

## Assessment of the Levels of Gender Mainstreaming and Women Participation in Yobe State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*In both developed and developing countries, there are political, social and economic participation at all levels. The essence of it is to seek control, acquisition and dispensing of leadership power to organized society. It is also aimed at harnessing and distributing fair and equitable resource as well as to influence decision making. Women are compounded and enforced by custom, tradition norms, values practice, belief and laws behind which stood the coercive force of the state. It was against this development that Nigeria in 2006 lunch a National Gender Policy on women and gender equality aimed to promote the contribution of women to develop at micro and macro levels to reduce dependency ratios within family. Therefore, the fundamental objective of this study focus to assess the effects of National Gender Policy and its implication on women development in Yobe state. Both primary and secondary data was used, survey research design was adopted while 342 respondents were selected from various women groups as sample of the study and questionnaire were distributed to selected women groups, government agencies (MWASD) and Non-governmental (NGOs) in three selected Local government Areas of senatorial zones in Yobe state. Using simple random sampling techniques, Validity and reliability test were conducted and the variables have correlation- coefficient values of 0.5 which is found to be reliable. The data collected were analyzed using frequency percentage, pair t-test and multiple regression was used. The study recorded a positive and significant effects of cultural practice on women development, gender mainstreaming on women participation in public sectors and women level of education on National Gender Policy on Women development. It was recommended that federal and states government have to give priority to cultural practice, Gender mainstreaming and women participation in public sector and women level of education*

**Keywords:** Gender Policy, Implication, Women and Development

### INTRODUCTION

Gender as contained in the Beijing Conference Document (1995) held in china. The conference was organized to sensitize and educate member countries on the need to eradicate all forms of gender discrimination and violence against women. It is also aimed to protect women's rights and dignity from any form of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, molestation and so on. It was in view of the above that some countries including Nigeria had attempted to set up gender equality machineries, policies, programmed to tackle women issues. As a result in some of the European countries today, the gender gap is bridging and women's participation in the formal labor market had increasing more than ever before and women are taking more active roles in public and political life as well as in decision making. However, in spite of such advancement, there are still evidences of challenges on de jure equal

rights and equal status with men with many forms of inequality increasingly acknowledged.

The 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was very explicit, elaborate and comprehensive in providing for every Nigerian citizen's equal right, Justice, Liberty, and Equality of Status and equal of opportunities in respect of Sex, Religion, and Tribe. This is to provide enabling environment to secure minimum standards of living to its citizens and also to guarantee the protection of their fundamental rights and freedom. Yet, in spite of the constitutional provisions and commitments to regional and international human right treaties and conventions, the rights of women and girls in Nigeria are grossly undermine and undervalued this is overtly evident in the overall low Gender Development index (GDI).

The central culture that permeates the Nigerian society is patriarchal in nature. This male-dominated culture accords women an inferior and

secondary position in society. The patriarchal culture of male supremacy still remains embedded, obscured and protected within traditional institutions and structures held in abeyance and relative utmost sacredness (FMF, 2012:51).

In Yobe state the situation that portrays the level in which women have been misrepresented and politically dominated due to certain conservative ideas of cultural practice among the people is at the increased. This because in Nigeria and indeed Yobe state in particular, womanhood is subjected to family ties or second class citizens; hence there is commonality of general belief system that the best place for a woman is the kitchen this trend has brought about misrepresentation of women's rights at all level of the family down to the society. The state in the past is patriarchal in nature which is a major feature of traditional society. It is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enable men to dominate women.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In every society around the world both developed and developing countries, there are political, social and economic participation at all levels. The essence of it is to seek control, acquisition and dispensing of leadership power to organized society. In addition, it is also aimed at harnessing and distributing fair and equitable resources and as well as to influence decision making in line with organized or individual as rightly opine by Arowolo, (2008). women are compounded and enforced by custom, traditional, norms and value practices, beliefs and the law, behind which stood the coercive force of the state.

In line with their position, Maduagwu, (2003), Aliegba, (2005) conquered that the women question has also come up seriously as at demonstrated by proponents of women's rights who fought and continue to fight to make the women issue as a major agenda for developmental studies. It was against this development that Nigeria in 2000 lunched a national policy on women and gender equality aimed to promote the contribution of women to development at micro and macro levels to reduce dependency ratios within family.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

This study is guided by the following research questions

- To what extend does lack of women's education affects national gender Policy Development in Yobe state?

