, though not in good proportion with their male counterparts. In some cases, they campaign for either their representations or in support of other individuals of their interest. Such efforts should be encouraged or supported.

(vi) Advocacy and Empowerment Programmes



Cloth-Weaving Industry



ICT Training

Fig. 6: Empowerment Programme:

Source: Retrieved from:

https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+advocacy+and+women+empowerment+in+Nigeria&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=VYkVV0R6NQpM%253A%252CqU0gzz8eSDH_rM%252C_&usg=AI4_kR4KBvr1XuI6z14xB7uLXKKGeyOUg&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwimjfb8dzgAhVMDmMBHa4DDtUQ9QEwAnoECAYQCA&cshid=1551303948269291&biw=1366&bih=657#imgdii=Yo3fbiuVzlpZLM:&imgcr=VYkV-VV0R6NQpM: 27th Feb., 2019

Empowerment could be targeted to an individual or group of persons (in this case men and women), with the main objective of identifying and developing their God-given potentials for self and societal integration and development. In this case, the focus should be on the women because they constitute the main subjugated group. At every stage, each programme should target the needs of the clientele such as skill acquisition, political education, and socio-cultural awareness, among others. The intervention programmes could be organized by the government and non-governmental organizations, at the national and international levels, depending on the interest, focus and the financial disposition of the organization concerned. The several UN efforts to end inequality, particularly on gender issues, are highly appreciated. Examples include The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, to mention a few.

The UN's adoption of the CEAFDAW is equally referred to as "Bill of rights to women" in all areas of life, as recognized by the General Assembly of the United Nations, represented by 163 countries, including Nigeria. Regrettably, majority of the women are still ignorant of this policy (Mayer, 1999). For advocacy therefore, UNESCO (1999) published *Passport to Equality* as an educational tool to reach out to the entire population for the knowledge and functions of CEAFDAW. This publication focuses on 30 items, providing information on different avenues and practices that inhibit the female population from enjoying equal rights with men. There is a general clarion call for the itemised limitations to be corrected to enable the women enjoy equal rights with men. Among other things, such areas considered are socio-economic, political and cultural spheres. These areas require specific laws aimed at banning all manner of discrimination, in order to achieve gender equality.

This publication by UNESCO is a handbook to assist stakeholders to objectively review existing local laws and people's habits, including relationships. The belief is that "education is a basic human right,

and each human being deserves to become master of his/her destiny” (Mayer, 1999: i-ii). Only education holds the key to prepare one to become fully involved in one’s community, with regard to its development.

(vii) Societal Institutional Reforms: Challenging Patriarchy and Integrating Gender and Development

These attempt at respecting and sustaining women’s rights for the success of democratic governance. In other words, positive national and international policies that guide the practice of gender equality, that are enshrined in the country’s rule of law should be seriously guided and practised to achieve their purpose. The practice has been reported to succeed in Uganda and Rwanda, where a specific number of seats have been reserved in the parliament to be occupied for women alone. In Rwanda, for instance, this practice contributed to 49 (61%) out of 80 seats were held by women in 2018 in the government. Such countries like Iran and Bangladesh in the 1970s, took positive steps further to lend themselves to this practice. These attempts encourage women’s involvement in development plans and processes, without side-lining them.

Historically, after the Second World War and in the 1950s, the women became more involved in agricultural production and industrial activities but were mainly employed in menial jobs due to their insufficient skills acquisition. They lacked the skills to operate the machines and worked under men’s supervision. They earned little but worked for several hours in the field. Subsequently, due to the increasing call for their integration into the production system, ‘Women-in-Development’ (WIN) movement was launched in the 1970s. Win aimed at getting more women involved in development projects that were only carved out for them, thus focusing on the practical needs of the women. Furthermore, the women were meant to improve their skills, get more involved in activities outside the home and upgrade their financial status for improved quality of life and higher social status. By the 1980s, not much progress was made

as the socio-cultural challenges of patriarchy were not vigorously given attention. In addition, men were not integrated into the women's projects, thus majority of the women's problem still persisted. The result was that what popularly used to be referred to as WIN was changed to 'Women-and-Development (WAD), without addressing the issue of gender inequality. Consequently, in the 1990s, WAD was changed to "Gender and Development' (GAD), in order to critically focus on gender relations. Among other things, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRCS, 2003) observe as follows: "GAD approach recognizes the greater value of gender as an analytical concept, as a lens that directs attention towards social and cultural processes and factors as important in addressing subordinate position of women". GAD therefore is considered a priority in the effort to alleviate the sufferings of women and reposition their status to measure up with their male counterparts.

