TWO HALVES MAKE A WHOLE: GENDER AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE NIGERIAN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

By

Olabisi Idowu Aina

Professor of Sociology &
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"...a nonsexist society would be a society with no race, gender, and class distinctions in the production and distribution of economic resources. It would also be a society where power is not distributed by virtue of one's class, race, or gender and where individual civil rights are respected and maintained.........Although that society seems a long way off, feminist research and theory provide the guidelines for creating it.

-   **(Andersen, 1988, pp. 361).**

PREAMBLE

The Vice Chancellor, Sir

The Principal Officers,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I welcome you ALL to this inaugural lecture – my academic and professional friends; my relations; in-laws; students; and all well-wishers, you are warmly welcomed.

It is with utmost reference to the ***Three-in-One*** (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost), the Almighty God, that I stand before you to present this 250th Inaugural lecture of this very Great University.

Like any other young girl of my time, all I wanted was to be married, raise my children, and be a devoted wife. I never knew it was possible for a girl to combine the world of academics with raising a God-fearing family. The man that made that possible was my husband, Professor Patrick Oladipo Aina, to whom I am eternally grateful. He became my academic pilot and a guard. My kids - Bisola, Lanre, and Ladi - went through the cold nights with me in my faculty office writing my dissertations and academic papers. I am ever grateful for their lives of devotion to God and to humanity.

My parents – *Madam Olabimpe Olaseinde and Pa John Adu Olaseinde* of blessed memory – provided the platform on which today's inaugural lecture was built – as a 'girl child', in a local cocoa producing farm town, they gave me the rare opportunity to venture into the world of academics,

where a lot of the girls in my time dare not tread. To my pseudo parents – Chief and Mrs. Babalola; and my brother – Mr. Tunji Olaseinde (who piloted me to the world of a Secondary School) – all present in this hall today, the journey was made possible by your efforts.

When I intuitively took the title " *Evaluation of Sex Roles Amongst the Yorubas of Southwest Nigeria*" for my B.Sc Thesis in 1979, little did I know that this was to lead to a life-long passion for feminist contestations and engagements. Even at a more advanced level, and as a student of Industrial Sociology, my Dissertations (M.Phil & PhD) were located in the emerging field of Gender Studies. A field so unknown in most African Universities at the time, that it took my Faculty (here at OAU) almost six months to approve my PhD thesis title, and to agree that the word 'gender' could be located in academic discourse. Today, the field of Gender Studies offers more than a mere academic enterprise; for it is both personal and political. In the last 3 decades I have ventured into the world of the sexes and their antecedents, with a focus on identifying and defining the impact of gender inequalities on human development. A central theme in this inaugural lecture - the *'two halves make a whole'* logic - is espousing the complementarities (rather than competitiveness) in gender role relations; a world where gender interests intermesh, and indisputably integrate...... *for HE created them male and female … in His own Image (Genesis 1:26). ......Then the man said, "At last, here is one of my own kind – Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh" (Genesis 2:23)*

1.0. INTRODUCTION
The African development crisis provides a unique experience with its roots in both exogenous and endogenous factors including political contestations, ethnic and religious rivalries, and competition for control over economic resources. For example, the Africa continent (of which Nigeria is a part) is ripped in crises, ranging from the crises of colonial and neo-colonial dominations, exacerbated in economic donaination driven by corporate globalization and the quest for internal economic growth. The result of the resurgence of neo-colonial incursions in Africa through globalization, and the attendant liberal economic policies led to economic retrogression of most African states ushered in

through structural adjustment economic policies and programmes, and a preference for privatization of resource yielding public institutions and infrastructures. The emphasis on export led economy has not only compounded the problems of governance in Africa, but also led to imbalance of trade between the 'have' and the 'have-not' nations of the world. Constantly, this has led to unequal relations amongst committees of nations, with the so-called Third World countries continually marginalized and disadvantaged. According to Filomina Steady (2002a), the marginalization of African countries through corporate globalization led to widespread poverty, the destruction of many African economies, social dislocation and civil strife; and compounded by the erosion of the life- supporting capacities of many African ecosystems. An overarching impact of the neo-colonial resurgence is the evolution of authoritarian regimes and gender-based discrimination across African region, and a resurgence of structural racism through a dichotomy of North/South divisions and polarities. Worst still, the African continent is riddled with gender discrimination and heightened gender inequalities which are the bane of sustainable development. Evidences around the world continue to demonstrate that 'societies with large, persistent gender inequalities pay the price of more poverty, malnutrition, illness, and other deprivations' (World Bank, 2000).

The overarching effect of poverty across nations further drew attention on gender inequality, a concept which has engaged the attention of scholars, development practitioners, policy makers, and civil society organisations for over 3 decades now. The continued existence of disparities between women and men in access and control over resources, and the overt discrimination against women throughout history, are not only seen as a clog in the wheel of national and international development agendas, importantly, the achievement of gender equality is bound up with all other goals of sustainable development, such as good

governance, human rights, environmental sustainability, poverty reduction, and inclusiveness in development planning and practice.

As the 'gender variable' enters the development equation, attention is now drawn on a better understanding of gender relations, particularly the unequal power distribution between women and men across societies. Gender equality does not ignore the biological differences between men and women (especially in reproductive roles, rather it helps to appreciate the uniqueness of each gender group and the importance of bringing the different needs and priorities of both women and men into knowledge production and development agenda, thereby helping to focus on gender differences in social arrangements, gender equity, and social justice – which are at the heart of sustainable development.

While it is important to understand gender differences, it is also important to note the extent to which the interests of gender groups (women and men) crosscut and overlap. Notably, "gender issues" are not the same as "women's issues". Rather, understanding 'gender' means understanding opportunities, constraints and the impact of change as they affect both women and men. Put simply, traditional gender stereotypes (often detrimental to women) could only be amenable to positive change by creating a partnership between women and men, and building mutual trust across gender groups.

At the core of my work is presenting gender equality as a key element in the development process. Development is envisioned not just as a process of creating opportunities for individuals to earn sustainable livelihoods rather, it requires that men and women are able to operate within a conducive policy/social environment that allows them to seize those opportunities. According to Parpart et al (2000), "development implies not only more and better schools but also equal access to education for boys and girls. Development requires good governments that give men and

women equal voices in decision-making, and policy implementation".

Importantly, **'If development is not engendered, it is endangered'** (UNDP, 1997:7). Thus, in addressing development from the perspective of *'the two halves make a whole'*, we are able to explore differential needs of women and men; girls and boys, in the development process. Importantly, we are able to appreciate that policies affect them in different ways; while they have rights to share the benefits of development, if sustainable development is to be achieved. Thus, *'the two halves make a whole'* approach is a shift from focusing on women in isolation, to a focus on gender relations which explore relations of cooperation and/or competition (even conflict) between the two gender groups in the development process. Gender relations are thus taken as prime factors in explaining social differentiation and social inequalities in the society; while they provide the platform for social/policy reforms for sustainable development. However, sustainable development may be hard to achieve where one-half of the potential talent base (women) remain untapped resource. It is also unlikely to address problems of development and/or find solutions to these, when only half of the population concerned are involved in this process. Memmati and Gardiner (2002), wrote "none of the three 'pillars' of sustainable development can be achieved without solving the prevailing problem of gender equity". These pillars are identified as – environmental protection; economic well-being; and social equity. Also, partnerships and equality between men and women are found to be the basis of strong families and viable societies in a rapidly changing world.

In specific terms, the lecture centres around the following themes – evolution of women/gender and development frameworks; international, regional, and national policy environment in which equity issues are situated; a sectoral analysis of gender and development issues (where most of my empirical works are located); contributions of gender research to the field of Sociology

(and the social sciences disciplines in general); while also drawing some conclusions.

2.0. **EVOLUTION OF WOMEN/GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS**

2.1. Conceptual Clarifications:

'Gender' is envisioned as socially constructed, and 'sex' as biologically given. While 'sex' is the anatomical distinction between being a male or a female; gender is the patterned, socially produced distinctions between femininity and masculinity. Sex attributes are universal and are often not adaptable to change, whereas gender attributes are culturally specific, and are subjected to change across cultures and historical epochs. Each cultural system creates a set of beliefs and practices for men and for women that define the relationships between them. Thus, the definition of gender insists that the situation of men and women must be analyzed in relationship to each other, and not in isolation. Through gendered processes, advantages and disadvantages, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning, and identity are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female; masculine and feminine. Many of these processes may be open and overt, while at other times, they are hidden within societal processes and decisions that seem to have nothing to do with gender. Albeit, neither women nor men are homogenous groups, for individuals are equally differentiated based on such social categories as class, age, and ethnicity amongst others. These social categories either act as enhancing and/or inhibiting factors to the position of women and men in the society.

As gender becomes a cross-cutting issue in development praxis, a greater focus is placed on women's roles and functions in the society. In numerical terms, women represent over 70% of the world's poor due to unequal access to economic opportunities. Increasing female participation in the workforce and the development of the female human capital, would not only help to

reduce poverty at the household level, it will radically enhance national growth and development. Importantly, poverty reduction in poorer countries (including Nigeria) largely depends on women, whose work are largely unaccounted for in national accounts, and unremunerated.

'Development' was originally conceived as a 'Western project', with the principal aim of modernizing the post-colonial societies. Paradoxically, these earlier efforts did not bring about improvement in the living conditions of societies in the South, rather, the process led to poverty, deprivations, environmental degradations, and gender inequalities among others, in the 'so called Third World Nations'. The failure of the 'modernisation model' of the neo-liberal assumptions fuelled the search for sustainable solutions to emerging development crises, with a connecting link now found between sustainable development and the feminist logic or what others called *'the feminine principle'* (Dankelman, Kurian, and Postel, 1992).

2.2. Gender and Development Frameworks

2.2.1. Intersection of Gender and Development
The interrogation of the 'gender' variable with the development model is intricately tied to the overall development crises which ensued in the post colonial regimes. According to Kate Young (1993), between 1945 and 1965 over 50 countries in Africa, Asia and Caribbean became independent nations. Many of these countries were left · with colonial heritage which left them impoverished and with distorted or fragmented economies and with no physical/social infrastructures. Thus, in the 1960s, the first UN development decade's goals focused on the industrialization of the South's post-independent countries, involving large-scale projects in order to foster fast economic growth which would eventually benefit the entire population. With the failure of the assumed 'trickle down effect' of the first UN Development Decade, a new development strategy was enunciated.

Thus, in the 1970s, came a stress on the development of people as a prerequisite for sustained economic growth. This meant a shift from mere capital investment towards investment into 'human resources' in the form of equitable distribution of wealth and income, social justice and improvement of facilities for education, health, social security amongst others. Thus the basic needs approach was adopted by the World Bank as a condition for its lending activities. Multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental development organizations subsequently endorsed this approach.

The era of concern with equity and basic needs approach was short-lived in the light of global economic crises - the 'oil crises' of the mid 1970s which led to deteriorating terms of trade, slowly growing export markets, net capital outflows from the countries of the South and increased interest rates on large-scale loans taken by the Third World countries which eventually led to series of structural adjustment policies, and the 'lost decade of the 1980s'.

With the attendant economic crises in the so-called developing countries (Nigeria inclusive), and the failure of capital to grant full emancipation in these countries, the Eurocentric measures of development were queried. A central argument was that the use of GDP or GNP may appropriately serve as indicator(s) of economic performance within a western model of development (a fully industrialized market economy), it may be inappropriate for an evolving market oriented economy of the Third World, with large non-market production sectors (a sector where most activities performed by women are located). Importantly, the attention later drawn on women's economic contributions to development in the seminal work of Ester Boserup (1970); and United Nation's initiatives since the 1948 to date altered the development landscape and its analysis. Women's issues and development came to be conceptually linked for the first time following the Second UN Development Decade (1970 -79). Importantly, this decade brought about paradigm shift in development discourse. Development planners shifted focus from mere economic growth to issues of

equity in the distribution of wealth, targeting the poor, building local and cultural autonomy using a 'people centred' approach. This emerging model of development shifted attention to women's contribution to the household economy, while their contributions to family welfare attracted significant attention by feminist economists.

The ensuing policy frameworks which developed as gender interrogates with the development model are largely described as –
    i. The Women in Development (WID) Framework;
    ii. The Women and Development (WAD)Framework;
    iii. The Gender in Development (GID) Framework; and
    iv. The Gender and Development (GAD) Framework.

2.2.2. The WID/WAD) Frameworks:
The change in the development paradigm in the 1970s; and the resurgence of the women's movement in the northern countries in the 1970s gave birth to the 'Women In Development' framework. The WID framework focuses on poverty and meeting individual basic needs. The framework sees women as both critical agents and neglected beneficiaries of the development process. Importantly, WID policies were oriented around poverty relief, with emphasis on women's importance in basic needs provision. Notably, the WID approach views women as objects of interest or subject of analysis.

The WAD framework emerged in the 1980s as a response to neo-liberal macro-economic policies which ushered in the structural adjustment programmes in crisis-ridden Less Developed Countries (LDCs) (including Nigeria). The Women and Development approach identified feminization of poverty within the context of the structural adjustment economic policies and with their differing effects on men and women's lives and livelihoods. It thus calls for special programmes to address the basic and the strategic needs of women.

The variants of the WID/WAD models are presented in Table 1, with a range of emphases – welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency, and empowerment models. While all the other variants assumed a liberal framework emphasis on basic needs and/or practical gender needs), the empowerment model emphasized strategic gender needs of women (see Caroline Moser, 1989). The Women Empowerment model gained momentum after the Beijing Conference (1995). The Beijing Declaration (Section 13) presents women's empowerment as a key strategy for development. The Declaration holds that 'women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.

A major criticism levied against the WID/WAD approach was the fact that it was strictly based on economic model and principles, which present women as 'the problem' thereby necessitating only 'women-focused' plans and projects, and women machineries in governance. This model ignored the strategic needs of women and thereby failed to challenge the structure of gender inequality in the society. The introduction of the empowerment model at a much later stage helps to bridge this gap, which eventually culminated to the GAP model which projects women and men as partners in the development process, with women becoming the other 'half' too important to ignore.

TABLE 1: WID/WAD POLICY FRAMEWORKS ON WOMEN

Welfare (1950 – 70)	Equity (1975-85)	Anti-Poverty (!1970s)	Efficiency (1980s – to date)	Empowerment (1975 – 1980s to date)
- Targeted the reproductive and nutritional needs of women; - Women seen as passive beneficiaries of development; - Non-challenging to institutional structures	-Targeted at meeting the productive; reproductive; and community management roles of women; - A top-down approach	-Targeted women's practical gender needs; - Poor women isolated for government intervention;	- Targeted women to make development more efficient and effective; And for equity; Focused on women's practical gender needs (delivery capacity of women	-Challenge of status of - Bottom-u strategies - Mobilization for change; - Governments are often wary of this approach, as they find it sometimes challenging and prescriptive

2.2.3. The GID/GAD Model

The Gender In Development (GID) model came into being in the 1990s as gender data/statistics were produced in such sectors as agriculture and employment among others; and as the gender variable is negotiated within the larger macro-economic framework for development. GID explored gender inequalities in society and focused on empowerment tools which only target women. A major shortcoming of GID is its inability to explore men's issues further; and how gender relations (of power) contribute to the overall experience of women.

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach sees gender equality not only as an issue of social equity, but as a cost to the development process. GAD aims at closing the gender gaps for

sustainable national development, and stands on two pillars i.e. women empowerment, and gender equality goals. It sees gender as a cross cutting issue in development and therefore uses the 'gender mainstreaming' tools and other gender frameworks to unfold (and to change) underlining 'gender-blindness'; gender stereotypes; and other gender abuses in society. This shift gives way to gender planning for development; and awareness of the gendered nature of social and economic processes and their outcomes. GAD challenges the structure of gender inequalities; and takes into consideration the varying impacts of policies; and programmes on gender relations of power and identity building in the society.

GAD approach goes beyond women issues, to ways society assigns roles, responsibilities and expectations to both women and men. Using gender analysis frameworks, the GAD approach helps to uncover implications of gender relations in productive. reproductive, and community management roles. The gender analysis framework subsequently explores gender roles identification; gender needs assessment; disaggregating control of resources and decision making within the household; and planning for balancing the triple role of women.

GAD approach uses a multi-dimensional approach to 'women empowerment', whereby women's empowerment goes beyond changing women's socio-economic conditions, to changing the system which continues to reproduce gender inequality in societies. Thus, according to Hannan (2003), empowerment should lead to concrete action that would bring about changes in laws, in access to resources and in public and private institutions that reinforce women's subordination. Proponents of the agency approach to empowerment (e.g. Larrea (2005) argued that focusing only on transforming underlying power structures, such as the promotion of democracy or equity in political participation, is meaningless. unless people are in the condition of health and well being to take advantage of such opportunities. Hence, Luttrell et al (2007) critically assessed debates on empowerment process, and warned

that care should be taken not to overemphasize the separation between 'structure' and 'agency', rather attention should be paid to a combination and a sequencing of both forms of approach in the empowerment process.

In most African countries, women empowerment strategies have mainly been in the area of welfare programmes e.g. micro-credits (under the poverty alleviation programmes), skill acquisition centres for women, and more attention on maternal health amongst others. Very little has been done in the area of sharing the public space with women as regards participation in decision making and women occupying leadership positions both in government and in the corporate world.

