

Gender Equalization and Economic Development in Nigeria

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Abstract: The study is on Gender Equalization for Economic Development in Nigeria. Certain problems such as unequal access to education and health care, discrimination and marginalization of women were identified as some of the factors that affect economic development in Nigeria. Religious factors, tradition and marital misunderstandings of people coupled with male-female discrimination by parents are some of the factors that hinder economic development in Nigeria. The broad objective of the study is to identify equal opportunities for men and women for economic development in Nigeria. The research is descriptive in nature. The researcher used secondary data in carrying out this study. These are data collected from relevant literatures to the study. He also used structured interview to elicit response from the respondents. The population of the study is 8 million people of adult males and females drawn from three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. A sample size of 60 of equal representation from the three major ethnic groups was used for this study. Some of the findings of the study include; lack of gender sensitization, no conclusive employment policy for women and unequal access to education and health care for men and women. In conclusion therefore, women are indispensable as long as Nigeria economic development is concerned. Women contribution to sustainable economic development in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Some recommendations were made, which include; gender sensitization, setting up of conclusive employment policy for women, equal access to education and health care for men and women and women empowerment through education, employment and political participation among others.

Key words: Gender equalization • Economic • Development and Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The concept of equality means much more than treating all persons in the same way. Equal treatment of persons in unequal situations will operate to perpetuate rather than eradicate injustice. True equality can only emerge from efforts directed towards addressing and correcting these situational imbalances. It is this broader view of equality that has become the underlying principle and the final goal in the struggle for recognition and acceptance of the human rights for women [1].

The cornerstone of every democratic society is equality. It aspires to social justice and human rights. In virtually all societies and spheres of activity, women are subject to inequalities in law and in fact [2]. This situation is both caused and exacerbated by the existence of discrimination in the family, in the community and in the work place. While causes and consequences may vary

from country to country, discrimination against women is widespread [3]. It is perpetuated by the survival of stereotypes and of traditional, cultural and religious practices and beliefs that are detrimental to women [4]. This discrimination against women to a very large extent hinders economic development of any country [5].

Women empowerment through education, employment and political participation among others will facilitate economic development of any given country especially developing countries. Such country should endeavour ensure gender balance in her various sectors of her economy for sustainable economic development of the country [6]. Sustainable economic development is economic development that attempts to satisfy the needs of humans but sustains natural resources and the environment for future. It is managing factors of production in a manner that they will remain available for future generations [7].

The discrimination and marginalization of women hinder economic development in all its ramifications. A society without women is like a Reverend Father without morality. For any society to observe sustainable economic development, women should be totally liberated and be given equal rights and privileges like their men counterparts [8].

Statement of the Problem: Recent efforts to document the real situation of women worldwide have produced some alarming statistics on the economic and social gaps between women and men. Majority of women in the world is poor and the number of women living in rural poverty has increased by 50% since 1975. Women are the majority of the world's illiterate; the number rose from 543 million to 597 million between 1970 and 1985. Women in Asia and Africa work 13 hours a week more than men and are mostly unpaid. Worldwide, women earn 30-40 per cent less than men for doing equal work. Women hold between 10 and 20 per cent of managerial and administrative jobs worldwide and less than 20 percent of jobs in manufacturing sectors. Women make up less than 5 per cent of the world's heads of state. Women's unpaid housework and family labour, if counted as productive output in national accounts, would increase measures of global output by 25 to 30 percent. These economic and social gaps between women and men affect economic development of many countries of the world today [9].

In addition to the above seemingly ill-treatment of women, it seems also that women are not given equal empowerment through education, employment and political participation among others like their men counterparts. In Nigeria today, certain laws, religion and culture also restrict women in participating in some socio-economic activities. Based on the above, the study is on Gender Equalization and Economic Development in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study: The broad objective of this study is to identify equal opportunities for men and women for economic development.

The specific objectives sought were to;

- Examine the human right of women as entrenched in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by General Assembly in 1948.
- Identify causes of discrimination against women.
- Establish the contribution of women to economic development.

- Identify strategies to power and increase the status of women.

Research Questions:

- How can human right of women be examined as entrenched in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by General Assembly in 1948?
- What are the causes of discrimination against women?
- What are the contributions of women to economic development?
- What are the strategies to increase women's status and power?

Scope of the Study: The study is on the Gender Equalization and Economic Development in Nigeria. It study was carried out between December, 2015 to March, 2016.

Significance of the Study: The study is significant because it will help other researchers in the relevant field in carrying out their study.

It is also significant because it will help women to understand their rights, possible areas where they are discriminated and marginalized and how they can increase their status and empowerment for Nigeria economic development.

The study is also significant because it will help government and other policy makers in formulating and carrying out their policies on gender equalization and economic development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sources of Data: Data for this study were sourced from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources of data are data collected from relevant literatures to the study while primary sources consist of interview carried out on the sampled population of the study.

Population of the Study: Population of the Study was 8 million people of adult males and females from three major ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Sample Size Technique: The researcher used stratified random sampling technique to determine the actual population of the study which is 60 in number, 20 for each ethnic group.

The Instrument for Data Collection: The researcher used oral interview in eliciting response from the respondents.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion

Summary of Findings: Based on the interview carried out on the sampled population, the following findings were made;

- There is poor promotion of societal awareness on women's rights.
- There is no enjoyment of all human rights by women on equal basis with men.
- There are no legal practices by governments to stop all forms of discrimination against women.
- Lack of Gender sensitization.
- No conclusive employment policy for women.
- There is negative discrimination in favour of women.
- Lack of wide net-work of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) for women.
- No equal access to participation of women in government and decision-making.
- Unequal access to education and health care.
- Poor implementations of international organs and commitments for Women.
- Inadequate use of mass media.
- Lack of monitoring targets to ensure that financial support reach women.
- Lack of women empowerment.

CONCLUSION

Women are indispensable as long as economic development is concerned. The contribution of women for economic development in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. In this connection, they should not be marginalized. They should be given equal treatment and opportunity. No law should restrict them in any form from participating in any economic, political and social activities in Nigeria.

The United Nations and other development organizations have discovered that the small skills acquired by women if properly harnessed, are the engine rooms of sustainable economic development.

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