In its approach to critically focus on gender relations, GAD adopted gender mainstreaming approach. To Makama (2013): "Gender mainstreaming is the systematic process of integrating women and men's needs, concerns and experiences into the formulation, implementation and evaluation of projects on a way that would address gender inequity". In the attempt to achieve this, this approach combines the daily problems and experiences of males and females, including their environment of operation to become an integral aspect of the study focus. In all, due process is followed to examine existing plans, policies and programmes as they affect human relations and their environment.

(viii) Popularizing Research and Publications on Gender Issues

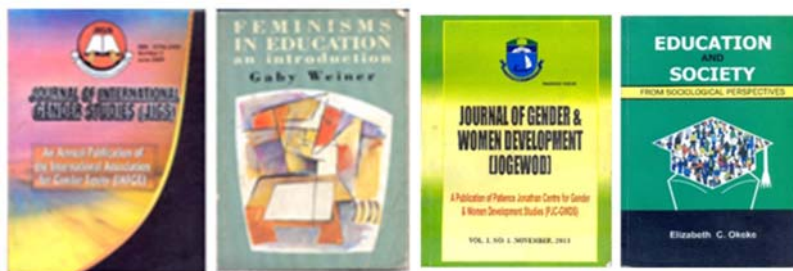


Fig. 7: Research Publications

Stakeholders, individuals and groups, including religious leaders and organisations should make effort to sponsor research on gender and women issues. They should float other programmes that are gender sensitive and preach them in their respective localities, to ascertain that their message has been well-delivered. For effective delivery and positive results, some interpreters in vernacular language should be easily recruited, to assist those who may not understand the formal language used.

In order to minimize ignorance of gender divide and its challenges, all hands should be on deck to encourage research on gender issues. Different political, social and formal organizations should endeavour to sponsor research by individuals and groups that are interested in gender issues at different levels.

Scholarships should be awarded by individuals, interest groups, governments and non-governmental organizations as well as national and international bodies for such related studies. In addition, effort should be made to publish the findings of such research in the media and academic documents, including books, monographs and journals. These efforts will, no doubt, provide varied information through research-generated aggregate data on gender issues for further studies in related areas and development issues in the country.

(ix) Maintaining a Secured and Peaceful Environment for Everyone to Operate

Nothing thrives effectively in an unstable environment. We need to secure our environment first, by ourselves, before we call on the government to assist. We should be our neighbour's keeper by providing assistance the much we can and reporting unsafety cases such as kidnapping, gangsterism, bullying, violent acts and cultism, among others. A well-secured and peaceful environment will attract researchers, government and non-governmental organizations to invest in human capital development and or the local environment itself, with the intention of providing job training, retraining and employment opportunities for the human population. The government could be attracted to invest, knowing that funds invested would be secured. In addition, philanthropists, groups and organisations can equally be attracted to invest accordingly towards the development of the country. Scholarship scheme and infrastructural development could become some areas of focus for their input.

MY CONTRIBUTIONS SO FAR

Golden Fleece in Gender Alliance

As a Sociologist of Education with special interest in using education, particularly gender education, as a powerful tool for addressing gender divide in Nigeria, for national development to be a reality, the following are my contributions

- (i) Today's Inaugural lecturer was mandate by the immediate past Vice Chancellor, Professor J. A. Ajenka, to submit a formal proposal to the establishment of a Gender Studies Programme in the University of Port Harcourt. On its approval, she was appointed as the Pioneer Director of the 'Centre for Gender and Women Development Studies', University



Fig. 8: Inauguration: Centre for Gender & Dev. Studies, UPH

(ii) of Port Harcourt, with the mission “... to expose the male and female population to the knowledge of social, cultural, economic and political hindrances that impede human development at the local, national and international levels, in order to attain peaceful coexistence for sustainable development” (PJC-GWDS, 2013:5). Due process was followed through the University of Port Harcourt Graduate School and approval was given by the University Senate and Council respectively to run the PGD and MA programmes of the Centre.