Although current figures present reduction in gender gaps between men and women in such areas as economic participation and empowerment, health and survival, and educational attainment, the gaps remained obviously large in the area of political empowerment. It is not surprising that the little progress made in other spheres has not translated to obvious gender equality and women empowerment in reality, as men continue to hold the reins of power, and thereby control the country's economic resources.

GAD has been criticized for emphasizing the social differences between men and women while neglecting the bonds between them and also the potential for changes in roles. Another criticism is that GAD does not dig deep enough into social relations and so may not explain how these relations can undermine programmes directed at women. It also does not uncover the types of trade-off that women are prepared to make for the sake of achieving their ideals of marriage or motherhood.

3.0. INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR MEETING GENDER EQUALITY/WOMEN EMPOWERMENT GOALS:

3.1.International Policy Environment

The gravity of threat to humanity that was created as a result of the 2nd World War made the allied countries to start to re-group and to form an international organization that would have the power to maintain security and foster prosperity. It was within this context that the United Nation's Charter was written. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights which is the primary international articulation of the fundamental and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, which also represents one of humanity's greatest achievement, eventually led to the adoption of the Covenant on Economic and Socio- Cultural Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and many other legally binding international rights and instruments.

The common provision which runs through the bills of rights is that which establishes gender equality as fundamental human rights for all without any form of bias. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights re-affirmed the rights to gender equality in its Article 2:

> *"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."*

Article 26 of the same Covenant states that:

> *"All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law..."*

Despite the acclaimed guarantee of human rights, women's rights remained at doldrums, and unrecognized in most societies of the

world, especially in developing economies. The UN has no doubt played critical roles in the history of the promotion of women's human rights. By 1952, in recognizing that women deserved political rights to participate in governance and choosing representatives, the UN came up with the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952). The convention on the nationality of married women (1957) was adopted to guarantee the rights of women who get married across national boundaries while the right to make a choice about marriage was ensured in the Convention on the Consent to Marriage (1962). Further conventions were adopted to ensure that no discrimination existed between men and women. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

A major issue that required international consensus for intervention was the continued existence of discrimination against women based on their perceived social status, often explicit in almost culturally acceptable norms and practices, such as domestic violence, and the subordination of women in almost all spheres of life. Hence, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. This convention began the advent of globalization of the rights to equality for all women and guaranteed equal access to opportunities in political (to vote and be voted for), business (to aspire to entrepreneurial goals) and public environments (to be Chief Executive). Over 180 countries embraced this convention and they all agreed to put in place the necessary instruments including legislation and programs to ensure that women enjoy all necessary rights and privileges. Gender equality had become a universal issue. By now it had become clear that no meaningful development can take place in an environment plagued with discrimination and in particular, exclusion of women from governance and policy processes.

Notably, the adoption of CEDAW was a follow-up on other strategies that were in place before it, particularly the Mexico Plan of Action (1975) which emanated from the first World Conference on Women. A major achievement of the Mexico Plan of Action was the declaration of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976 – 1985) by the General Assembly. To change the structures which perpetuate gender inequalities across the globe, the United Nations adopted 3 key strategies which are:

- Full gender equality and the elimination of gender discrimination;
- The integration and full participation of women in development;
- An increased contribution by women in the strengthening of world peace;

The United Nations decade for women also led to the creation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM)[1]. By the end of the UN Decade for Women, the Nairobi Conference (1985) which appraised the programme came up with Forward Looking Strategies to strengthen the achievements of the Decade for Women.

Still, essential ingredients to development were lacking and women were still disadvantaged in many areas. The need to address these gaps influenced the emergence of more declarations and conventions. Education which is a veritable tool for development was first recognized as an area where gender equity was in urgent need. A World Conference on Education for All was held in 1990 and this came up with Declarations and a platform for action to address education gaps including the rights of women to education. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development came up with Agenda 21 (1992) and clearly enunciated the rights of women within environmental issues. Some of the rights were

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[1] Now UN-Women

reaffirmed in the 1993 Conference on Human Rights and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Environment.

A major milestone was achieved at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) which ended with the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA). With the provision that women must be part of the decision making process in matters relating to economic, political and social advancement, the idea of women empowerment became irrevocably tied to development across nations. Further strategies were put in place by the UN to improve women empowerment as contained in the Outcome Document adopted by the General Assembly Session on Gender Equality and Development and Peace in the 21st century titled "Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action". The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (2000) as a global strategy for poverty reduction further changed the gender landscape in favour of women. Five (5) of the eight (8) goals directly impact on the improvement of the status of women with goal 3 in particular seeking to achieve gender equality in education by 2015, a goal fully supporting the Dakar Declaration on Education for All (EFA) (2000) which contains most of the ideals of the Beijing Platform. More importantly, MDG goals further reiterated the point of view of gender equality and women's empowerment as development objectives in their own right (MDG 3 and 5), while also serving as critical channels for achieving the other MDGs and reducing income and non-income poverty. Gender equality and women's empowerment help to promote universal primary education (MDG 4), improve maternal health (MDG 5), and reduce the likelihood of contracting HIV/AIDS (MDG 6) (World Development Report, 2012).

The global leadership provided by the United Nations in the pathway to gender equality led to the development of gender diagnostic tools and frameworks now used in the process of gender mainstreaming. Some of these are discussed below:

a. Indicators of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Globally, specific measures of gender inequality and women empowerment have been developed, which are either aggregate indices and/or individual indicators. Some of these are listed below:

i.   Aggregate Indices of gender inequality and women empowerment:
   o   The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) – UNDP (1995)
   o   The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM - UNPD);
   o   The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index;
   o   The Social Watch Gender Equity Index;
   o   Gender Inequality Index (GII) (which replaced the Gender-related Human Development Index) – 2010

ii.   Individual indicators of Gender Inequality: These are the individual indicators used in assessing progress with the MDG goals and targets.

b. Gender Mainstreaming Tools/Frameworks

The positive global response to gender equality and women empowerment led to the development of regional and national gender policies and strategic frameworks for bringing about quantitative (positive) changes in gender relations, and targeting women for development. A number of gender diagnostic tools have been used to better understand gender concepts, and how the gender variable relates with other development variables. The usual point of departure is to undertake a gender audit, which is the first step in the process of gender mainstreaming. Gender audit helps to analyse public policy, including legislation, regulations, allocations, taxation and social projects from a gender perspective, and noting how these affect the status of women (separate from men) in a given society. Using a gender budget perspective, it

analyses even income and expenditures of the government and institutions noting the extent of gender gaps and disparities. A central point of view is that variance in gender impacts of policies and programmes stems from the different roles of women and men in household relations, often leading to lower economic status for women. The purpose of gender audits is to lead to changes in public policy that contribute to an increase in gender equality.

Notably, gender mainstreaming helps to bring the concerns of women (separate from men) into the mainstream decision-making criteria and processes and are pursued from the centre rather from the margins. A central concern is to strengthen the legitimacy of gender equality as a fundamental value that should be reflected in development choices and institutional practices. When gender equality is recognized as a strategic objective of development, gender equality goals influence broad economic and social policies and the programmes that deliver major resources.

Gender Mainstreaming tools (often referred to as a twin-track approach i.e. women empowerment track (which targets women specifically for development); and the gender integration track which mainstreams both women and men's concerns in policies, programs; projects; and human organizations in general) (see Figure 1).

Other vital elements of the gender mainstreaming process is the generation of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics without which it becomes almost impossible to generate evidence-based policies and programmes for meeting gender equality goals.
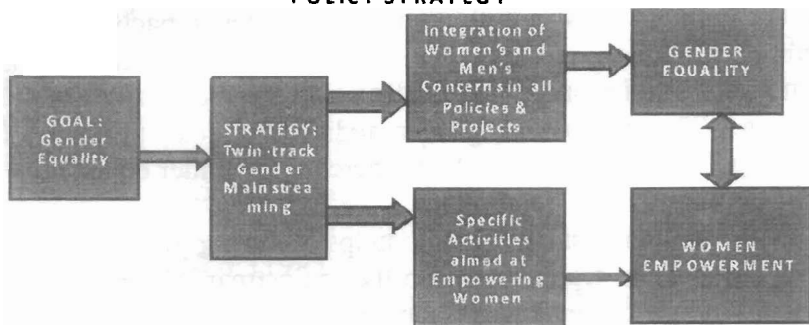
3.2. African Regional Policy Environment:

Africa responded to the global waves of rights and development, when in 1981, it adopted a regional instrument, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1981 marked the beginning of a new era in the field of human rights protection in Africa. The Charter distinctly deals with human rights in a unique African way. It is nevertheless, a defective human rights instrument in the sense that, among other things, its provisions on gender-related rights are not elaborate, while it addresses these rights in general terms, thereby missing out core issues relating to women's rights.

The drafters of the Charter were clearly aware of its shortcomings and this, no doubt, accounts for the Charters provision through its Article 66, for the adoption of special protocols or agreements to supplement its provisions, where necessary. This later gave room for the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa. The AU Protocol finds its primary relevance in its comprehensive embodiment of the rights and freedoms, which women in the African region have been denied over a long time, while they continued to be victims of discrimination and harmful practices. Since the creation of the

Organization of African Unity (OAU) Charter in 1963, women's issues did not come to the fore until the adoption of this special Protocol for the rights of women in Africa. The protocol therefore sought to address paternalism such that women can be strengthened and equipped to take control over their roles as child bearers and as community managers.

The Protocol is therefore designed according to its preamble to "ensure that the rights of women are promoted, realized and protected in order to enable them to enjoy fully all their human rights. It envisions an Africa where men and women from all walks of life dwell together in mutual respect of each other's rights. It has, therefore, significantly contributed to the birth of a new Africa. The Protocol is arguably one of the most progressive and visionary rights instruments for gender equality not just in Africa but internationally.

The African Union also took a decision to work towards gender parity at its inaugural Session in 2002 in Durban South Africa. In July 2004, the same Heads of States and Governments reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality through the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. NEPAD is the instrumentation of policy that will prepare Africa to engage with the rest of the world, including the industrialized countries and multilateral organizations by addressing poverty reduction in a comprehensive manner. Therefore, NEPAD has entrenched within its strategic long-term goals, achievement of gender equality.

NEPAD gives credence to women empowerment and gender equality frameworks, and thereby expects African States to come up with frameworks for engendering development indicators in the continent. For example, in addressing poverty issues in Africa, NEPAD is being implemented within the purview of the MDGs (rather than have parallel goals and format).

The Protocol for the rights of women in Africa was adopted in July 2003, and came into force in November 2005, after ratification by 15 countries as required by the African Charter. Nigeria was the 7th country to ratify. The protocol emphasized the need for the enlargement of space for women in politics and appointment positions. For the first time, the Protocol addressed issues around reproductive rights of women, recognized rape, sexual slavery, and other sexual violence, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Subsequently, gender equality and women empowerment best practices have been recorded in Africa especially in the following countries – Uganda, Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and to some extent Nigeria. Key learning points from these 'best practices' have been reported, including –

i.   Incorporation of gender equality agenda in national Constitutions and development of national gender policies;

ii.   Introduction of affirmative action instruments to correct existing gender imbalance in the respective societies;

iii.   Developing gender friendly electoral processes to allow women's participation and representation without prejudice or sentiment.

iv.   Hinging good governance on gender equity and equality principles.

v.   State's partnership with the civil society organisations to achieve gender equality and gender justice

vi.   Decentralisation process at the local level in order to offer greater opportunities to identify potential women for leadership positions.

vii.   Engaging the civic education process to support women in politics and decision making and devising strategies for capacity building for effective representation of women at all levels;

viii. Developing strategies to ensure that the constitutions and manifestos of political parties support women's participation in politics and decision making, generally, and

affirmative action to improve women's participation in politics;

ix. Broadening application of affirmative action to other issues such as livelihoods, education, health, budgeting and allocation of resources amongst others.

3.3.Nigeria Policy Environment

Fact sheets on Nigeria present a gruesome picture of the conditions of women and girls compared to their male counterparts. According to a recent publication by the British Council (British Council: Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012), Nigeria's 80.2 million women and girls have significantly worse life chances than men and also compared with their sisters in comparable societies. The report projects Nigerian women and girls as the hidden resource worthy of investing in, for sustainable growth and development. Failure to target them will also mean that the country might not be able to realize the conditions for meeting the MDG goals set for the world societies.

3.3.1. Nigeria's Commitment to International and National Instruments on Gender
Equality and Women Empowerment:

Importantly, Nigeria made several commitments to various international and national instruments devoted to promoting and protecting women's empowerment. Chapter 2 of the Nigerian Constitution provides for several provisions that can directly and indirectly entrench gender equality, while Chapter 4 which is actionable clearly by virtue of Section 42 (1) prohibits gender discrimination on the basis of sex and origin. Despite all these commitments, women's rights are still extensively violated in Nigeria and the country still remains far from achieving the realization of gender equality goals and practices.

Nigeria confirmed its commitment to upholding international human-rights standards by ratifying several major global treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

(Civil and Political Rights Covenant), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Covenant), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Children's Rights Convention), and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention against Torture). A state that ratifies or accedes to an international convention "establishes on the international plane its consent to be bound by a treaty." The government of Nigeria is therefore obligated under international law to protect the rights guaranteed by these instruments. Nigeria has also ratified the Optional Protocols to the Civil and Political Rights Covenant and CEDAW, which permit individuals to submit rights-violation claims directly to the relevant monitoring body, as established by each treaty, after exhausting domestic remedies. However a large volume of these laws, particularly the gender related laws are yet to be incorporated into the laws of the Federation.

Nigeria ratification of CEDAW prescribes its commitment to promote and protect women's human rights and also to put measures to be taken to ensure that women human's rights are articulated and respected. The convention was ratified in 1989 without any form of reservation and its optional protocol was later signed in 1999. The optional protocol enables individual women or groups of women to raise petitions for perceived acts of discrimination.

A major instrument which continues to anchor interest in gender issues both at global, regional, and national levels is the Millennium Development Goals Declaration. The MDG goals provided an entry point into resolving gender inequalities in society by treating 'gender' as a cross-cutting issue in development, and ensuring that gender/ women issues are wholly integrated into policy and planning processes. Thus, the Goal 3 (Gender Equality and Women Empowerment) of the Millennium

Development Goals is now widely accepted as a precondition for the attainment of the other 7 MDG goals.

For Nigeria to deliver in its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (and other regional instruments linked to this), gender equality and women empowerment concerns must necessarily top its policy agenda. Currently, Nigeria spends USD 1billion debt relief gains in addition to other budgetary appropriations trying to meet the MDG goals, yet its social sector continues to present gruesome gender statistics as exemplified in Table 2. As a leading member of the African Union, Nigeria faces the challenge of how best to deal with the issue of gender equality and women empowerment both in its public and private sector institutions.

3.3.2. Gender and Development Plans in Nigeria
Development planning in Nigeria was viewed as a major economic and political strategy for achieving economic development and social progress, particularly, in the areas of socio-economic infrastructure, industrialization, modernization, high rates of economic growth, poverty reduction, and significant improvements in living standards. Prior to independence and up till date, Nigeria had formulated and implemented quite a number of development plans: pre-independence planning phase; and the post independence phase. Three plans featured in the pre-independence era for the periods 1946-1956, 1951-1955 and 1955-1962. For the post independence era, three major phases of development planning experiences can be identified namely, the fixed medium-term planning phase (1962-1985), policy-oriented planning phase (1986-1988) and the perspective planning phase backed by rolling plans phase (1990 till date) (Obadan and Ogiogio, 2003).

These planning efforts have been implemented within a mix of both capitalist and socialist developmental frameworks (Obadan and Ogiogio, 1993). The implicit assumption under the two regimes rests on the degree of ownership and control of public

recourses. While the capitalist doctrine bestows greater roles to the private sector participants in the ownership and control of national resources, the socialist doctrine emphasizes the central role of the state in channelling the developmental path for the country. Prior to 1986, Nigeria based his developmental planning efforts on socialist doctrines, which then informed its centrally controlled mechanism, thereby leading to government involvement in virtually all productive activities in the economy. This was facilitated by the huge foreign exchange receipts from oil following the oil boom of the early 1970s. However, this became grossly unsustainable, thereby leading to a fundamental challenge to this developmental framework. As from the mid-1980s, Nigeria adopted and implemented neo liberal policies that are supply-driven, technologically efficient and profit-oriented, seeking to achieve the full use of the country's resources for social and economic progress through existing institutions and systems. This was based on the assumption that comprehensive planning systems of the previous decades is falling out of use because it is assumed that market forces increasingly dictate the pace of growth and development in the private sector. This has resulted in minimally regulated economic and social institutions and marginal state intervention in the market, with little benefit for those (usually women) who operate outside of the formal markets. On the whole, the neo-liberal policy framework tends to have a negative impact on social development and gender relations, with increasing gender inequalities, joblessness for women and the 'feminisation of poverty' (UNIFEM, 2005).

By May 29, 2004, Nigeria, under the Obasanjo regime, launched a policy package tagged National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS). It is premised on the core principles of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value orientation. The NEEDS framework was implemented through macroeconomic restructuring, strengthening of the private sector, public sector reform and a social charter which is anchored on inclusiveness and full participation of all.