- What are the factors affecting National Gender Policy on women development

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to assess the effects of National Gender Policy on women Development in Yobe state while the specific objectives are to;

- clarify how women education affects National Gender Policy on Women development
- identify the factors affecting implementation of National Gender policy on women participation in Yobe state

### RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relation between Gender mainstreaming and women participation in some sectors in Yobe

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### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study has both academic, methodological and practical significance. The academic benefit include theories such as feminist, system theory and women development theory while in the methodology multiple methods were used to further explain the research work. The practical significance is attributed to activities of government and non –governmental agencies. This study would add to the body of knowledge on the levels of women's empowerment at local and national levels on the existing literatures with regards to the role of empowerment and women's participation in development processes.

The need for the study arises from the realization that the fight against gender inequality amongst women demands an effective ways of reducing rate of poverty in Yobe state through various women advocacy and the ministry concern, the ministry of women affairs and social development. It would therefore, appear worthwhile exercise to undertake this research, with the view to identifying their problems and shortcomings and consolidating on their strength and success on women Developments (NGP 2008). The study would be of importance to the Ministry of Women Affairs as it would analyze the Effects of National Gender Policy in Yobe state. This would prepare the Ministry to take necessary action to proper adequate measures or strategies for women empowerment.

The history of women discrimination could be dated to the Romance civilization and Arab Jahiliyah periods as contained in the Encyclopedia Britannica (2001) which describe the legal position of women as “completely dependent; and if married her property is passed to her husband”. In essence, the wife is a product that can be purchased as property. This was further obtained during the ancient pre-Islamic era, where daughters were buried alive as they were not considered worthy until the coming of Islam. Although, Quran and Hadith stated clearly without ambiguity that “a woman is equal to a man in the sight of Allah as regards her rights, responsibilities and action” until later, civilization sprang from Europe, Asia, Africa and the world over women were seen as no value and are merely regarded as property that can be bought. The bottom line here lies with the key reason for the discrimination against women and as well as its root causes in the society. These reasons placed men far and above to celebrate as being unique, stronger and fit for the public space than women.

Development which has the core values of sustenance, self-esteem and freedom from servitude “is a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, population attitudes and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty” (Todaro and Smith, 2004: 17). Its essence is to increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life; raise the level of living through increase in income, provision of more jobs, better education and greater attention to cultural and human values; and expand the range of economic and social choice available to individuals and nations (Todaro and Smith, 2004). National development is therefore the overall development of a country which entails the social-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a nation which can be achieved through development planning (Lawal and Oluwatoyin, 2011).

Gender equality which according to Reeves and Baden (2000) means women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere, have been identified as a core development objective. This is because it enhances productivity, improve development especially for the next generation, and make institutions more representative. Attempts made to reduce poverty can only be successful if the differences in the status of women and men in key areas like population and families, health, education, work, power and

decision making, violence against women, environment and poverty are taken into consideration (Lin, 2011; World Development Report on Gender and Development, 2012; ILO, 2012). To Ejiro Joyce Otiye-Igbuzor, a country director at the Centre for Development and Population Activities in Nigeria, gender equality is an imperative for development, democracy and global progress (Otiye-Igbuzor, 2006).

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The history of women discrimination could be dated to the Romance civilization and Arab Jahiliyah periods as contained in the Encyclopedia Britannica (2001) which describe the legal position of women as “completely dependent; and if married her property is passed to her husband”. In essence, the wife is a product that can be purchased as property. This was further obtained during the ancient pre-Islamic era, where daughters were buried alive as they were not considered worthy until the coming of Islam. Although, Quran and Hadith stated clearly without ambiguity that “a woman is equal to a man in the sight of Allah as regards her rights, responsibilities and action” until later, civilization sprang from Europe, Asia, Africa and the world over women were seen as no value and are merely regarded as property that can be bought. The bottom line here lies with the key reason for the discrimination against women and as well as its root causes in the society. These reasons placed men far and above to celebrate as being unique, stronger and fit for the public space than women. Women are more feeble and weak and meant to stay within the confluence of the private space. This has gone a long way to affect women’s perception of politics and has therefore led to a very low level of political interest, leadership knowledge and activity of women in politics. Nkoyo(2002:23) *observed that:*

*While severally, emphasis is laid on women’s numerical strength, translating such into the attainment of power has been difficult as women are perceived as “supporters club, team of cheerers and clappers.*

Nkoyo (2002) further opined that in Nigeria there seems to be no critical understanding of the difference between “a visible agenda for women and an impacting agenda for women.” In view of the above, sexual division of labor and job opportunities are being allocated on the basis of sex rather than merit or performance. This therefore put the men at the advantage to possess more purchasing power over and above

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their female counterparts. This contributed immensely to the low level of women's political participation and is becoming alarming and disturbing and this hampers them (women) from contributing their quotas towards the development of Yobe state and Nigeria as a whole. According to Nwankwo (2012), women in position of responsibilities are noted to be hardworking and firm in their decision making and implementations. Nevertheless, Nigeria as a member nation to the international Convention on Equality for Women is still far below average, as man in Nigeria and Yobe State in particular is more superior to woman.