(ii) Among other things, she attended related conferences, workshops, public lectures and presented papers. On certain occasions, she chaired sessions, delivered sponsored and unsponsored lectures, asked and answered questions in related issues. Just to mention a few, in 2013, today’s Inaugural lecturer was the Synod Lecturer in the Anglican Communion, Diocese of Eyo. She was the NDDC Public Lecturer at the International Women’s Day Celebration; Chairman, University of Uyo, International Women’s Day Celebration, Akwa Ibom State; Delivered a public lecture at Prof. Andem Bassey Foundation in Calabar, Cross River State.



Fig 9: Workshops & Conferences

- (iii) She published reference books and journal articles and, in some cases, edited and contributed book chapters, among others, in related issues.
- (iv) She continued research and publication in order to establish differences and relationships among and between societies, communities, groups and countries.
- (v) Organized national and international advocacy workshops/conferences, (in Port Harcourt, Makurdi and Ghana, among others); Chaired Committees for the creation of a wider knowledge of the gender movement both within and outside the educational institutions.
- (vi) Provided counselling services to the students and staff of the University as well as the local communities.
- (vii) Till date, the Inaugural lecturer is the Chair occupant of the Board of Trustees of three duly registered Non-Governmental organisations engaged in education, gender and women development issues.

CONCLUSION

The quality efforts of men and women must be integrated for the achievement of sustainable national development to be a reality. Female domination by the males remains a public rhetoric, so long as the prevailing obnoxious cultural practices and institutional structures that define societal norms and way of life of the people remain unaltered. Earlier efforts since the 1970s to empower women and enlighten them on their rights for their effective integration in the country's development system have not yielded much success, due to non-inclusion of women's problems arising from gender discrimination against them by the men. Instead, research findings still maintain that the female population lag behind and seem not to be responding adequately to positive development demands to increase the level of progress and development in the country.

In view of the foregoing, this presentation upholds that the observed gender divide, caused by the women's false societal labelling as being feminine and weak and their consequent role assignment that could not be compared with those of the male population, who are considered masculine and strong, will continue to widen, once the cultural, socio-economic, religious and political structures are not devoid of gender bias for the benefits of the women themselves. Consequently, education, particularly gender education which involves men and women is considered as an essential weapon that will enable women's potentials to be identified, developed and integrated into the country's development system. Furthermore, it will enable the men to see the reason to partner with the females to enhance cooperation and bridge the identified gaps in their development efforts. By doing so, achieving sustainable national development becomes a reality. As Makama (2013) succinctly puts it, a nation's "... sovereignty ... belongs to the people (women inclusive).

Thank You.

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CITATION



PROFESSOR ELIZABETH CHINWE OKEKE
B.Sc. (UNN), M.A. Ed., Ph.D (UPH), MNAE

Today's Inaugural Lecturer, Professor Elizabeth Chinwe Okeke (Nee Unachukwu) was born on 26th July, 1951, as the 5th and last child of Chief Ezigbo Otue and Madam Ezinne Chienyezu Unachukwu in Uruezealor village, Ogidi, Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Professor Elizabeth's father worked for the colonial masters and knowing the importance of education, ensured that his male and female children went to school.

Professor Okeke attended Ebenezer Primary school, Ogidi, and made an excellent grade which secured her admission into the then Anglican Girls' Grammar School, Awkunanaw, Enugu, in 1962. The Nigerian Civil War disrupted her secondary education, but she continued after the war and successfully obtained her West African School Certificate in 1971. She immediately proceeded to Women Teacher Training College, Afikpo and qualified as a Grade II Teacher at December, 1972. Elizabeth taught for a while before gaining admission to study Geography in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1975. She graduated in 1979 with a Second Class Upper Division and as the best graduating student in the Department of Geography.