The democratic environment promoted greater interaction and freer expression of ideas which enriched the NEEDS formulation process. NEEDS, designed to last from 2004 to 2007 has several distinctive features, which distinguish it from the earlier National Rolling Plans. These include -

i.   Adoption of Poverty Reduction Strategy and Framework
ii.   Adoption of a reform programme aimed at re-engineering the growth process
iii.   Adopting a formulation process which is largely participatory
iv.   Formation of an economic team to drive the process
v.   Adaptation for all tier of governance (SEEDS - the States Economic Development Strategy; and LEEDS - the Local Governments Economic Development Strategy)
vi.   Focusing on strategy and policy directions rather than programmes and projects (that is, an option for decentralised project planning and execution).

The objective of NEEDS is to enable Nigeria achieve a turn-around, and grow a broad based market oriented economy that is private sector-driven, but this time, with a human face. NEEDS therefore has as one of its priorities, empowering people to participate in this process, and to ensure improved quality of life for the citizenry. It is therefore seen as a pro-poor development strategy with sources of economic empowerment being gainful employment and provision of social safety nets for vulnerable groups, mostly women and children. Thus, NEEDS is perceived as a home grown vision for sustainable economic development for poverty reduction, strengthening public sector through reforms and improving the quality of health of the people. It is designed to serve as alternative to the negative and marginalising impact of globalization.

It could be said that the first development strategy that explicitly recognizes the productive role of women in development framework is NEEDS, even though it is limited in its applicability of gender mainstreaming frameworks. The policy thrust of NEEDS as a policy document balances a concern for market-oriented private sector led economic development with a people-oriented social charter. However, a critical assessment of the NEEDS document shows that it is pure and simple a neo-liberal market-oriented reform, which also has the endorsement of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. NEEDS is backed with the neo-liberal ideology "based on an unwavering belief in 'free markets'. Thus the NEEDS framework hinges on the promotion of the ideals of mainframe capitalism with its strong ideals for "competitive market, private ownership, free trade, and export-led growth, strict controls on balance of payments and deficits, and drastic reductions in government social spending". Although the NEEDS document seemingly avoids market fundamentalism by its focus on social charter and public sector reform, the absence of any policy mechanism for translating the rhetoric of poverty alleviation into concrete programme of poverty alleviation and the overemphasis on privatization, deregulation and liberalism cast it in the mould of past World Bank inspired structural adjustment program with its promotion of less government involvement (Akimbo and Yinusa, 2007).

Generally, the fundamental principles governing the **NEEDS (I)** macro-economic framework resulted in replicating marginalisation of the vulnerable groups especially women and children. This is explicated in its paying little attention to gender issues and gender mainstreaming frameworks. Thus, the NEEDS framework has been criticized for lacking theoretical and analytical rigor in mainstreaming gender concerns into its frameworks. NEEDS framework does not explicitly deal with the household economy, especially the non-monetized reproductive sphere. This is the sphere which deals with the social and material processes through which the human population is maintained and renewed on a daily

and inter-generational basis. According to Elson (1995), reproductive work enters the equation only insofar as it constrains women's ability to contribute labour to the production of tradables. It therefore goes along with conventional macro-economic analyses which ignore the un-monetized sphere of human reproduction. However, feminist macro-economics analyses, by contrast, present social reproduction as a necessary activity which underpins both the production of tradables and the promotion of human well-being (Elson 1995).

A number of flaws have therefore been identified with the NEEDS framework. These include, among others -

- Its lack of rigour in using gender frameworks. This has been attributable to absence of gender disaggregated data in the country, and thereby, inability to identify evidenced based gender gaps on which to build policy frameworks in pursuance of gender equality and women empowerment principles
- Inability to go beyond WID frameworks in addressing women's needs and concerns; and thereby failure to locate gender issues in the mainstream of policy frameworks;
- Failure to challenge the structure which continues to perpetuate gender inequalities within the main frame development plans and policies. Thus, by using the WID approach NEEDS retains traditional gender division of labour, which failed to challenge the structure of gender inequalities, and therefore, unable to transform women's status.

  NEEDS also failed to incorporate gender budgeting into its budgetary frameworks, thereby leaving out a major tool for monitoring government commitment to gender issues.

- NEEDS limited its discussion of gender issues to the sections on social charter, poverty, women empowerment and safety net; rather than present gender issues as a cross-cutting issue in development, policy, and planning. It therefore left out a major policy framework – mainstreaming of gender issues in the entire policy framework. The entire machinery for gender

equality and women empowerment framework was left out of NEEDS, with no specific role for Ministry of Women Affairs.

- At the institutional level, coordination and planning of development plans are patterned along sectoral biases resulting in a fragmented, compartmentalized approach, and thereby ignoring cross-cutting gender needs and concerns. Achieving sectoral goals and objectives are paramount, while sectoral gender equality and equity issues hardly attract concerns. Major sectoral plans like health, water supply, agriculture and rural development offer minimal integration of gender into their planning focus and action plans. Gender is also glaringly absent in public expenditures and budget units identified for sectoral activities, with the exception of girls' primary education and maternal health. Often, activities or programs that provide a gendered focus are placed at the bottom of the priority list, frequently leaving them with either minimal or no funding to implement.
- Where some specific intervention programmes are put in place to improve the position of women, this is usually in the public sphere and does not necessarily result in changes in gender relations within the home. A major policy gap is the inability to target gender relations in the domestic sphere.
- NEEDS framework left out a major ingredient of the reform i.e. the participatory model which allows inputs from grassroots particularly women, and the vulnerable groups.

Through the efforts of UNIFEM and other development partners (CIDA, OXFAM etc), the National Planning Commission developed frameworks for engendering NEEDS. Also, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs undertook the assessment of the level of gender mainstreaming /gender budgeting performance across the various sectors (Aina, 2009).

Response to many of the queries raised above led to the development of a Gender Mainstreaming Manual by the National Planning Commission which was to improve on the

conceptualisation of gender within **NEEDS (II)** and related SEEDS/LEEDS frameworks, although evidences continue to point to low technical skills in gender mainstreaming applications amongst stakeholders. A major gap is the inability to connect with gender mainstreaming framework across all sectoral strategies, rather than locate it merely within the Social Charter component of the NEEDS framework.

The little gains made during the Obasanjo Regime was soon to evaporate with the President Musa Yar'Adua 7 points agenda which glossed over government commitment to gender equality and women empowerment. Although, the Yar'Adua's seven points agenda recognizes the need to tackle the issues of the dis-advantaged groups as part of the overall strategy for poverty reduction and development, there was no clear commitment to gender equality and women empowerment issues, which remain the bane of the Nigerian sustainable development.

No doubt, the present administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, is a carry-over of some of the reforms initiated in the gender sector by the Obasanjo's regime. In developing the new development agenda tagged – Vision 20:2020, a 'Special Interest Group on Women' was put together with the following target – developing policy statements that engender 'sustainable human and national development built on equitable contribution of the Nigerian women, men and children'. *I served in that group*. This sector was driven by the core principle expressed in the National Gender Policy of 2007, that is, the principle of *'Gender Equity and Women Empowerment' which brings about sustainable human development and a just society devoid of discrimination based on sex or circumstance, thereby promoting human rights and the protection of health, social, economic and political well being of all citizens in order to achieve equitable rapid economic growth; evolve an evidence-based planning and good governance.*

A major criticism against the Vision 20:2020 framework was the inability to mainstream gender issues into the work of the 29 Thematic Groups that worked on sectoral issues in building a frame for the Vision 20:2020. This means that Vision 20:2020 is also guilty of those gaps identified with earlier macro economic frameworks such as NEEDS.

Since the Women's Decade (1975 – 1985) to-date, Nigeria recorded a number of bold steps towards bridging gender gaps in nation building, including -

- The creation of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in the 36 States of the Federation and a Women's Department in the FCT.
- Emergence of women empowerment programmes, particularly the variety of pet programmes introduced by the various 'First Ladies' both at the Federal and State levels.
- Women in Agriculture Program (WIA) which targets female farmers; and
- Micro credit institutions and programmes meant to open up credit facilities to female entrepreneurs.
- The establishment of the National Advisory Committee on Women and the National Commission for Women (NCW), in response to the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women;
- The regular submission of periodic country reports related to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to the UN;
- Support for the adoption of the Gender Policy of the African States (ECOWAS);
  The creation of a National Secretariat for Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in the Presidency to monitor and track performance towards the attainment of the MDGs, and in particular, concern over the attainment of the MDG Goals 1,3, & 8;

- The Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFEE) designed for women operating micro enterprises and the Business Development Fund for Women in small and medium scale enterprises currently operated by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs;
- The Women Trust Funds established in 2007; and
- The current waves of gender mainstreaming in both private and public sector organizations e.g. the Banking Sector; and government institutions.

Despite the above listed achievements, gender frameworks remain very peripheral to core governance and management of national resources, heightened by such operational issues as –

i. Lack of a gender responsive budgeting framework for the country;

ii. Lack of gender disaggregated data and gender statistics to monitor gender gaps, to ensure appropriate policy actions;

iii. Weak legislative support for gender issues, and failure to see gender issues as cross-cutting in all sectors (both at the levels of policy and practice).

iv. Weak technical supports for GEWE institutions and machineries e.g. the Ministry of Women Affairs and its Agencies both at the federal and state levels are not professionalized enough for their mandates.

v. Absence of Gender Equality Department, and the presentation of existing women-focused programmes and projects as ad hoc.

vi. Failure to institute community based structures for gender equality and women empowerment as part of the government reform process; and as stipulated by the National Gender Policy (NGP) of 2006.

vii. Low pace of adoption of the 'National Gender Policy' by State/LGA level institutions and the private sector.

viii. Inability of the government to partnership with the private sector for the implementation of the National Gender Policy etc.

4.0. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT: A SECTORAL ANALYSIS

The gender and development framework (GAD) presents a balanced assessment of women and men's productive and reproductive dual role status for sustainable development, in particular as cultural ethos interrogate with economic functions/roles. This dual role status presents women across societies and across historical epochs, as the ones who bear the burden of production and reproduction.

Using current data, this section explores the dimensions of gender disparity in Nigeria, noting progress made at closing existing gender gaps; and emerging gender issues. Specific gender sectors selected for review closely align with the MDG goals and the Beijing Platform for Action target areas. They also represent sectors where my academic work has made the most impact. These are: Agriculture and Rural Development; Poverty and Economic Empowerment; Education; Health; Employment and Labour; Environment and Natural Resource Management; Politics and Governance; Legal and Human Rights; and Gender Based Violence (see Figure 1).

Figure 2: Selected Sectoral Analysis using the Gender Framework
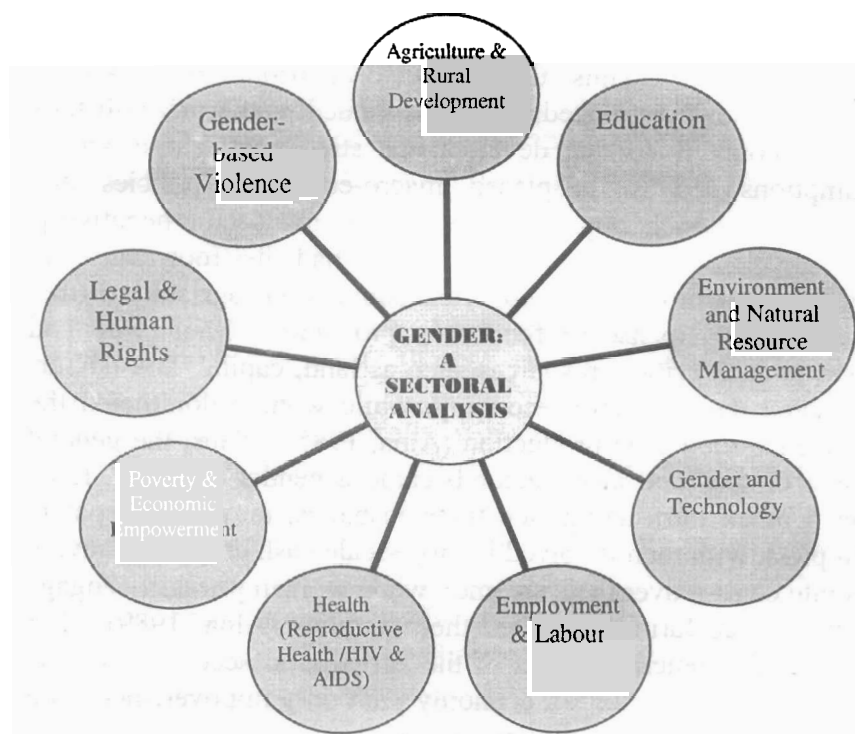
4.1. Agriculture and Rural Development:

For a long time, agriculture was the mainstay of the economy until the advent of petroleum products. Agriculture accounted for over 66.7% of the GDP in the 1960s, which decreased to about 17.3% in 1975. By 1976, petroleum sector activities became more dominant, accounting for over 93.6% of export earnings, and rising to 97.3% in 1980. By 1982, the share of agriculture in Nigeria's export was as low as 2.2% as against over 70% in the early seventies. By the 1980s, Nigeria had become a net importer of food, with the population growth rate persistently higher than the rate of food production, since then.

Although both women and men play critical roles in agriculture, Nigerian women produce over 80% of its food products. Despite the contribution of women to food security, they are often not accounted for in National GDP since their products are often at the subsistence level. Thus, the economic contributions of women farmers are underestimated, and undervalued, and worst still they are unaccounted for in development strategies. These wrong assumptions led to misplaced macro-economic policies and programmes which impact on the agricultural sector negatively. Also, the problem of food insecurity had its root cause in agricultural policy which supported commercial agriculture (tree crops) at the expense of food crop production. Men (who had access to such critical resources such as land, capital, and labour) dominated the cash crop economy, while women dominated the subsistence food crop production (Aina, 1985). Thus, the general neglect of the food crop sector became a gender problem. Even when women farm along side their husbands, they keep separate farm plots, with men involved in large-scale cash cropping (having absolute control over their income), while women primarily engage in subsistence farming to feed their families (Aina, 1989). For example, the general neglect of the agricultural sector as Nigeria turned attention on the 'oil economy', not only impoverished rural communities, but also feminised poverty.

According to the Human Development Report (2005), the number of rural women living in poverty in the developing countries is estimated at 565 million, and in Africa alone: 130 million. The data further revealed that since the 1970s, the percentage of rural women below the poverty line has increased by 50 percent, whereas that of men: 30 percent, further re-echoing a system which heightens the "feminization of poverty" (UNDP, 2005).

In Nigeria, women represent 76% of the entire population in the rural areas. They constitute the larger percentage of the poor; they are less educated and majority of them engage largely in small scale agriculture and petty trading. Women also form the larger

part of the labour and production force, which produce over 70% of the nation's food supply, but they have access to less than 15% of the resources available in the agricultural sector (WIN, 2005). Despite Nigerian rural women's contributions to productive work (agricultural and non-agricultural); processing and distribution of agricultural products amongst others, these productive roles are largely unacknowledged, unpaid for, and poorly taken into account in national accounts. Importantly, rural women's low economic status is now recognized as one of the most important reasons for chronic poverty in the rural areas.

Despite women's role in agriculture they remain 'invisible' partners in development. Women generally lack access to such critical resources as land, credit/capital, labour, and entrepreneurial skills (training). Traditionally, women in Nigeria do not own land, but only have access to land through their fathers or husbands (often through a lease arrangement - usury). By implication, women could then only plant arable (which are usually planted at the subsistence level), rather than tree crops (commercial crops such as cocoa, rubber, coffee etc). Also, since women lack collaterals, they could not easily attract bank loans. Hence, women rely on traditional cooperative system ('esusu') to access trading funds.

Today, the dominant role of women in agricultural production is gaining predominance. Rural women are the main producers of staple crops (yams, maize, rice) and other secondary crops such as legumes and vegetables (a new cliché in modern commercial farming). Women keep livestock, feed and milk the larger animals, raise poultry and small animals such as sheep, goats, rabbits and guinea pigs. They provide most of the labour for post-harvest activities, and they are often in charge of storage, handling, stocking, processing and marketing. As more men migrate to the cities in search of paid employment, women are left in the rural villages to bear the burden of household food needs.

As development agencies now realise the central role of women in agriculture, they started to focus them for assistance. For example, in 1987, UNDP and the World Bank took a critical look at the role of women in agriculture in Nigeria, and found women to be 60-80% of the agricultural labour force, while also producing two-thirds of the food crops. The study found that the World Bank assisted programme in agriculture was tangential to women's needs. By 1988, the Bank wanted to redress this gap in policy and programme by the creation of the Women in Agriculture (WIA) programs within the existing State Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), so as to address the gender-related deficiencies within the existing extension program. The ADPs were created in the 1970s with funding assistance from the World Bank, with a central goal to increase the production of both food and industrial crops by simulating agricultural production at the small farm level.