The term 'gender' is used to describe a set of qualities and behaviors expected from men and women by their societies. A person's social identity is formed by these expectations. These expectations stem from the idea that certain qualities, behavior,

characteristics, needs and roles are 'neutral' for men, while certain other qualities and roles are natural for women. UN Report 2013. The report notes that the improvement of the status of women and girls will not only promote human development, but will help in achieving the other aspects of National Gender Policy. According to the National Gender Policy situation analysis (2013) the success of this institutional framework to ensuring a process of gender equality and social justice for the country is dependent on strong political will and national commitment to gender equality and social justice. It is also dependent on the success of Nigeria's fragile democratic political structures. Proposed machinery must be properly financed. The set National Gender Policy Goals and targets overarching policy pronouncements on gender equality and women empowerment is shown below.

### National Mandate for Gender Equality (Government Institution)

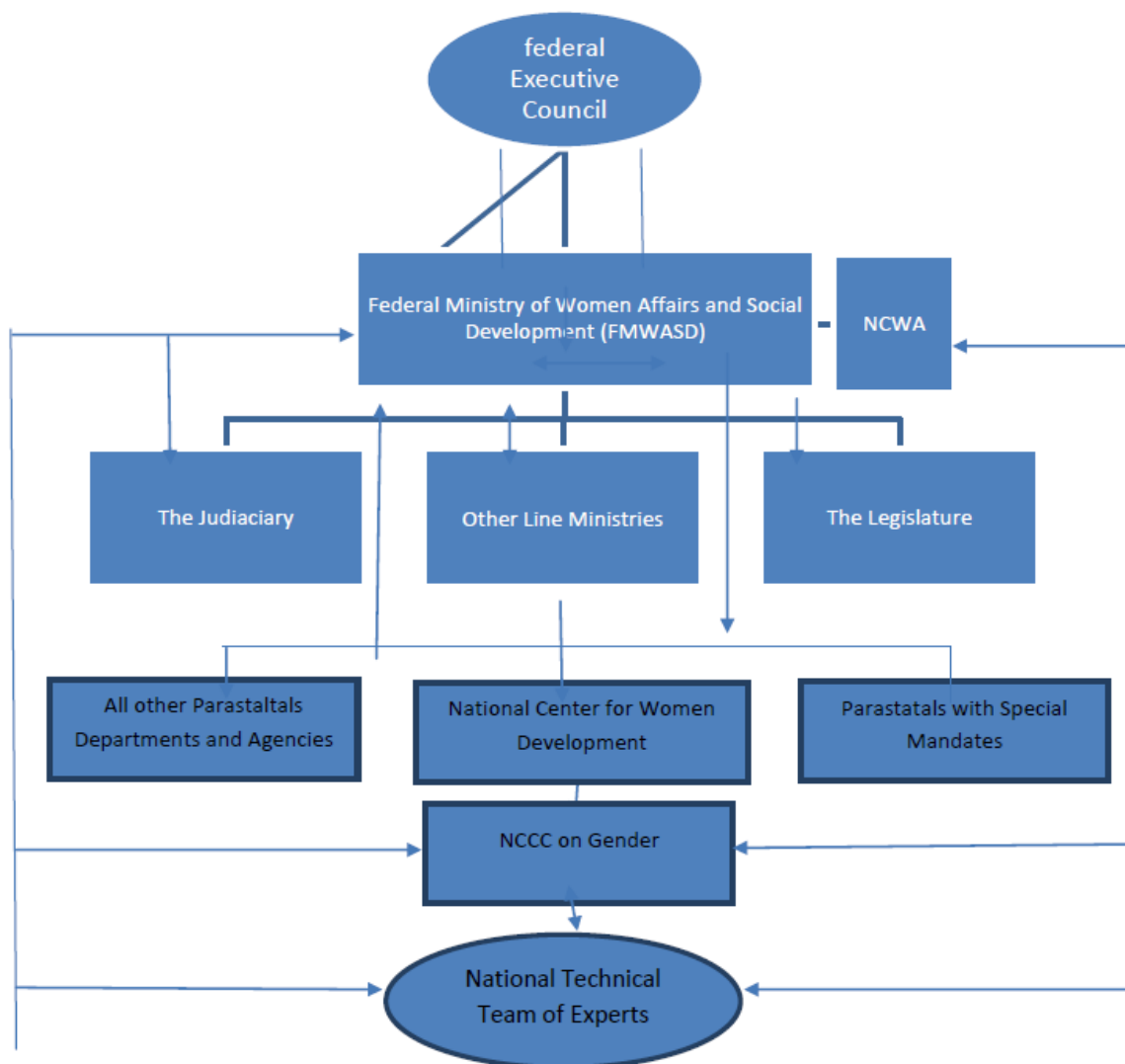


Figure 2.1. Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development Chart

Source: Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, (2015)



Gender inequality has been the conception as far back as the era of Aristotle (Greece ancient philosopher) when women are being perceived as weak, cautious, and only good to be domesticated for home comfort, with men being considered as the strong, independent, adventurous, active, and rational. The practice is still the norm in some societies till today and the implication is the undermining of level of women participation in socio-economic activities which is considerable especially in entrepreneurship development.

Women are adjudged to be the most underutilized resources in the world going by the lower level of participation in the labour force relative to men even when they constitute half of the world's human capital. According to OECD, (2012), the employment gender gap is more prominent in OECD countries like Mexico, Italy and Greece with fewer than 50% women in paid employment, working part-time and earning less than men due to persistent gender wage disparity. Women undertake chunk of unpaid care work across all cultures and economies. More importantly, this is noticeable in many societies where existing norms command that women and girls shoulder the main responsibility for caring for children, the sick, elderly, as well as household runs providing water, energy supplies and cooking (AfDB (2014)). This undercuts their possibilities of schooling or being able to harness and secure incomes and better working conditions on their own productive activities. The fact remains that there would be significant contribution to GDP if the bulk of household activities and childcare are valued to form part of national accounting.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are several literatures on gender issues, women oppression and marginalization and the strategies for intervention; consequently there was the emergence of different Theoretical explanations seeking to explain the causes of these domination, marginalization and oppression, among them are the liberal feminist, socialist feminist theory, standpoint theory among many. Other theories that would be applicable to the study is the system theory which explains the relationship between government and the citizens.