After her National Youth Service Corps in 1980, she was employed as a Graduate Assistant by the University of Port Harcourt to teach in the Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences on 14th July, 1980. After her Master's degree programme in the Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, in 1983, her services were formally transferred to the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education in 1986, where she successfully completed her Doctoral programme in 1989. Elizabeth Chinwe Okeke rose through the ranks to become the first Professor of Sociology of Education in the University of Port Harcourt, in April, 2009.

Professor Okeke has supervised hundreds of undergraduate research projects, scores of Masters' degree Theses and Ph.D. Dissertations.

She was the pioneer Director, Centre for Gender and Women Development Studies (2012 -2015). In collaboration with some professionals from within and outside the University of Port Harcourt. Professor Elizabeth Okeke headed the team that designed and provided the course contents of all the Postgraduate courses run in the Gender Centre till date. These courses were approval from the School of Graduate Studies, Senate and the University Council. Elizabeth was a former Acting Head of Department of Educational Foundations. She is currently the Chairman of the Departmental Graduate Board and permanent member of Senate, University of Port Harcourt.

Professor Elizabeth Chinwe Okeke is an Executive Member of the prestigious Nigerian Academy of Education (NAE) and she is presently the Assistant Secretary General the academy. Professor Okeke also belongs to the *Association of Sociologists of Education, Nigeria (ASEN)*. Between 2002 and 2004, she was a Research Associate, Human Resource Development Centre, an NGO in Lagos. She is an elected Member of the European Centre for Research Training and Development, UK (2018); member of the Editorial Boards of some reputable international and national Research Journals and has successfully organised and attended

conferences, workshops and related academic events nationally and internationally, where she presented papers and chaired panels.

Professor Okeke has equally served as Chairman, NUC Accreditation team for undergraduate programmes to seven Universities and team member to six others. She has participated in the NUC Resource Verification of new undergraduate programmes in Nigerian Universities (2017). Between 2014 and 2015, she was an Assessor in the Education and Training Sector of the Lagos State Research and Development Council (LRDC) initiative aimed at strengthening research and development in the State Tertiary Institutions. She has served as an External Assessor to eight different Universities in Nigeria, some of which she still serve till date.

In 2005, Professor Elizabeth was twice the University of Port Harcourt CORDEC's Team Leader for the World Bank Project on 'Train-the-Trainers' programme for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in Bayelsa State. In 2008, she served as a Consultant to UNFPA 5th/6th End line/Baseline Survey of UNFPA Programme of Assistance to Nigeria, in charge of Rivers State. Between 2008 and 2010, in far-away Japan, she was an elected Board Member, representing Africa at by the International Society for Universal Dialogue (ISUD).

She is the Co-founder and Pioneer President of the *International Association for Gender Equity (IAFGE)*, a duly registered Non-Governmental Organization. She is the Board Chairman, *Initiative for Data and Social Advancement (IDASA)*; Board Chairman, *Results-Based Peace Building & Sustainability Advocacy Initiative* and Board Member, *Foundation for Female Empowerment (FFE)*.

Since her elevation to the Professorial rank, her family's philanthropic Foundation, *ECONIK*, has sponsored over eighty male and female secondary school graduates in different skills acquisition programmes and supported entrepreneurial empowerment of widows in some communities in Rivers and Anambra States.

The 157th Inaugural Lecturer is the 1st Professor of Sociology of Education to deliver Inaugural Lecture in the University; the 4th Professor in the Department, but the 2nd female Inaugural Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations.

Professor Elizabeth enjoys reading, music, dancing and playing tennis. She is happily married to an erudite and certified Engineer, Sir Chief Gibson E. Okeke (Ebekuedike n'Ukpo) and the union is blessed with four adults, who are professionals and two promising grandchildren.

Professor Elizabeth Chinwe Okeke, who is also referred to as an ardent *Voice of Women, Ochechinyelu, Pillar of Nation Building, Pillar of All Saints' Church, Ukpo, Exceptional African Woman in Education, and a Sociologist of Education Par Excellence*, is hereby presented to you to deliver the 157th Inaugural Lecture of the University of Port Harcourt.

Professor Ndowa E. S. Lale
Vice-Chancellor