With the creation of WIA program (with funding support from UNDP), attempts were made to improve agricultural extension services for women farmers. The WIA programme attempted to give 'voice' to women farmers in policy reform process, though the logistics of doing this became cumbersome for the project planners and implementers. Eventually, female extension workers became 'the voice' of the women farmers at training workshops and policy meetings. The WIA program targeted women's groups in three different ways, viz –

> ➢ Working with pre-existing organization in which members are already pursuing a specific goal such as credit or communal work;
> ➢ Organizing the women into blocks or cells so that they can receive ADP assistance;
> ➢ Using NGOs to identify women's beneficiary groups

The participatory approach used by the WIA program was reported as a major reason for the success of this program. Although many states adopted this program subsequently, its impact on the entire rural agricultural sector remains minimal. First, many rural women

do not even know of this program, neither did they benefit from it. Since, then, other development programs have targeted women rural farmers. These include the 'Better Life for Rural Women', the 'Family Support Programme', and Family Economic Advancement Programme'. According to Williams (2001), less than 5% of the target beneficiaries (women) were ever reached, due to the low level of awareness of these rural women, and other structural problems associated with programme planning and implementation. Some even see women empowerment programme as elitist, rather than targeting women within the core poor groups.

A recent publication on the 'State of Gender in Nigeria' by the British Council (2012) showed that even though more than 50% of agricultural labour is supplied by women, men are more likely to own land. Specifically, male-headed farm households own more than three time (1 hectare) the amount of land that female-headed farm households do own (0.3 hectares). Also agriculture inputs used by female-headed farm households is significantly lower than male-headed households across most resource categories (including fertilizer, animal traction, livestock, pesticide, herbicide, irrigation, hired labour and access to extension services). Worst still, less than 2% of female-headed household use mechanization in rural area.

The factors limiting women productivity in agriculture are multi-dimensional including -
- Lack of access to critical resources (land, capital, appropriate technology, entrepreneurial skills),
- Skewed extension services delivery,
- **Poor infrastructure facilities** (motorable roads, potable water, markets, proper shelter, energy supply among others). Often, poor access to these facilities imposes significant drudgery on rural populations and contributes significantly to post harvest losses.
- Low prestige of agriculture,
- **High illiteracy rate and inadequate business**

management skills,

- Lack of data on women's contribution to agricultural production,
- Heavy workload resulting in time constraints.

Notably, rural living has attendant implications for the livelihood of women, as they constitute 76% of rural communities in Nigeria. The general experience of rural living has been lack of social infrastructure and essential goods and services. Rural areas are also replete with gender-based stereotypes and discrimination that deny women equitable access to opportunities, resources and services.

Although the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) does not have a separate critical area of concern on rural women, it does address their needs and priorities in many of the twelve critical areas of concern. For example, it highlights the need for policies and strategies to improve the situation of rural women producers; increase their incomes and provide household food security. The document also identified specific measures to support women's livelihoods, including facilitating rural women's equal access to resources, employment and training, markets, trade, and information and technology; and strengthening rural women's commercial networks and business services (Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995).

Women are the backbone of the rural economy following their multiplicity of roles, including domestic chores and caring for family members; producing food crops and looking after livestock, especially in small farm holdings. Rural women also tend to work on micro income-generating activities (micro-enterprises), apart from making their labour readily available in husband's farm-holdings. Income generated by rural women are often directed to family needs, thus, women play primary role in ending hunger and poverty. While all rural poor suffer numerous constraints, rural poor women are often more vulnerable. It is therefore important to engage in policies and programmes that are empowering to these

women to bring them out of doldrums, thereby making them competitive, so as to improve their negotiation ability within the private and public domains.

Some Theoretical Discourse on Women's Role in Agriculture:
Debate on the role of women in agriculture is not complete without reference to the theoretical shifts provided by feminist scholarship in this sector. Feminists challenged the basic concepts and assumptions in the field of peasant studies, in particular, its challenge of popular neo-classical models, and the restructuring of Marxism. This resulted in the reconceptualisation of women's work in agriculture, the structure and the internal dynamics of households, the gender division of labour, and social relations of production.

The limitations of neo-classical models soon gave prominence to Marxist frameworks as alternative approach to understanding the underdevelopment of the Third World. However, classical Marxist models failed to explain the origin of gender hierarchies, as it was encumbered with biological determinism and therefore failed to reconcile the sex-gender system. Marxism was not only based on western experience, its models and points of view were described as contradictory (Barret, 1986). Marxism separates the family from the wider social order, considers it marginal to capitalism, and therefore failed to define the boundaries of production and reproduction. Feminists brought about some paradigm shift as household is envisioned as both a unit of reproduction and production. Thus, improving women's role in agriculture must be matched by a restructuring of reproductive roles.

A major contribution to structural changes in agricultural policies came from feminist theoretical view point which challenged the conceptualization of households as homogenous units, whereby agricultural policies over a period of time remained gender neutral. Feminists present household economy as that governed by relations of domination, subordination, and conflict (Afonja and

Aina, 1998). Thus, households are not as democratic as often assumed. Female bargaining power is reduced by the culture and ideology of male domination, whereby women are left to unending negotiation and renegotiation to change the balance of power. More importantly, the competitive edge of peasant units of production in capitalist structures is encouraged by the non-transferability of family labour, the zero/low opportunity cost of women, children and the elderly and the fact that women are assigned the tasks of daily and generational reproduction as well as a wide range of economic activities. Thus, under capitalism, women's subordination and undervalue of female productive and reproductive roles subsist.

The structural inequalities generated by unequal terms of trade and the exploitation of the resource of poor nations by the rich countries have also been used to explain the place of women in rural agriculture. It was argued that globalization subsumed Third World agriculture into the second place, as it is displaced by industry and the financial sector or as the trans-nationalization of agriculture occurs (Barron, 1994). This led to a trend toward bimodalism (polarization between large scale agro business and small scale peasant farming). The role of the State in this process determines the extent of marginalization and the dispossession faced by women and/or rural families. Importantly, lack of gender sensitive planning is attributable to women's dispossession and proletarianization in the agricultural sector. Thus agriculture policies through the Green Revolution to the structural adjustment programmes produced macro-economic policies which further feminized poverty in the rural economies.

The poverty-oriented approach, premised on the assumption that women are in high proportions in the poorest income groups and that the economic status of household in the poor families is directly related to the economic role of women, brought gender issues in agriculture to the fore. A central condition for economic growth was to increase the productivity and the income of women

in low income households. Buvinic (1983:16) argued that phrasing women's issues in terms of poverty and economic growth facilitates the translation of women's issues into development policy issues and hence, their incorporation into development strategies. The poverty-oriented approach makes a distinction between women's production functions both at home and in the market place. It therefore seeks to increase women's direct control over resources with the assumption that they are likely to use these resources to improve the immediate welfare of their families, especially the nutrition and the health of their children (Blumberg, 1989; and Kandiyoti, 1991). A central question is 'how does this empowerment of women translate into increased productivity for sustainable economic growth and equity?

Women must move beyond the subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture i.e. cash crop production. This can only be made possible with the restructuring of the exploitative relations between the rural and the urban sectors, and between exporters of raw materials and consumers. is long as peasant households are subsidized by women for the survival of the capitalist sector, women's products will continue to yield low incomes while capitalism flourishes. Inequalities must be addressed at both global level (unequal terms of trade, the debt burden and the global security); and at the micro level (a restructuring of cultural ideologies and legal frameworks). To solve the subordination of women in agricultural production, the policy option must be located within the sustainable human development framework. This is made possible through mainstreaming of gender issues in this sector, into macro-economic policies and frameworks.

4.2.   Poverty And Economic Empowerment:
Nigeria ranked amongst the poorest countries in the world, despite its rich endowment with natural and human resources. The 2005 Human Development Index presents Nigeria as one of the twenty countries with the lowest human development index, and with a rank of 158 in a table of 177 countries (UNDP Human

Development Report, 2005). An estimated 70.0 per cent of Nigerians live below the poverty level, compared with 27.2 per cent in 1980, 43.6 per cent in 1985 and 42.8per cent in 1992. Nigeria thus hangs precariously with a greater percentage of its population living on less than 1 US dollar per day without any sign of relief for majority of the citizens. Approximately, 47-48 per cent (estimated to about 15 million persons) of the labor force remains unemployed.

Nigeria is ranked 57th out of 95 in the Human Poverty Index, with relatively high social inequity as indicated a Gini-coefficient value of 50.6, and gender-specific discrimination putting the country in a rank of 122nd of 144 in the Gender Development Index (UNDP Human Development Report, 2005). Poverty has further heightened the 'girl child' abuses through phenomena of 'child marriage'; child labor; and trafficking of girls for sexual trade in the international market (Osezua, 2009).

According to UNDP (1995: 4): *'Poverty has a woman's face - of 1.3 billion people living in poverty, 70 percent are women.'* It is often asserted that there is a 'feminisation of poverty' occurring, i.e. that poverty among women is rising faster than poverty among men. For example, IFAD (1992: 22) found that between 1965-70 and the mid-1980s, the number of rural women living in poverty increased by 48 percent. By comparison, the number of rural men living in poverty increased by 30 percent in the same period. **'Gender inequality is a structural impediment to poverty elimination. It is in everyone's interests to remove it'** (DFID, 1999).

The feminization of poverty and the specific impact of poverty on women is the result of inequalities embedded in norms, traditions and practices that hinder women's access to critical resources such as land and credit. These curtail their inheritance rights and constrain their political participation. The causes and outcomes of poverty are highly differentiated between women and men,

Box 1: Feminisation of poverty:
- Caused by inequalities embedded in norms, traditions and practices that hinder women's access to critical resources;
- Policies & programmes are male-centric, and weak in gender diagnosis
- Outcomes:
- unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy, low status of women, environmental degradation, poor access to social and health services etc.
- Women bear the burden of governance inadequacies as – care givers, and hewers of wood etc.

particularly because of persistent unequal access to, and control over productive resources and decision-making processes. Yet, traditional conceptualizations of poverty consistently neglect to take this into account, resulting in policies and programmes, which fail to improve the lives of poor women and men and their families. A focus on gender equality is essential for adequate analysis of the causes and impacts of poverty and the identification of effective strategies to eradicate poverty. Central to such a focus is the attention given to gender perspectives, including the equitable participation of women in productive activities (Aina, 2008a, 2008b).

Widespread poverty remains the major challenge to development efforts in Nigeria. Some of the challenges of poverty are – unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy, low status of women, environmental degradation, and limited access to social and health services, including reproductive health services. The outcome of these poverty generated conditions includes high levels of fertility, morbidity and mortality, and low economic productivity (see Box 1). Sustained economic growth and development is essential to poverty eradication, and more importantly, women empowerment is now seen as an entry point to gender equality in society.

Gender inequality plays a significant role in accounting for Nigeria's poor growth and poverty reduction performance. Majority of the poor are women who live in rural areas and are active in trade and the informal economy, but continue to be hampered by lack of rights, resources and economic opportunities. The gender gap in Nigeria remains very complex due to the cultural and traditional context which is anchored in beliefs, norms and practices which breed discrimination and feminized poverty. Although women's participation in the market economy has increased, especially in the informal sector, however at the same time, women's domestic workloads have not declined. Women continue to be primarily responsible for such activities as the care of children and the elderly members of the household, cooking and cleaning, fetching water and firewood and managing the household in general. Thus, the existence of gender related barriers can thwart the economic potential of women and such barriers have an adverse impact on enterprise development, productivity, and competitiveness in the African region as a whole.

Incorporating gender perspectives into discussion of poverty reduction not only facilitates an improvement of women's situation and increased gender equality, but contributes to positive outcomes in achieving the goal of good governance. Gender responsive governance is crucial for achieving the goals of poverty reduction in Nigeria. There is evidence that countries with weak or undemocratic governance structures and processes are more likely to do poorly on both poverty reduction and gender empowerment measures. Empowerment, equality and equity are principal concepts in poverty reduction. The significant differences in voice, opportunity and outcome between different groups in society, including between women and men, is a critical factor to address in poverty-reduction strategies. It is a matter of concern that much of the focus on governance continues to be solely in terms of political aspects, overlooking the importance of social and economic empowerment and equality between women and men for sustainable development (Ashworth, 1994).

Human rights, entitlements, networking, voice, social capital, as well as economic participation and resources, are essential for liberating poor women and men to be able to both meet basic needs and develop the capabilities and opportunities for more active participation in the development process. A gender-sensitive political economy should be a development goal geared at improving the socio-economic living conditions of both women and men. Transformation of economic gender relations is necessary to facilitate women's attainment of the right to own and manage financial resources, which in turn will allow them to expand their participation in other spheres of life.

4.3. Education Sector

More than any other time in the Nigerian history, women education is now considered a priority because it has become a major factor in the development equation, and in particular, a key to gender equity, justice and poverty reduction; improved skills and technological knowledge acquisition; improved nutrition; reproductive health; and general socio-economic development of a nation. Yet, the challenges of gender issues in education still remain mostly unabated. The cultural barriers which the girl child faces concerning her roles at home and in the society still inhibit her ability to go to school (Afonja, Aina and Adelabu, 1997a; 1997b; Aina, 2000a). Gender stereotypes still exist in learning materials and too often, teachers' different expectations of boys and girls result in negative biases against girls' education. Despite government policy interventions and programs, empirical evidences continue to show gender disparity in enrolment, attrition, and retention at all levels – primary, secondary, and tertiary (Ngwagwu, 2001).

The United Nations Education and Scientific Commission (UNESCO) rated Nigeria among the nine countries with the highest number of illiterate population in the world, with women constituting the larger percentage of this (UNESCO, 2003).

Nigeria has a combined primary, secondary and tertiary education gross enrolment ratio of 56.2% and a total adult literacy rate of 57% (UNDP, 2005). Like many developing countries, the number of

Fig. 3: Percentage Enrolment at Various Levels of Education By Gender (2006 Figures - Source: Nigeria Gender Statistics Book - 2008)

educated girls is less than those of boys. The proportion of female enrolment in various levels of formal education (primary, secondary, college of education/ polytechnic, undergraduates and post graduates) is lower than that of males (Figure 3).

The magnitude of gender imbalance increases progressively as the level of education goes higher. For example, the ratio of females to males enrolled at primary school, undergraduate and doctorate degree levels are: 10:12, 10:22 and 10:25 respectively. Enrolment figures from the Northern states are much more lower than the national averages, with Northwest and Northeast having the highest gender disparity figures in the country.

National figures showed that the proportion of girls in total primary school enrolment rose marginally from 43.9% in 2001 to 44.5% in 2006 i.e. an increase of 0.6% (FMWASD, 2008). Thus with a current rate of increase of 0.6% in 6 years, it might take about 46 years to attain gender parity in primary school enrolment at the national level, if the country does not become pro-active in redressing gender disparity in education.

Gender disparities in school enrolment present unique patterns across the different regions. Female enrolments at primary, secondary, and the tertiary levels are generally low in the North zones. In the Southern zones, female enrolments at the primary,
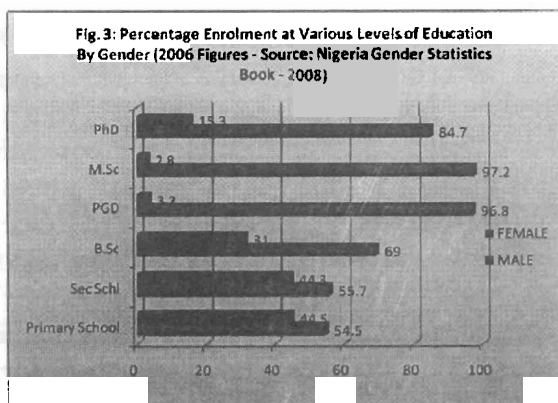
and secondary levels are higher than male enrolments in the Southeast, while these are at par with male enrolments in the Southwest. Enrolment figures at the tertiary level show ratio 1:4 in favour of boys in the Southwest, and as high as 1:19 in the technologically based faculties (see Aina, 2005). Presumably, these ratios are wider in the northern zones.

Data from SPESSA situation analysis (2002) show that gender disparities in enrolment are further heightened between rural and urban locations, and so also are the performance patterns. There are higher attendance rates and more overcrowding of classes due to space shortages in the urban areas than in the rural areas. The learning assessment study also indicated different levels of achievements between boys and girls, rural and urban schools, and between States. Also, more girls drop out of school than boys at all levels.

Apart from gender imbalance, Nigeria's educational system suffers, amongst others, from a persistent imbalance/disparity in educational development due to inadequate funding (Aina and Olayode 2008a); scarcity of educational equipment and supplies; overcrowded classrooms; inadequate library and laboratory facilities; insufficient student housing; violence arising from the activities/operations of cultist student organizations and examination malpractices Afonja, Aina, Adelabu, 1997).

Afonja et al. (1997) in the study conducted in Osun State, analysed the causes of gender disparity in the education sector further, and highlighted the following additional causative factors –
- Early marriage;
- Poor attitudes of government and parents to female education;
- Stereotyping girls as non-achievers; financial constraints;
- fear of unemployment; religion;
- poor performance of girls, high cost of educational materials;
- irregular payment of salaries; and
- negative attitudes of girls to schooling.