One of those theories adopted to compliment the research work is the liberal feminist theory –is an individualistic form of feminist theory which focuses on women's ability to maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. Its emphasis was on making the legal and political rights of women equal to men. Liberal feminists argued that society holds the false

belief that women are, by nature, less intellectual and physically capable than men, thus it tends to discriminate against women in academic, the forum, and the market place. Liberal feminists believe that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance to the so-called public world.

The liberal feminist are of view that all people (men and women) are born equal and therefore equal opportunities should be provided for them and that the existing women oppression and subordination arose because of the non-recognition and implementation of this principle. The theory believes this marginalization is derived from the pattern of socialization of men and women into different roles in the society (Sha, 2007). This has the consequence of producing inflexible expectations of men and women which resulted to prevent women from having equal opportunities. This bad positioning of women according to Sha is further reinforced by discriminating prejudice and irrationality perpetrated by men, the family, the state and its agencies.

### EMPIRICAL STUDIES

In a research carried out by the United Nation, (2012) department for international development titled "improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria" the report is based on published official data, supplemented by some recent qualitative work (Mahdi Asubiano forthcoming) a wide range of Nigeria social and economic data was revealed and great variability in their quality coverage and consistency was observed. The bureau of statistics (BS) is responsible for collecting analyzing and disseminating data, but other government agencies also collect parallel data. The research's key findings provide a comprehensive view of gender in Nigeria. Its access to the progress in key areas including employment and livelihood, education and health, political representation and violence. It finds out that women suffers systematic disadvantage and discrimination that is magnified for those in the poorest state and sectors of the society. It recommends policies to improve the lives of women and girls and identified priorities for actions. The research findings also revealed that 54% of Nigeria still lives in poverty and the proportion has doubled in recent years when about 28% were classified as poor. Nigeria human development indicators are also worse than those comparable lower middle income countries 42% of Nigerian children are malnourished.