Box 2: Education Sector: Policy Reforms & Programs

- Child Rights Act (2003) – *13 Nigerian States are yet to accede to the Act.*
- UBE Act (2004);
- Laws prohibiting the withdrawal of girls from school in the following States – Gombe, Bauchi, Niger, Bornu and Kano
- Reviewing of National Policy on Education in 2004
- Special Scholarship Schemes for females to study medicine in Gombe State
- Rivers State Schools Rights Law No.2 (2005)
- National Policy on Women (2000)
- National Gender Policy (2006) & Its Implementation Strategies (2007);
- National Policy on Gender in Basic Education (2007)
- National Child Policy of 2007 and its Strategic Plan of Actio (2008)
- Situation Assessment and Analysis on Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Nigeria (2008)
- The Girl Child Education Initiative in Northern States (FGN/UNICEF)
- The 10-Year education Plan (2006 – 2015) targets gender budgeting and ensures expenditure framework for closing gender gaps in the education sector

Progress Made So Far:

The education sector has witnessed a number of interventions at the levels of policies/ legislative reforms and programs (see Box 2).

Challenges:

Despite policy and programme interventions, the education sector still faces a lot of challenges. Some of these are listed in the National Gender Policy, 2006; and the Progress Report on AU Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, 2009. Results of empirical research (Moja, 2000; National Gender Policy, 2006), show that specific gender issues in the education sector include:

- Poor infrastructure;
- High dropout rate of girls from school as a result of early marriage, teenage pregnancy and poverty of parents/guardian
- Weak monitoring mechanisms to measure the implementation of programs that promote gender equity in education (e.g. UBE).
- Poor budgetary allocations to educational sector;
- Cultural and religious practices such as early child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child labour etc that militate against the girl-child's education in many parts of Nigeria.
- Low enrolment of women in science and technology
- Absence of gender –disaggregated data in education
- A decline in the numbers of female teachers and their importance as role models.
- High drop-outs of boys from secondary and tertiary education in the South-East Nigeria.
- Lack of adequate facilities in school environment to cater for the girl-child biological needs
- Inadequate support for the training of female basic education teachers.

4.4. Health Sector

The Nigerian health sector is plagued by a number of problems, including – mal-distribution of health facilities; poor management of the health systems; poor referral systems; and the neglect of the rural areas where a larger proportion of the population resides (especially women and children) (Odebiyi and Aina, 1998; Adewuyi, Odebiyi, Aina, Raimi, 1999; Aina, Adewuyi et al, 2002). Effectively, only 35% of the population have access to the modern health care system, while the remaining 65% depend on the services of the traditional healers (Nigeria Gender Statistics, 2008).

Importantly, the issue of women's health did not attract much attention (both in health policies and in health research) until in the

recent time. For a long time, health research (especially in the area of maternal and child health) in Nigeria focused more on child health at the neglect of the woman's health. Even when the health of the woman is targeted, it remained at the level of reproductive health with particular emphasis on family planning. At the level of policy, the Nigeria's health policies since 1946 showed that the focus was largely on the provision of capital intensive facilities (e.g. hospital infrastructures), and physician-oriented curative services. The country's health policies came under strong attack in the mid-1970s, while the Third National Development Plan (1974 - 1984) identified the problems associated with the earlier health policies as – mal-distribution of facilities, provision of 'static' facilities, poor management, and inability to emphasize preventive health.

Part of the gains of the UN Decade for Women (1975 – 1985) was the attention now drawn on women's health issues. Following the Alma Ata conference of 1978, came the introduction of the Primary Health Care (PHC) initiative which specifically focused on maternal and child care, and family planning. This was further re-echoed in programmes aimed at meeting the 'Health for all in the year 2000'. Importantly, the Millennium Development Goals 4, 5, & 6 target reduction in child mortality; improvement of maternal health; and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases respectively. To meet the MDG goals and targets in the health sector, the role of women as care givers and as consumers of health care service becomes primary.

Infant mortality rate (IMR) in Nigeria is estimated at 86 per thousand live births, while the under five mortality rate is put at 138 per thousand live births. Also, maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is 545 per 100,000 live births. The national HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was 4.4% in 2005, increasing to 4.6% in 2008. Majority (54.4%) of those with HIV/AIDS infection are women compared to 45.6% men. Women being the poorest of the poor are

susceptible to commercial sex work which likely aggravates the spread of HIV. In Africa, one life is lost per minute to malaria.

Women, as care givers bear the brunt of ill health within families i.e. caring for husbands, children, and the elderly. Women also bear a greater proportion of health hazards associated with reproduction (compared to men), including cases of unwanted pregnancies; abortion; Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF); sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Okonofua, Odimegwu, **Aina**, Daru and Johnson). All of these have attendant implications on the woman's work and /or her health. Notably, unmarried adolescent mothers continue to grow in number, while they continue to transmit poverty from one generation to the other (Aina and Odebiyi, 1997).

Generally, the subordinate position of women in the society tends to significantly affect their health status (Odebiyi and Aina, 1998; Adewuyi et al. 1999). For example, the prevailing power relations between men and women socially sanction male promiscuity, while women (and girls) tend to have no power to determine when to have sex, initiate love-making or decide to practice safe sex (Aina, Aransiola, Osezua, 2009). Thus, women become easy preys to sexually transmitted infections/HIV/AIDS. Odebiyi and Aina (1998) described this as 'suffering in silence', and with a high cost for the nation's overall health status. The British Council Gender Report on Nigeria (2010), noted that only 3.2% of women in the poorest 20% of the population use any form of contraception, while 35% of those in the top 20% do. The National HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Survey (NAHRS) 2005, reported that less than two-thirds of pregnant women in Nigeria received antenatal care; only about half were attended to at delivery by skilled attendants; while less than half received post-natal care (FMOH, 2006).

Gender issues in HIV/AIDS have been well documented (UNAIDS, 1999; WHO, 2006). Women more than men are

exposed to the risk of being infected, while they bear the social burden of family members infected with the disease (UNAIDS, 1999). In many cases, the socio-cultural norms which hampered women from making life choices, including the choice of when, how, and where to have sex, further expose to HIV infection. A reported case of 12% HIV sero prevalence rate amongst the female commercial sex workers, compared to 18.6% amongst female allied workers; and 4% amongst male allied workers in the oil region (Nigeria Niger Delta Region), calls for a critical attention (Aina and Bamiwuye, 2009). Many of the reasons alluded to this sharp disparity in the HIV sero prevalence rate between men and women allied workers in the Niger Delta oil region, were located in cultural ethos, and the norm of seeing women as mere sex object who have no right to 'anything' including job opportunities; promotions; trainings amongst others, unless they are forcibly couched into warming a man's bed (Aina and Bamiwuye, 2009).

The overall control of husbands over their wives' health needs is a major factor for a high maternal mortality rate amongst the Hausas of Northern Nigeria. For example, Hausa women according to Murphy et al (1981), need husbands' permission to attend hospitals, while Harrison (1978) noted that their husbands' permission is again needed before an operative delivery. Amongst the Hausas in Zaria, operative delivery is seen as a sign of reproductive failure. Thus, husbands deliberately delay the permission for their wives to have such operations, hoping that they would make a normal delivery. Often, such delays cause maternal and infant mortality in some of the northern states in the country. Other socio-cultural factors associated with high maternal and infant mortality rate in Nigeria have been identified by Aina et. al, 1995; and FMWA&SD, 2010 to include -

i. Demand-side factors -
- Culture of male supremacy;

Box 3

> The Breastfeeding Policy – 1994
> Maternal and Child Health Policy – 1994;
> National Adolescent Health Policy - 1995
> National Health Insurance Policy Act – 1999;
> National Reproductive Health Policy & Strategy – 2001;
> National Food and Nutritional Policy – 2001;
> The National Reproductive Health Strategic Framework of Action – 2002 – 2006;
> The National Policy and Plan of Action on Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria – 2002;
> The National Strategic Plan of Action for Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF) Eradication in Nigeria – 2005

Low economic status of women (whereby all economic decisions – including attendance of healthcare services – are taking by husbands who pay for such services);

Illiteracy and ignorance;

Harmful traditional practices such as – child marriage; early and frequent child bearing; male child preference over female children; female genital cutting; refusal of emergency obstetric care to women in labour that are suspected of having committed adultery; attribution of pregnancy complication to act of God and/or attack by evil forces; attachment of taboos to some nutritious foods that are healthy for the growth of mother and child; and attachment of taboos to movement by pregnant women at certain times of the day

• A huge gap between knowledge and practice of family planning methods.

ii. Supply-side Factors:

The supply-side factors responsible for high infant and maternal mortality have been identified as -

• Weak healthcare system, especially, poor referral systems and emergency obstetric care services

- Poor health care infrastructure, especially in the rural settings;
- Inadequate number of health professionals, especially in the rural settings;
- Gender insensitivity of health professionals

The response of the Nigerian government to gender issues in the health sector culminated into a plethora of policies (see Box 3). Notably, to meet the goals and the targets of the MDG goals in the health sector, Nigeria adopted the Integrated Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (IMNCH) with notable programme interventions such as –
- The distribution of *Mama Kits* which contains immediate needs of the mother and baby during and just after delivery (a programme spearheaded by most First Ladies across the States;
- The Women and Youth Empowerment Foundation (WAYEF) introduced the community friendly ambulance scheme to deliver ante-natal services to the door steps of pregnant women in some rural areas in the country;
- Implementation of a midwifery scheme aimed at addressing the shortfall of midwives in the rural areas, thereby improving reproductive health care;
- Advocacies to Stakeholders on child and maternal health by the FMWA&SD supported by MDG funds among others.

To address the gender issues in HIV/AIDS, a Gender Technical Committee was put in place by National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) with mandates for –
- Gender mainstreaming in all programmes and plans;
- Gender disaggregated data for effective planning at all levels.

Other NACA initiatives are –

- Formation of different advocacy platforms presenting different constituencies within the national response system including the Network of people living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (NEPWHAN); the Youth Network on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (NYNETHA); the Nigerian Business Coalition Against GIV/AIDS (NIBUCCA); the National Faith-Based Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS (NFACA); National Women Coalition on HIV/AIDS (NAWOCA);
- Implementation of the National Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS with respect to gender dimension of HIV/AIDS, including intervention for safe sex among Commercial Sex-workers, provision of Counselling for women living with HIV/AIDS; and other strategic steps such as -
  - The National Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Strategy (2004 – 2008);
  - Capacity development programmes on mainstreaming of gender and HIV/AIDS in key sectors.
  - Family Life HIV/AIDS Education (FLHE) curriculum for schools
  - HIV/AIDS Workplace Policies in key sectors among others
  - The Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) sites among others.

Despite the efforts listed above, gender statistics in the health sector still appears gruesome. Sustained solution to these problems can only come when gender is seen appropriately as a development cross-cutting issue. For example, women's education has been intricately tied to years of schooling, and access to economic resources. Data from Gender Report on Nigeria (2010) showed that only 11% of women without any education give birth in a health facility, while 90% of those with higher education deliver in health facilities. Also, the report projected a 5-year increase in female education as a correlate of a decreased early fertility by 1.3 births. Thus "when fertility rate is higher, education rates are

lower, contraceptive use is lower, access and usage of service is lower and under-five mortality rates are higher in poorer regions. For example, in the Northwest Nigeria, the average fertility rate per woman is 7.3 and only 3% of women use contraceptives. The risk of death for children under five is more than 2 times higher for children with mothers who have no education compared to those with secondary or higher levels of education.

### 4.5.   Employment and Labour Sector:

Though Nigerian women make up about half of the country's population, they remain under-represented in the formal labour force (**Aina 1995; 2011**). A survey carried out in some Nigerian Work Organisations by FITC (2011) showed that 67.2% of the 15,070 employees captured in this survey were males, while female were 32.8%. In the same study, 78.7% of the executives were males.

At the national level, men dominate the wage/salary employment except in sales and services, with the proportion of men to women in administrative/managerial positions being 3 to 1.5 percent respectively. In agriculture, men dominate (50.5 percent), compared to women (35.5 percent). In the manufacturing work, the proportion of men (16.7 percent) almost doubled that of women (9.0 percent). However, the disparity within professional (6.1 percent); technical (3.3 percent); and clerical related (2.8 percent) are not so glaring (NPC, 2001). Table 3 shows the distribution of employed persons by sex and by sector, depicting that there are more men in all the industrial categories (except in Health & Social Work; Hotels & Restaurant; and surprisingly in the Manufacturing sector). Empirical evidences show that women are generally employed as administrative and unskilled labour in the manufacturing industries (Aina, 1995). Also, the composition of the work force in the Federal Civil Service which is the largest single-entity employer in Nigeria is inclined in favor of men as 76% of the workforce are men whilst women comprise 24%. Women hold less than 14% of total management level positions in

the Federal Civil Service. In the medical field, which involves highly skilled and relatively well-remunerated work, women represent 17.5% and men 82.5% of those employed (National Gender Data Bank, 2008).

Also, the extractive industry with annual business volume of over US$42m has almost zero level participation of women. Women do not benefit sufficiently from the economic opportunities that oil, gas, and mining operation provide both at the community and individual levels. Men are mostly employed in the extractive industries, while women bear the social costs of environmental degradation and social disruption which occasioned mining and exploration activities in the oil region (Aina et al, 2009; Ukeje, Odebiyi, Sesay and Aina, 2002).

Fig. 4: Distribution of the Nigrian Police Force By Gender and By Ranks
(Soource - Nigeria Police Headquarters, July, 2010
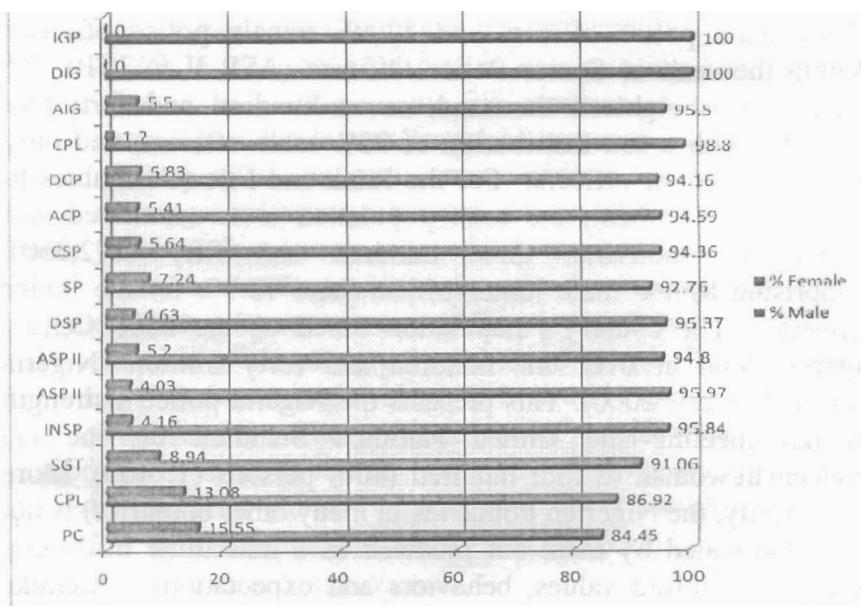
The typical female professions remain – nursing/midwife, teaching (kindergartens and primary schools), secretaries; while typical

male professions are engineering, banking, veterinary medicine, and university lecturers (FITC, 2009). Available data also shows that in the education sector, the number of female teachers decreases progressively as the level of education increases (56% in the primary schools to 16.8% in the Universities) (Nigeria Gender Statistics, FMWASD, 2008).

The employment figures in the formal sector in Nigeria continue to affirm the under-representation of women in the labor market. On the whole, an average of 79.58 per cent of men and only 20.42 percent women were employed throughout the period 2001 – 2007 (NBS, 2007). The disparity in educational attainment, in favor of men (NPC 2001); and gender stereotypes in the society are some of the key factors linked to the sex differentials in employment in Nigeria (Aina, 2000a).

As at July, 2010 the strength of the Nigeria Police Force stood at two hundred and ninety-one thousand, and ninety-four (291,094), 87.6% male police officers and 12.4% female police officers. Within the rank of Senior Police Officers (ASP II to IGP), the population is eighteen thousand, seven hundred and forty-five (18,745), with a sex distribution of 95% male officers, and only 5% female senior officers. For the Rank and File (Constables to Inspectors of Police), the total population is two hundred and seventy-two thousand, three hundred and fifty (272,350), comprising 87.1% male junior officers and 12.9% female junior officers). The country's population based on the 2006 Census figures stood at over one hundred and forty million (Nigeria Census Figures, 2006). This presents the Nigeria police's strength as not meeting the United Nation's Standard of one (1) Policeman/woman to four hundred (400) persons (1: 400). More importantly, the Nigerian Police (as in many other countries) is not only dominated by men, but modeled as a masculine institution with masculinised values, behaviors and expectations. Alemika and Agugua (2001) noted that only 4% of the total police population; and 8% of all officers respectively, were women. As at July, 2010, the figure for senior female police officers merely

moved to 5%; and 12.9% for junior female police officers. The gender imbalance in the Nigeria Police Force has attendant implications for women, especially as this relates to access to justice.

In the informal sector, due to limited education required for participation, women are more active than men. However, women in the informal labor market remain uncompetitive because of lack of access to critical resources (land, capital, labor, and modern entrepreneurial skills, including access to information). Women who work within this unregulated labor market face stiff competition from men (many of whom flocked to this sector following job loss and retrenchments in the formal labor market) (Aina, 1995a,1995b, 1995c; 1997/78; 1998a; 2010).