Studies have been conducted on the impact of empowerment and what leads to successful

empowerment. In a study conducted by Rahman and Naoroze (2007) on women empowerment through participation in aquaculture in Bangladesh, it was observed, using the multiple regression analyses, that of the five selected measures of empowerment; access to assets and resources alone was responsible for 59.8% of the variation in overall empowerment. In the study, the multiple regression analysis revealed that only four independent variables were significant predictors of women's empowerment. These were participation in agriculture, education, extension media contact and training. Participation in agriculture accounted for 14.9%; education accounted for 9%; extension media contact accounted for 4%; while training accounted for 2.5% of variations in empowerment. A significant relationship was found between women's education and their empowerment and this implies that education enhances women's empowerment both in the family and the society.

### METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research methodology entails the methodological issues discussed, are the research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling techniques, method of Data collection, validity and reliability of the instruments and method of data analysis employed. The study used descriptive survey method. The population of this study is one thousand seven hundred and sixty five (1765) mostly women among which a sample of three hundred and fifty three (353) were selected, by 20% of number of women registered groups

A structured questionnaire consisting closed ended questionnaire was employed for the survey. The instrument was meant to measure the variables of the research using 5point likert-type rating scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The data collected were analyzed using percentage, pair t-test and multiple regression was used to test hypothesized relationship.

### Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered on the respondents by the researcher with the help of research assistants. The researcher trained the research assistants on how to administer the instrument. The researcher and research assistants administer the instrument to the respondents and retrieved them after completion. It will not be possible for the instrument to be collected

immediately, the respondents were given few days to retrieve the completed questionnaire from them.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using regression to determine factors affecting national gender policy and while t-test is used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. For decision purposes based on five-point rating score, any item with a mean of 4.50 -5.00 is interpreted as most highly needed; also any item with a mean falling between 3.50-4.49 is interpreted as highly needed, also any item with a mean of between 2.50-3.49 is regarded as averagely needed; any item with a mean between 1.50-2.49 means low needed while any item with a mean between 0.50-1.49 is considered not needed. If the computed value of t exceeds the critical or table value, the null hypotheses is rejected, but if the computed value of "t" is below the critical or value, the null hypotheses is not to be rejected.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The discussion of major findings of the study is based on the assessment of the effects of National Gender Policy and its Implication on Women Development in Yobe state with particular emphasis on the perceptions of officials of Ministry of Women Affairs as well as the Non- governmental organization (NGOs) and specifically women respondents.

It was discovered in the analysis of the responses that cultural values can enforced women discrimination in roles played by men and women in society, cultural values also promote harmful beliefs on women education especially in some societies women were denied access to education, resources, land and even inheritance and it's may also leads to inadequate representation of women in economic, political social and religious representations.

Hypothesis 2 was also tested on the variable levels of gender mainstreaming and women participation in some sectors in Yobe state on women empowerment. The results indicated there significant relationship between level of gender mainstreaming and women participation in some sectors in Yobe state. Based on the findings of objective 2 women are nowadays represented in economic sector, women also participate in formal political structure, gender mainstreaming is presently regarded as a tool for poverty eradication and economic empowerment, it

is also a tool for institutional change and a strategies adopted for achieving gender equality, most sectors in Yobe state have gender equality desk office in almost all ministry to ensure adequate women participation and representation in all sectors of the economic. But most respondents believes that there is mainstreaming of gender in some sectors but not to some certain extend, the representation is not up to expectations of women as to 35% affirmative action needed. The second hypothesis proves that there is a relationship between genders mainstreaming of and women development.

### CONCLUSION

From the result of this study it was concluded that there is positive effects of cultural practice on women development, gender mainstreaming and women participation in public sectors and women education affects National Gender Policy on Women development. The study further concluded that other significant factors affecting implementation of National Gender policy and its implications on women participation included Cultural practice, High number of women not adequately educated, wide gap in income earning activities among men and women, awareness on the policy agenda and objectives and Adequate strategies has to be implemented to develop women.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research presentation and analysis of the research work, the researcher proposed the following recommendation which may be of great significance to the government and non-governmental organizations.

- Since cultural practice has positive affect on women development, Nigerian government have to create policy on cultural practice that would enable women to freely participate and practice.
- Gender mainstreaming and women participation in public sector has positive relationship therefore, there is need for national gender policy to be reviewed and formulate policy monitoring, there has to be indicator to assess the implementation of gendered aspect of policies. Sector programming framework which focus on women empowerment in each sectors programme to reflect the application of gender equality principles.

Women level of education significantly affects National Gender Policy on Women development, Nigerian government through ministry of women

affairs is to organized more programmes on women access to education opportunities especially those relevant to a sustainable economy.

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