Data on unemployment trends reveals a downward trend in the rate of unemployment in Nigeria. The composite index shows that the rate of unemployment fell from about 6% between 1985 and 1987 to less than 2% in 1995 before it peaked over a little above 4% in 2000 and before stabilizing around 3% between year 2003 and 2007. Unemployment rate was found to be much severe in the urban centers than in the rural areas, while educational level remains a strong explanatory variable for unemployment trends. Secondary school leavers were the most affected, with the rate fluctuating between 48% and 70%. Less fluctuation was recorded among the primary school leavers. Unemployment rate among the tertiary education graduates largely stabilized below 10% between 1985 and 1995 before rising to about 21% in 1998 and later falling to the initial levels. These figures point to the central role education plays in determining access to employment. Hence, 'education' has been globally treated as a 'fix it variable' in the fight against gender inequality across national boundaries, and in ensuring that women are empowered.

The Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) affirmed that the greatest victim of the global economic meltdown has been the Nigerian

workers because of the unprecedented increase in the numbers of the unemployed resulting from mass retrenchment while those who remain in employment have found their standard of living steadily eroded due to inflation (NLC, 2009). In February 2009 alone "many companies shed thousands of jobs; a number of textile factories laid off 5,000 employees; Dunlop Nigeria laid off 400 employees; PAN laid off 565 of its 753 employees while Cadbury laid off 300 employees and the virus of job losses has continued unabated" (The Nigerian Guardian, 2009). However, the impact of the economic crisis on Nigerian women in particular, given the existing gender inequalities, has not been well documented. In a patriarchal system, it is devastating when a male household breadwinner loses his work. There are feelings of hopelessness where a man is supposed to be the breadwinner. The tendency is to take out the frustration on the partner in terms of violence in the home. The economic and financial crises also put a disproportionate burden on women who are often concentrated in vulnerable employment; more likely to be unemployed than men; and have unequal access to and control over economic and financial resources.

Theoretical Discourse on Gender and Work Organisations
Various frameworks have been used in analyzing female labour force participation, some of which are –
- The equal opportunity approach
- The equip the women perspective;
- The Value difference approach;
- Gender mainstreaming framework;
- The culture revision school and
- The dual agenda approach.

Although these approaches differ in basic assumptions and analytical frameworks, they all provide a set of strategic response to handling gender issues in organizations. Some of these options include –

- Development of the equal opportunity policy for organizations;
- Minimizing the skill differences across gender groups to enable women compete as equals with men in career professions;
- Promoting diversity in the workplace;
- Bringing about changes in the situations of men and women in the workplace so as to redress the disadvantaged position of women in the workplace and in the society;
- Family-friendly flexibility work options
- Balancing gender interests and the goal of the organization (for example, the dual agenda approach amplifies a gender equitable work environment, seeing this as helping the organization to meet its strategic objectives and strengthen its performance.

Aina (1992, 1995a, 1996, and 2000b) explored the new challenges that 'gender' poses to complex organizations in Nigeria, in particular, the inability of those who manage modern industrial systems to consider 'work' and 'non-work' roles mix. A central thesis of my research works in this sector ('gender issues in organisations') is the need to manage the modern industrial organizations with 'a gender lens', thereby treating men and women as social beings, with multifaceted roles (including 'work' and 'non-work' roles). Both men and women bring to the workplace their socially derived roles (roles of wives, husbands, fathers, or mothers etc), which, must not be ignored, if the organization is to get the best out of the individual worker. My central is to challenge the structure of social/gender inequality both at the societal and organizational levels, for engendering work organizations is likely to have a multiplier effect on change in organizational norms, values, work practices, mental models, and performance criteria among others.

4.6. Gender and Technology

Technology is now a household word, while development itself is almost equated with technological development (Aina and Soriyan, 2000). National communities and private individuals use technology to transform modes of thought and patterns of living. Technology, however, is not value free or value neutral, neither is it gender neutral, because every society has a gender-based division of labour. Thus, technology creates different impacts on men and women within and across classes, ethnic and racial groups.

In the developing countries, such as Nigeria, modern technology has had a negative impact on women, much more than their counterparts elsewhere (Tadesse, 1982:78). Women, in these countries are subjected to double subordination, first as members of peripheral economies, and second, for being culturally treated as socially inferior to men. Thus, technology is not only a symbol of maleness and a source of male identity, but also a symbol of power and dominance, which is often guarded and defended (Lie, 1991).

Changes in technological capabilities take different forms across sectors (agriculture, informal and formal labour markets), and have various implications for women's lives and life chances (Aina and Soriyan, 2001). For example, though women play important roles in both subsistence and commercial agriculture, they become less visible under mechanized, globally planned, and controlled, state subsidized commercial agriculture. Rather, women are clogged into subsistence agricultural sector where agriculture becomes feminized, less visible, decentred self-provisioning of food (Shiva, 1989). Within the peasant household distributional mechanisms, and within the agrarian system as a whole, women's position is threatened and continues to deteriorate. Most technical innovations are directed at men, and strengthened the dominant position of the male as head of household (Palmer, 1977). Importantly, is the tendency to treat the household as homogenous, thereby neglecting the competitive market orientation existing in

dominant polygynous peasant families (i.e. household undercurrents of competition over the factors of production and income).

In the non-agricultural rural sector, and the urban informal/formal sectors of the labour market, a number of technical innovations aimed at women's work have been introduced. Generally, these are often either unaffordable and/or inadaptable to feminine use. Aina (1994) looked at technological assimilation in female-owned small enterprises, and found that many of the improved technologies introduced to rural women under the government sponsored Better Life Programme (BLP) met with failure. Primarily, this was because innovators failed to take into account the interaction between technology and its social and economic environment. In the formal sector, Soriyan, Aina and Odebiyi (1997, 2001) found that with the introduction of the computer technology in office jobs, resulted in deskilling, and displacement of confidential secretaries and typists (who are traditional women); with options for computer programmers and data entry operators (who are mostly men). A core problem is the inability of organisations to envision a system of training and retraining schemes for women so as to acquire needed skills in the new emerging labour market.

As information technologies are now being used to bridge national divides, series of factors constrain women's access to information and allied technologies relative to men (Aina and Ajilore, 2012). These include socio-cultural factors that range from ideas about the nature and role of technology and machines, to perceptions about the accessibility of the technology, to insecurities based on social markers of identity like gender, race, age, and so forth. Women often have complex relationships with technology and machines as a result of being socialized over time to believe that machines and technology is a man's domain and not for women and girls, thus generating a gender bias in attitudes towards studying or using information technology. At school, girls are discouraged from

studying science and technology, either consciously or unconsciously, by parents' and teachers' biases, leading to steady attrition of girls and women throughout the formal science and technology system.

Significantly, the potential of technology to advance development and contribute to people's well-being have been well-recognized. Science and technology are vital for achieving global development goals by facilitating efforts to eradicate poverty, achieve food security, fight diseases, improve education, and respond to the challenges of sustainable human livelihoods. However, the contribution of science and technology to development goals can be accelerated by taking gender equity issues into account. Mainstreaming a gender perspective in Science and Technology will both enhance social equity and bring significant benefits across the economic structure and social fabric, and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the attainment of sustainable development.

4.7. Gender, Environment and Natural Resource Management

"Advancing gender equality may be one of the best ways of saving the environment, and countering the dangers of overcrowding and other adversities associated with population pressure. The voice of women is critically important for the world's future – not just for women's future." (Amartya Sen, 1986).

Debates on women and environment was brought into the public space by Vandana Shiva (an Indian female physicist) at the First World Conference on Women, 1975 (Mexico City). Governments and Development Agencies became attracted to this debate in the 1980s, as gender issues were negotiated in environmental and natural resource management policies and programmes. It later became obvious that the integration of gender issues in

environmental policies and programmes are important determinants for implementing the Beijing Platform of Action (1995), the Millennium Development Goals (2000) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002).

Primarily, the discussion of Gender and Environment is based on two precepts (identified by UNEP), which are:

i. That gender mediates human-environment interactions and all environmental use, knowledge, and assessment; and

ii. That gender roles, responsibilities, expectations, norms, and the division of labor shape all forms of human relationships to the environment,

The issues identified above are better captured under "gender and environment" rather than "women and environment", as -

Gender differences are evident in the use and management of natural resources, and unequal relationships in the family, community, etc. mediate women's access to resources;

- Gender differences are evident in livelihood strategies that are rooted in particular uses of the environment;
- Gender differences are evident in knowledge of the environment, knowledge of specific resources, and of environmental problems;
- Gender differences are evident in responsibilities for managing, owning, or stewarding resources, and in rights to resources;
- Gender differences are evident in encounters with the environment, in perceptions of the environment and in perceptions of the nature and severity of environmental problems;

- All of the above contribute to the gender differences that are evident in accountability, stewardship, and action for the environment.

Relations between the sexes and attention to the specific needs of each have until recently gained little attention by those charged with addressing global climate change. The word "gender" found no mention in the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, until specific intervention of eco-feminists and/or feminist environmentalists.

It is now a truism that women, particularly those in poor countries, are affected differently by climate change compared to their male counterparts. Women are among the most vulnerable to climate change, partly because in many countries they make up the larger share of the agricultural work force and partly because they tend to have access to fewer income-earning opportunities. Women manage households and care for family members, which often limits their mobility and increases their vulnerability to sudden weather-related natural disasters. Drought and erratic rainfall force women to work harder to secure food, water, and energy for their homes. Sometimes, girls drop out of school to help their mothers with these tasks. This cycle of deprivation, poverty and inequality undermines the social capital needed to deal effectively with climate change.

In the Sub-Saharan Africa, environment issues include deforestation, decreasing availability of water and desertification. Increased deforestation leads to soil erosion and flooding, reducing agricultural productivity; contributes to decreased water availability and contributes to the burden of women. Primarily households feel the effects of deforestation as energy needs as fuel-wood becomes scarce; women spend less time cooking and spend more time looking for firewood. They may be forced to cut multipurpose trees, which provide other non-timber products. Men who are more likely to use fuelwood for making charcoal and

firing bricks, also may cut trees without regard for environment or household consequences, thus forcing women to walk further for fuelwood. Because of the differential access to and control of land, women may not have control over tree planting and management.

Aina and Odebiyi (1998) in a Nigeria-Kenya study on domestic energy crisis, found that women in both countries bore the burden of the fuelwood and domestic energy crisis because of their cultural roles of meeting the energy needs of their households through fuel collection, preparation, and use. The scarcity of fuelwood means that women have to walk longer distances to get their supply. They noted the detrimental effects of women carrying heavy loads of fuelwood, including damage of the spine, and associated problems with childbearing.

In the Nigeria Niger Delta region, Aina, Adeyemi, Waziri, and Samuel (2009) found that women and girls living in oil communities bear the brunt of environmental and social impact of oil exploration which includes forced displacement, environmental degradation, disruption of subsistence agriculture and traditional livelihoods, human trafficking (for sex work) and increase in sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS (in the oil sector). Conventionally, women's voice(s) are hardly heard in any extractive industry community project interventions and planning. This is because, more often than not, the word 'women' is often buried in the word 'community' as women are generally excluded from community consultations, while their voice, needs, concerns and aspirations are never reflected in community-based projects(Rossi, 2001). To achieve sustainable development, environmental planners must recognise the role women play in managing the environment and learn to include gender analysis among the tools they use for the project scoping, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation and impact assessment. Combining gender with the environment planning makes both economic and social sense for two-halves make a whole.
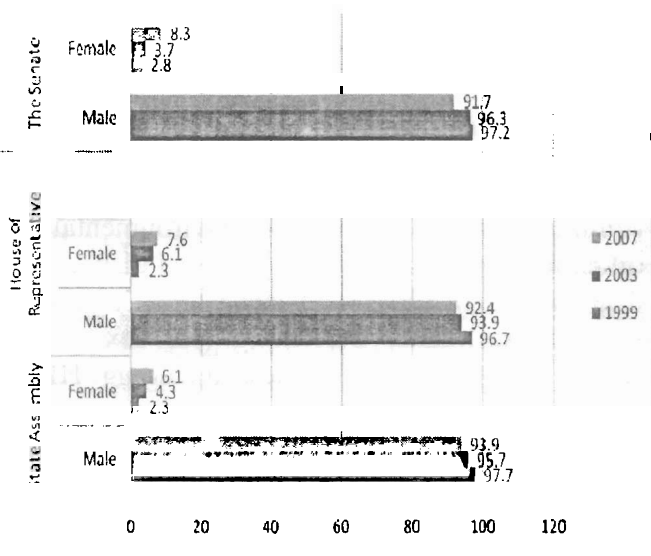
4.8. Politics and Governance

4.8.1. Women and the Political Landscape

In the pre-colonial, colonial, and post colonial Nigeria, women never enjoyed parity with men in issues of governance. The history of political transformation in Nigeria is replete with issues of male domination, and women tokenism in participation in public affairs (Aina and Ukeje, 1998; Aina and Olayode, 2012b). The political system in Nigeria remained male-centric (as witnessed under military dictatorships and by extension in the emerging democratic civilian governance structures and practices). The military era provided women with the least opportunity to challenge the structure of gender inequalities, as military dictatorships merely

Fig.5: Gender Distribution in Selected Political Offices in Nigeria

The Senate
Female 8.3 / 3.7 / 2.8
Male 91.7 / 96.3 / 97.2

House of Representative
Female 7.6 / 6.1 / 2.3
Male 92.4 / 93.9 / 96.7

State Assembly
Female 6.1 / 4.3 / 2.3
Male 93.9 / 95.7 / 97.7

■ 2007
■ 2003
■ 1999

0   20   40   60   80   100   120

rewind the wheel of female subordinate position in the society through the 'First Lady' syndrome (a process which hindered the 'woman's question from being addressed within the mainstream development praxis). Under such arrangements, the 'woman's question' was treated within the private interests of wives of political leaders (a mentality which is almost difficult to erase even within the party politics and democratic governance). However, the foundation that was laid in the nation's women affairs through the 'First Lady' program led to Nigeria signing as a party to several

United Nation's Conventions on elimination of discrimination against women. It is also believed that the adoption of a draft national policy on women and the establishment of a National Commission for Women which was upgraded to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and the National Centre for Women Development were gains realized from the overtures of the 'first ladies'.

The country is yet to implement its commitment to women's political participation through the 30% affirmative action mandate provided for in the National Women Policy (2000); and which was later increased to 35% in the National Gender Policy (2006) (see Figure 5). Women's political participation continues to be inhibited by socio-cultural factors that relegate women to the background in leadership discourse and decision making processes. Thus, the wide gender gaps in governance and politics have been blamed for the gross discrimination faced by the Nigerian women irrespective of regional/urban-rural location, ethnic origin, and religion.

Political parties in Nigeria are more or less rhetoric than real, and obviously play lip service to the gender equality agenda. These political parties are fraught with a gamut of problems, including –
- Undemocratic administration of the parties;
- Lack of gender responsive party politics culture (i.e. they all imbibed a 'Male-stream culture')
- Gender unfriendly party practices (For examples: violence, money politics, blackmails and name calling amongst others)
- Lack of technical skills to mainstream gender issues in party politics among others.

Many of these socio-cultural practices create barriers to women empowerment and gender equality, thereby placing a clearly higher burden on women. The shrouding different exclusions and deprivations faced by women in cultural and traditional beliefs

often deprive them access to information, education, and wealth-creating assets such as land, capital (including credit facilities), labor, and entrepreneurial skills. Also, the restrictions created by socio-cultural practices can be blamed for the poor participation of women in politics and decision-making processes. Such restrictions also affect their access to education and professions, which also limits their capacity to compete effectively with their male counterparts in the labor market for lucrative and more fulfilling jobs.

Thus, the low status of the Nigerian women is generally reproduced by the culture of male supremacy inherent in local traditions and cultures, including religious idiosyncrasies. Thus, women are not only kept 'silent' in the public sphere, but also in the private domain. Although the 1999 Constitution guarantees to every Nigerian (male and female) the right to acquire and own immovable property, many of the customary laws are inconsistent with section 43 of the Nigerian Constitution which assigns this right. For example, in almost all the states of the federation, women have no right over land and landed property as they cannot under customary laws inherit land/landed property neither directly from their fathers nor from their husbands.

4.8.2. Gender Responsive Governance and Corruption

Notably, corruption drains public resources and takes much needed funds away from national economic development or social services, while it disproportionately affects women and the poor who are most dependent on these structures. Women may also be in less powerful positions to challenge corruption when it occurs. Alternatively they may face gendered forms of corruption such as the demand for sex in return for particular services or resources.

A relationship is gradually being established between gender responsive governance and anti-corruption practices in public office (*World Bank Development Research Group, 1999*). A central argument in this respect is that women may be more

relationship-oriented; have higher standard of ethical behavior; and may be more concerned with the common good than men are. Notably, gender differences are attributed to socialization, or to differences in access to networks of corruption, or knowledge of how to engage in corrupt practices among others.

However, other authors have criticized the gender-responsive arguments as antidote against corruption. One of such is Anne Marie Goetz (2003) who questioned the notion that women in governance will result in lower levels of corruption. According to Goetz, these studies failed to acknowledge the extent to which gender relationship may limit the opportunities for corruption, particularly when corruption functions through all-male networks and in fora from which women are socially excluded. Goetz believes that as workplace becomes more feminized and women take the top leadership jobs, it cannot be assumed that women will choose less corrupt behaviour. Evidences from Nigeria also present a paradox of gender and corrupt practices in public office.

There are sufficient evidences to prove that women are veritable access in public offices (Aina and Olayode, 2010). Ngozi Okonjo Iweala successfully transformed the Nigerian economic platform when she succeeded in negotiating a debt relief package for Nigeria as a Finance Minister (July, 2003 – June, 2006) under the Obasanjo Regime. Dora Akunyili transformed the face of the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) when she was appointed as the Director General of this organization starting April 2001. However, other women have been found to be guilty of corrupt practices like their male counterparts. Examples are found in the scenarios that took the first Nigerian Female Speaker of the House of Representative (Mrs. Patricia Etteh) out of office; and Adenike Grange, the first female Nigerian Minister of Health in 2007. These two cases do not merely point to women's culpability for corrupt practices, but that they are also viewed as the by-product of the system which brought such women to power. It is therefore argued that the few token

women who have served in political offices are often reflection of the male oligarchy that brought them to power (Aina and Olayode, 2010).

On the whole, governance in most African nations, bear a masculine face, with women merely serving as stooges, and often manipulated by men. Women would need concerted exposure and training to understand fully the rules of the game, and the undertones of governance. Integrating more women into public office as a potential anti-corruption remedy without addressing the collectivist culture, and the inherent masculine manipulations existing in the public sphere, may prove futile, as women may succumb to social ethics of their 'god fathers' at the expense of public sector ethos, as in the case of Patricia Etteh.

4.8.3. Gender and Good Governance

Good governance has been defined as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs, and the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens' groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences. Accountability, transparency, participation and legitimacy are the core elements of good governance. Gender responsiveness is essential to all of these, and is a measure of good governance. Analysis and action on gender issues, the participation of women as well as men in governance processes at all levels, and the recognition of women's rights and needs, are central to good governance.

Women's limited access to resources, public debate and political decision- making is still insufficiently considered in mainstream governance literature. Only ten to twelve per cent of parliamentarians world-wide are women. A major area of concern regarding gender equality and governance is thus the issue of participation of women. However the issue of gender equality in relation to governance goes far beyond the game of numbers.

Equally important is the lack of attention to relevant gender perspectives in both process and substance. Governance policies are developed by institutions whose rules, norms and practices often effectively restrict women's right to meaningful participation and potential to make real choices. Gender perspectives are important in governance in particular because the discourse, procedures, structures and functions of governance remain heavily skewed. This raises important questions about transparency, inclusion, legitimacy and accountability – all of which lie at the heart of the governance debate.

Governance must be gender-sensitive if it is to be equitable, sustainable and effective. Participation and civic engagement are critical determinants of good governance, a concept which addresses issues of social equity and political legitimacy and not merely the efficient management of infrastructure and services. The different ways in which women and men participate in and benefit from governance are significantly shaped by prevailing constructions of gender, whose norms, expectations and institutional expressions may constrain women's access to social, economic, and political resources. Most societies ascribe roles and responsibilities to women and men differentially but fail to value, or even account for, the crucial contributions women's labour makes to household and community maintenance. Ironically, such social reproduction allows little time (or, in some cases, permission) for women to participate in civic life in ways which help them to determine their own lives (Boserup, 1977).

However, the Nigerian political terrain has become almost an impossible area for women to trend, exemplified in highly corrupt and monetized electoral process right through party formation, membership, participation, party primaries, campaigns, and election results. Electioneering has been exemplified with thuggery, and violence, while election victory is synonymous with 'cash and carry'. Thus, election process and procedures are shrouded in secrecy. Women who are in minority are usually

disadvantaged not just because of number, but much more because of lack of funds, and inability to meet up with the level of thuggery and violence employed by men.

While women's membership in parties has greatly improved from the First Republic (1960-65), their positioning within the party hierarchy and influence over party decisions are minimal. This became very evident during the 2003 general elections, when in spite of the unprecedented number of female aspirants and the heightened local mobilization amongst the generality of women, only a handful of women were nominated. The reason for this is not far fetched. Nigerian political parties are traditionally and intrinsically male-dominated. Most parties paid lip service to gender issues.

A gender-sensitive approach to governance has two principal objectives; first, to increase women's participation in development; and second, to foster gender-awareness and competence among both women and men in the political arena and planning practice. A concerted approach to the issue of participation is required, including an improvement in women's representation in political structures and their active involvement in advocacy and lobbying for equitable and sustainable human development.

4.9.   Legal and Human Rights

A number of gender issues have been identified in legal instruments and laws which violate human/women's rights principles in Nigeria. Some of these are discussed in this section. Several gender issues of concern arise from a perusal of the 1999 Constitution and the various legislations.

4.9.1 The Constitution

Gender issues in the 1999 Constitution cover a wide spectrum ranging from language, the non-ratification of gender-friendly treaties and citizenship/indigene rights amongst others. Some of these are discussed below: -

a. **Language of the Constitution**- The language of the 1999 Constitution is gender biased and it is written as if only men make up the geo-political entity called Nigeria. For example, the pronoun *'he'* appears in the 1999 constitution about 235 times.

b. **Discrimination in the composition of representation of Governments, Boards and Statutory Bodies** - Section 14(3) did not include gender consideration in the composition of the Government and of the Boards of its Agencies. This may give room for the marginalization of women

c. **Establishment of Federal Executive Bodies and Commissions** - While the Constitution makes provision for the composition of bodies like Federal Character Commission, Civil Service Commission, National Council of State, there is no provision for a Commission that would promote gender equality.

d. **Non-ratification of Gender-friendly Treaties** - Section 12 of the Constitution states that no treaty between the Federation and any other country shall have the force of law unless enacted into law by the National Assembly. This clause has prevented the domestication of CEDAW and other gender friendly treaties.

e. **Citizenship/Indigene Rights** - Section 27:2a confers the right of citizenship to any woman who is married to a Nigerian citizen but denies such right to foreign men married to Nigerian citizens.

f. **Right to Family Life** - Section 37 on the Right to Private and Family life as presently provided in the constitution is inadequate to prevent under-age marriage and to protect rights of widow to inheritance.

4.9.2. Gender Issues in the Penal Code and Criminal Acts.
The emerging gender issues in the Criminal Code and Penal Act range from discrimination in prescribed punishment for indecent assaults on males and females to spousal abuse and wife battering. Some of these are discussed below -

a. **Indecent Assaults on Males and Females** – The criminal code prescribes discriminatory punishment for the same offence depending on the gender of the victim. For example, the Criminal Code discriminates against women on the issue of punishment against personal assaults. For instance Section 353 provides the following on Indecent Assaults on Male: *"Any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults any male person is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for three years. The offender cannot be arrested without warrant'*. Section 360 of the Criminal Code however provides the following on *Indecent Assaults on Females:"Any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults a woman or girl is guilty of a misdemeanor, and is liable to imprisonment for two years.* It is obvious from the above provisions that the assaults against women attract less stringent sanctions than assaults against men, even though in most cases, women stand more risk of being violated and abused.

b. **Marital Rape** - Section 182 of the Penal Code stipulates that *"sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife is not rape if she has attained puberty.*" This provision does not only condone marital rape, it also condones defilement of young girls under the age of 16. This is because the age of puberty is not fixed and any girl who for instance has commenced her menstrual period is deemed to have attained puberty.

c. **Spousal Abuse and Wife Battery** - The provision of the Penal Code encourages violence against women. It allows for the beating of a wife for the purpose of correction.

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Section 55 (1) (d) of the Penal Code stipulates, *"Nothing is an offence, which does not amount to the infliction of grievous harm upon any person and which is done by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife. Such husband and wife being subject to any natural law or custom in which such correction is recognized as lawful"*

d. **Discrimination in Marital Relationship** - Section 55 of the Penal Code presupposes that a wife can never be considered an equal in a marriage

4.9.3. Police Act And Regulations

Section 46 of the Police Act 1967, contains some provisions which certainly discriminate against women, as police officers. Just as it is present in the 1999 Constitution, the Police Act 1967 obviously displays discrimination against women in employment into the Nigeria Police Force, and in their public duties within the force and perhaps career aspirations and conditions of service. On entry to the Nigeria Police Force, the Police Regulations Section 121 states that:

> *"Women Police Officers shall as a general rule, be employed on duties which are connected with women and children"*

The particular regulation further defined specific duties for female police officers, including - the investigation of sexual offences against women and children; recording of statements from female offenders and accused persons brought to Police Station. The duties of female police officers also include conducting of interviews for women and children who have been apprehended for certain offences by the Police. Thus, Section 122 of the 1967 Police Act states that -

> *"Women police officers recruited to the General Duties Branch of the Force may, in order to relieve male police officers from these duties, be employed*

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in any of the following duties, namely: (a) Clerical duties (b.)Telephone duties (c) Office Orderly duties".

Also, the Nigeria Police Force, Section 127 of the 1967 Police Act mandates women who are desirous of getting married to apply for permission to do so, failure of which may lead to their disengagement from the Force. It is surprising that only female police officers are mandated to seek for permission before getting married while their male counterparts have freedom over when to marry. The provision of this section is not only discriminatory but a source of gender inequality in the access to public employments. This provision has become a major hindrance to most young women seeking employment to the Nigerian Armed Forces.

4.9.4. The Labour Act
The Labour Act of 1971 has been found to be discriminatory against women. Although the Act was reviewed in 1990, such provisions are still largely being used against women at the workplace. An important example of this is section 34 (1) which confers upon a worker the right to be accompanied by family. As stated by the Act:

> *"Any citizen who is recruited for service in Nigeria may be accompanied to his place of employment and attended during his employment there by such members of his family(not exceeding two wives and such of his children as are under the age of sixteen years) as he wishes to take with him".*

What this provision portends is that men have special status such that they have to be accompanied by their wives and their children to their place of new employment (and not vice versa). By implications women are positioned to play the role of a second fiddle to their husbands. It is however acknowledged that the same Labour Act provides that women should be protected during

pregnancy, as regards access to maternity leave and protection from unjust dismissal from work. The same Act bars women from engaging in MINE JOBS considering their biological make up. All of these point to the fact that Laws and Acts in Nigeria are guided by traditional gender norms, and predominantly male-centric.

In response to the perceived injustice to women entrenched in the Labour Act of 1971, the Federal government enacted **National Commission for Women Act, 1989.** The Act seeks to, among other things, *"promote the full utilization of women in the development of human resources and to bring their acceptance as full participants in every phase of national development, with equal rights and corresponding obligations, as well as work towards total elimination of all social cultural practices tending to discriminate against and dehumanize womanhood".* Evidences abound to show that these have not been adhered to.

4.9.5. Property Law

One of the crucial aspects of human life is the acquisition of movable and immovable properties. Both men and women need properties to survive the challenges of nature but access to such properties by women is usually constrained by civil and customary laws. Although the 1999 Constitution guarantees to every Nigerian (man and woman) the right to acquire and own immovable property, many of the customary laws are inconsistent with section 43 of the Nigerian Constitution which assigns this right. For example, in almost all the states of the federation, women have no right over land and landed property as they cannot under customary laws inherit land/landed property directly from their fathers nor from their husbands, except indirectly through male children (in case of husband properties). Women with no male children stand the risk of dispossession after husband's demise. Tobi (2007) stated that women in both South Eastern and in the North have less chances of owing properties compared to their counterparts in the Southwest. Yoruba women of Southwest Nigeria are noted for their involvement in trade and other

economic activities which accorded them opportunities to own personal properties, and to gain affluence independently of their husbands. This traditionally provided financial basis/social status for few Yoruba women to be accorded a place in traditional politics, and opportunities to occupy traditional political positions. However, all of these have been lost under modern political processes, particularly post colonial era.

4.9.6. The Land Use Act Of 1978

The Land Use Act of 1978 is the Act specifying the use, distribution and ownership of landed property by both individuals and the government. The Act unlike previous legislations on lands in Nigeria has remained in force for over 30 years now. The Land Use Act which was promulgated by General Olusegun Obasanjo, the then Military Head of State, had its intention summed up in the head note to the Act as follows:

> *"The land Use Act is an Act to vest all land composed in the territory of each state (except land vested in the Federal Government and its agencies) solely in the Governor of the state, who would hold such land in trust for the people and would henceforth be responsible for allocation of land in all urban areas to individuals resident in the state and to organizations for residential, agricultural, commercial and other purposes while similar powers with respect to non-urban areas are conferred on Local Government".*

As suitable as the intention of the military was on land sharing and perhaps at ensuring that there is public equity in the future, many state officials continue to use the law against the vulnerable in the society. A common practice has been indiscriminate allocation of lands to friends and associates, family members, and co- workers in expectations of kick backs. Although the Land Use Act does not show outright discrimination against women, however, because men are largely in top government positions, women hardly get

approvals to acquire landed properties because of the male-oriented politics of the Land Use Act. More so, the Land Use Act empowers Local Government officials and the Government at large to respect existing customary law in land use and land distribution. Thus, the Act states that:

> *"in the case of a customary right of occupancy, unless non customary law or any other customary law applies, be regulated by the customary law existing in the locality in which the land is situated"*

This simply means that the traditional customs which grant little or no access to women to own land and property are directly or indirectly upheld by the new Land Use Act. In most cases, women are generally poor, and do not have the requisite education to seek redress in the law court on issues of gender disparity, especially those pertaining to land sharing. Apart from the fact that there are common laws and customary laws standing as obstacles to women development, women awareness of discriminatory land laws is low. Thus, women have continued to suffer utter neglect in the hands of government.

4.10. Gender Based Violence
4.10.1. Forms and Types of Gender-based Violence

Violence Against Women (VAW) is a social problem which pervades virtually all the world societies unabated through history. VAW does not only predominate in homes, and the family institution, but also a common occurrence in all other human institutions, such as the school environment, the workplace, and the political sphere. Gender violence is throughout a woman's life cycle (Box 4). VAW presents itself in diverse forms, including rape, assault, battering and beating, sexual harassment and all sorts of sexual molestations. All of these constitute a violation of the fundamental human rights of the individual so violated (who is usually a girl or a woman). The fear of violation drives fear into the lives of women and young girls and less frequently, for men

and boys. Worst still, it has taken such a long time to attract the attention of policy makers, and the public to the ills of VAW.

The first global attention drawn on the need to protect all humans from violence and torture was the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1975). Significantly, the women's rights agenda did not attract global attention until the adoption of the International Bill of Rights for Women, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 by the United Nations, to which over 160 countries, including Nigeria were signatories. By 1993, the World Human Rights Conference drew attention to Gender-based Violence as a human

> **BOX 4**
> **GENDER VIOLENCE IS THROUGHOUT A WOMAN'S LIFE CYCLE**
> 1. Prenatal – sex selective, abortion etc.
> 2. Infancy – Female infanticide. differential access to medical care etc.
> 3. Childhood – FGM, Incest and sexual abuse of the girl child
> 4. Reproductive Age – Wife battery; murder; sexual harassment in the workplace; rape; marital rape etc.
> 5. Old Age: Abuse of widows; elder abuse etc.

rights violation, emerging from a system of gender relations that assumes that men are superior to women. The United Nations 1994 Declaration on Violence defines VAW as -

> "any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".

Also, the 4th World Conference on Women and Development in Beijing (1995) identified VAW as one of the twelve (12) critical areas of concern deserving urgent attention and action by

governments, NGOs and individuals by the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The term 'Violence Against Women' is now used to describe a wide range of acts, which include murder, rape, sexual assault, emotional abuse, battering stalking, prostitution, genital mutilation or genital cutting, sexual harassment and pornography (see Crowell and Burgess, 1966). Other forms of VAW are - women in conflict situations, trafficking in women, widowhood rites and early marriage amongst others.

The Women's World Forum Against Violence, held in Spain, November, 2000, explicitly stated that-
> *"women regardless of class, race, religion or ethnicity are vulnerable to multiple forms of gender based violence. Violence Against Women knows no boundary".*

In Nigeria, the VAW Bill, passed at the federal level in 2005, sponsored by a coalition of NGOs, defined VAW as –
> *"physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and economic abuse occurring in the family, work place and in the community".*

Trends in violence against women and girls are globally alarming. Human Rights Watch (2000), in its survey of 5 countries, found that 12,000 women die every year as a result of domestic violence. In Pakistan, 80% of the women are victims of domestic violence, while in South Africa, 49,280 cases of rape were reported in 1999 alone (with many more unreported). In Peru, 28,000 cases of domestic violence were reported in 1998, while in the United States of America, 1.8 million women are assaulted every year by men in their lives. In Jordan, official statistics indicate that each year, one-third of the 'honor killings' fell on women carried out by members of their families. Also, the State of the World Population UN Report (2000) wrote on domestic violence, stating that –

> *'at least one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some way, most often by someone she knows. At least 60 million girls, mostly in Asia are missing; 2 million are introduced into commercial sex market yearly.'*

Effah-Chukuma (2004) wrote on violence against women in Nigeria, with the assertion that –

> *"it is a daily occurrence both in the public and private sphere but, is rendered invisible, receiving little or no attention, while the silence around it, is used as a weapon in further perpetrating it".*

In Nigeria, recent data show that 30% of Nigerian women have experienced some form of violence in their life time (DHS, 2008); 7% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone a form of sexual violence and half of the women reported that their perpetrators were husbands, partners or boyfriends (British Council Nigeria Gender Report, 2012).

Aina (1998) presented culture as a strong explanatory variable in understanding the predominant gender ideology within the Nigerian society. Cultural norms continue to sustain unequal power relations across gender groups; subordinate the position of women in the society; and sustain obnoxious harmful traditional practices such as FGM among others. Worst still the existing legal structures fail to protect women from their social assailants. Thus, VAW, as a critical and prominent form of abuse of women's human rights in Nigeria, would require active involvement all and sundry, in particular, the Police[2], who in their routine work, encounter or address many incidents of these cruelties against women.

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[2] The Nigerian Police Force lacks requisite training in handling gender-based violence.

In Nigeria, domestic violence like wife battery is considered a normative order. Many, including the Police do not even consider it as a form of abuse. Thus, sometimes laws and legal procedures condone violence against women, allowing men to act with impunity in the name of exercising a "right" to discipline their wives. The Penal Code applicable to Northern Nigeria, Section 55 permits domestic chastisement of wives for corrective purposes.

The Nigeria Police Force, acting on what is termed 'cultural normative order' does not generally treat VAW/GBV as a threat to human dignity and rights, and as a gross violation of women's rights. Aina, Obilade, and Olayode (2010), found in a field study, a number of factors which hinder the Nigeria's police from adequately engaging with issues relating to gender-based violence, including -

- Inadequacies of current legal provisions to address issues of gender based violence, particularly issues of domestic violence/wife battery and rape
- Inadequate requisite skills to handle issues of gender based violence by police officers
- Absence of modern technology to aid investigation and detection of gender based violence, especially rape (e.g. DNA/forensic technologies)
- Pervasive cultural norms that seem to validate wife battery as purely domestic issue rather than a criminal one
- Issues of gender based violence are often given the required attention and seriousness in the police stations.
- Absence of relevant specialized structures and personnel to specifically handle cases of gender based violence (e.g. special police unit trained to handle GBV/VAW).
- Absence of gender desk units in most police stations across the country to handle gender issues
- Absence of resource allocations specifically targeted to fight gender based crimes

- Pressure on victims to withdraw charges when the perpetrator is a member of the family or a close associate of the family, thus hampering police investigation and prosecution.
  Police stations often lack trauma centres and other facilities to support and to protect victims from perpetrators.

Generally, Violence Against Women in Nigeria continues unabated, taking a queue from police brutalities against the female gender, and the media records of brutalities against women (see Cases 1 to 8 presented in Box 5). The cited cases show that men were usually the **perpetrators** of violence against women, while violence against the female gender knows no age boundary (see the case of a 3-year old raped by a 43-year old man). Notably, all categories of men are responsible for these violent acts against women including Pastors, young and old men, husbands, and strangers, including the police force. It is also important to note that the cases presented in this lecture as in all many other documented cases elsewhere were recorded inconclusive i.e. readers could not determine whether or not the law in actual sense caught up with the culprits. We only have the records of such men being led to police stations, while there were no records of judgement and punishments meted out.

> **BOX 5: REPORTED CASES OF VAW**
>
> **Cases 1 – 8 were curled from the Annual Report on VAW published by Project Alert (2005):**
>
> 1. A 3-year old raped by a 43 year old man (an uncle)
> 2. A girl raped by her own father/impregnated
> 3. Husband murdered wife, set her ablaze thereafter;
> 4. A Pastor-husband killed wife in a thick forest;
> 5. A Pastor- husband set wife ablaze
> 6. A Police Officer killed a girl over a N20 Bribe;
> 7. Lover boy bathed girlfriend with acid;
> 8. Ex-husband bathed ex-wife with acid

Presently, some NGOs in Nigeria now run 'Battered Women's Shelter'. Despite their efforts, thousands of women are left without succour and protection. Also, despite policy response to VAW, the Nigeria media is replete with cases of VAW on a daily basis. The fight against VAW in our society can only achieve results when we all join hands together and present a common front against harmful traditional practices which devalue women; obnoxious gender role ideologies, and retrogressive sex stereotypes. Both women and men must necessarily present a common voice on these issues to achieve any meaningful success in this regard. Advocacy and social mobilization efforts in this regard must not be short-lived, but a constant effort which will involve all and sundry, old and young, rich and poor, able-bodies, and those that are physically challenged.

5.0. CONTRIBUTIONS OF FEMINIST RESEARCH TO SOCIOLOGY AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

A sociologist is a social reformer hence, Sociology as an academic discipline focuses on the search for humanitarian social change; that is, improvement of social life through improved social policies and group action. Feminists have argued that Sociology as a field of study has not been able to fulfil this mandate because most of the theories which guide sociological thinking are construed in masculine perspectives.

Millman and Kanter (1975) highlighted six major points on the feminist critique of Sociology, which are –

i. Conventional topics studied by sociologists lead us to ignore issues that would further illuminate women's lives;

ii. Sociology, by focusing on public roles and behaviours, ignores the areas where women's experience is more likely revealed

iii. Sociology tends to depict society as a single generalisable entity

iv. Gender is seldom considered by sociologists to be a significant fact that influences behavior

v. Sociology focuses on the status quo, thus giving it a conservative bias

vi. Conventional sociological methodologies are likely to elicit only certain kinds of information; most notably the kind is least likely to reveal new data.

Feminist perspectives in Sociology thus open up new discourses and ideas about social relations of the sexes, thereby generating new realities. This is made possible through feminist theorizing and methods; and the reconstruction of the distorted view about one-half of the human population – women. Feminist research is changing traditional stereotypes of sexism and social construction of knowledge. Notably, feminist research has contributed to the growth of Sociology in two important ways – theory building and social research methods.

For a long time, Eurocentric concepts and methodologies cushioned knowledge production and theory building in the various academic fields in the Social Sciences. This was to suite the interest of colonial administrators who were paradoxical in maintaining the colonial system of governance. First, was the need to imbue in the colonies ideologies and values that would help maintain what Steady (2002a) called 'scientific racism', and colonial interest, through which these foreign values could gradually take the place of local ideologies and the so-called 'primitive modes' considered as retrogressive to material development. According to Steady (2002a), today, globalization has taken the place of traditional colonial project, as the continent faces more insidious form of domination through neo-liberal paradigms and concepts of development; and in particular, as gender concept becomes an organizing principle in transnational capital and resource allocation, thereby furthering the reproduction of colonial hegemonies.

BOX 6

'..we have listened for centuries to the voices of men and the theories of development that their experience informs, so we have come more recently to notice not only the silence of women but the difficulty in hearing what they say when they speak. Yet in different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of **care, the tie between** relationship and **responsibility,** and the **origins of aggression in** the failure of **connection. The** failure to see the different reality of women's lives and to hear the differences in their voices stems in part from the assumption that there is a single mode of social experience and interpretation. By posting instead two different modes, we arrive at a more complex rendition of human experience which sees the truth of separation and attachment in the lives of women and men and recognizes how these truths are carried by different modes of language and thought".

Gilligan (1982, pp.174)

Theory building in Sociology has been criticized for not only being euro-centric, but male-centric (male-dominated), and generally presenting partial realities (for in many cases, such theories excluded women's experiences and realities, and their contribution to the general understanding of emerging realities in post-colonial Africa). Until recently, almost all disciplines in the social sciences rely on 'male-stream' approaches to theory construction and knowledge production. When such theories are applied to policy formulation and development practice, it naturally follows that women's meaning systems, priorities, and contributions to knowledge production and sustainable development are put in abeyance. The resulting androcentric views of social realities often results in either gender blind and/or gender biased policies (see Gilligan 1982: 174 – Box 6). Generally, this is justified by

scientific fallacy ('objective neutrality') which Harding (1987:182) became wary of in her critic of science. She wrote -

> "Scientific knowledge-seeking is supposed to be value-neutral, objective, dispassionate, disinterested, and so forth. It is supposed to be protected from political interests, goals, and desires (such as feminist ones) by the norms of science. In particular, scientific 'method' is supposed to protect the results of research from the social values of the researchers".

Harding and other feminist theorists are quick to reflect on how social phenomena are defined as problems in need of explanation, with a central argument that "there is no such thing as a problem without a person (or group of those) who have this problem: a problem is always a problem for someone or other" (Bailey, Leo-Rhynie, and Morris, 2000). Thus, feminists today query the scientific enterprise for its androcentricity and misogyny. Thus, 'mainstream' science is traditionally portrayed as universal, value-free and neutral in its pursuit of truth. Within this framework, science is deemed to be valuable for all and for all time. On the contrary, feminist theorists see knowledge production as a social activity embedded in a certain culture and world view. In this vein, the reality which science aimed at explaining is a by-product of individual perceptions and interpretations of a meaning system within a cultural frame and logic. Feminists, as well as radical post-modernists writers see universalism as a false doctrine, and often an expression of white, male, supremacist, hegemonic thought system. For feminists, social thoughts are not neutral nor value free, rather, they are socially situated and contextualized (Braidotti, Charkiewic, Hausler, and Wieringa (1994). Rather than have a universal 'mankind', human beings are described and analyzed based on concrete material and semiotic variables, including gender, class, race, ethnic identity, lifestyle etc.

Simone de Beauvoir (1952) long foresaw science as an instrument of male domination over women (and all others). He therefore laid the foundation for the future feminist theorists who saw a close link between masculinity, rationality and violence. No longer could women issues be confined to irrationality and passivity in scientific discourse, rather, women become active agents in the production of knowledge, while 'gender' becomes a cross-cutting issue in scientific debates and discourses. Feminist theorizing thus aims at deconstructing and redefining concepts which were previously defined in male perspective and often taken as the norm.

Importantly, the search for universalism, and the universal logic of development ran through traditional social science parlance. For example, Steady (2002) identified the field of Anthropology as an outcome of colonial hegemony, which developed to understand the emerging colonial states, and in essence its concepts and basic assumptions were reinforced by colonial mentalities and racial principles. Thus, at the core of its theoretical explanations were theories of social Darwinism, structural-functionalism and acculturation theories which indeed projected the European states as civilized, culturally advanced, and worthy of emulation. In the words of Maquet (1964), the field of Anthropology justified colonial expansion and domination, as Africans were projected with the image of the 'savage'. The ensuing modernization theory of the time projected a unilinear development process imbued with the principles of evolutionism. The notion of social order through the maintenance of social equilibrium reechoed the supremacy of constitutional authorities, and regulatory laws over human rights issues and dignity of human life. Even with the demise of modernization theory, neo-evolutionists continue to be the main drivers of neo-liberal assumptions on which emerging globalizing ethics are built. According Steady, globalization is framed in a binary context of – rural/urban; formal/informal; traditional/modern; developed/underdeveloped etc.

The dichotomy between the west and the non-western cultures came into the fore in most social science disciplines in Africa. Often, the theories learnt in the classrooms are not easily amenable to reconstructing African realities, or reinventing its development experience. The diversities which exist in African social realities (age; sex and sexual orientations; religion; ethnic identifies; and class among others) are not theoretically challenged and explained, nor amenable to public policy responses.

Also, until recently, the field of Sociology never thought of sex and gender as sociological issues (Andersen, 1988). The language of the classical sociological thoughts remained primarily masculine, and almost non-adaptive to analyzing gendered conditions and experiences. However, as feminists perspectives are gradually introduced to the discipline, central questions asked in sociological imagination (C Wright Mills, 1959), are now redefined to incorporate the structure of gender inequalities and its outcomes. Thus, feminist scholars are now raising new questions about the social organization of gender relations, the possibilities for social change, and the relationship of social change to academic knowledge production. In general, social science concepts are now being redefined. For example, the concepts of 'housework ' and the 'household economy' are now gaining special attention in social science fields, in particular in the fields of Economics, Sociology, and even Agriculture. Such concepts are now redefined within the broad understanding of productive labour; household incomes and national incomes, leading to a broader understanding of economic accumulation, and place of the 'gender variable' in understanding the wealth of nations.

Feminist epistemologies are in variants, captured under three categories by Deborah Poff (1988) as – i. moderate formation feminism; ii. Critical reformation feminism; and iii. Methodological feminist revolution. Moderate formation feminism (well articulated as liberal-feminism) attempted to correct masculinist bias in theories without challenging the basic

assumptions of these theories i.e. the structure which continues to reproduce gender inequalities in society. A central focus of this frame of thinking is the outright neglect of women's experience and women's realities in analytical discourses of social life. Thus, the moderate reformation feminism made attempt to correct that absence. A methodological concern within this line of thought is the under-representation of women as objects of research, while research problems were still formulated from androcentric point of views (Wine, 1983). Critical reformation feminism moved further on the continuum of feminist discourse. It questioned the epistemological basis of sexism and the system which reproduces gender inequalities in societies. However, a retooling of methodological canons of scientific inquiry (i.e. principles of rationality) will correct male bias, and would produce a better account of gendered experiences and realities. This description was succinctly presented by Harding in her description of what she called 'feminist empiricism' –

> 'Sexism and androcentrism are social biases correctable by stricter adherence to the existing methodological norms of scientific inquiry. Movements for social liberation 'make it possible for people to see the world in an enlarged perspective because they remove the covers and blinders that obscure knowledge and observation'. The women's movement produces not only the opportunity for such enlarge perspective but more women scientists, and they are more likely than men to notice androcentric bias' (Harding, 1986).

Notably, the critical feminist standpoint assumed universal features of women's experience. Although political struggles and undercurrents are important for transforming the position of women in society (i.e. through women's movements), it differed from other earlier theories of social inequalities e.g. the Marxian tradition. For critical feminism, sex/gender system or 'engendering' process is more fundamental as a classificatory

process of change, rather than a mere class consciousness as projected by Karl Marx.

Though both the moderate and the critical feminist projects acknowledge some level of flaws with mainstream science, they failed to proffer alternatives. Deborah Poff (1988) thus argued for what she called 'methodological feminist revolution'. This perspective rejects androcentrism and its epistemological commitment to classist, racist, and sexist view points. It preaches a feminist viewpoint which is fundamentally 'anti-authoritarian, anti-elitist, participatory, and emancipatory (Harding, 1986).

BOX 7

'......Post-modernist feminist theorizing argues that not only are the Enlightenment perspectives the perspectives of particularly privileged groups and societies, but they are the perspectives of androcentric, European societies. Enlightenment theorizing represents the epistemologies of the European worldview. It denies the visibility and relevance of the approaches of knowledge from the Third World ... deemed irrelevant as a source of knowledge"

- Barriteau, 1992 pp 1 – 4.

The feminist-standpoint theoretical approach rests on the tenet that knowledge should be formulated from a broader base of experience, what Harding (1987) described as an objective reality, when women's experiences and knowledge are added to mainstream or androcentric epistemologies. This is however contested by the postmodernist-feminist theorists who assume multiple realities of social experiences, which are fluid, contingent, and historically and culturally specific. In such a case, even women's experiences differ across race, class, culture, and sexual orientation. Despite their diversities, feminist theoretical approaches converge on the core issue of women's subordination, though they differ in their assumptions about the causes or sources of that subordination (Bailey et al., 2000). Thus, according to

Chhachhi (1988), the rejection of all feminist theory as 'western', 'Eurocentric', or 'ethnocentric' is due to the inability to distinguish between the application of feminist theories to the historical, political and socio-cultural specificities of the Third World women, and the notion of all theory as 'white'. Aina (1998) wrote, 'African feminism may be better explained within different historical epochs – precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial. For example, both patriarchy and capitalist imperialism intermesh in specific ways to subjugate women in the post-colonial Africa. Thus the goals, values, and ideals of feminism remain the same across regions – liberating the society from dehumanization and repairing the loss of fundamental human rights.

A major theoretical shift is the challenge of the public-private dichotomy which devalues women's reproductive work[3]. The liberal-feminist assumptions of the 1970s gave way to a more critical analysis of the structure of social inequality, and a total reconstruction of the development paradigm, whereby development was defined as 'socially responsible management and use of resources, the elimination of gender subordination and social inequality and the organizational restructuring that can bring these about" (Sen and Grown, 1987). Thus, to be sustainable, development process must necessarily stress economic and social change, empowerment of women, and progressive changes in public-private relations to benefit women (Barriteau, 2000 – see Box 7). A practical approach to achieving this is the preference for a system-wide approach to gender mainstreaming and women empowerment frameworks.

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[3] For example, liberal feminism of the 1970s maintained that women can gain equality with men by participating more in the public sphere of the economy (the modernization perspective), without redressing the structure of social inequality which lies within the private domain i.e. the household dynamics

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1.   Recommendations

This lecture presents a clear link between 'gender constructs' and sustainable development, for women's empowerment and gender equality are development objectives in their own right. This right is clearly expressed in the logic of achieving the MDG goals. Misallocating women's skills and talent comes at a high economic cost (World Development Report, 2012). Thus, it is important to work towards reducing gender gaps across sectors, and correct the structure of gender inequality within the Nigerian social structure, and its attendant negative impacts on sustainable human development. To do this, a multi-dimensional approach is required, while variety of social and political actors must play important roles in resolving gender imbalance in socio-cultural, economic, and political arrangements in the country. Different stakeholders must necessarily play a variety of roles – The Government; Political Parties; The Private Sector; The School System; Religious Leaders; Traditional Leaders; the Household; Women/Girls; Men/Boys among others.

6.1.1. The role of different stakeholders in the engendering process:

a. Government:

The government must provide an enabling environment for gender equality and women empowerment policies and practices to thrive, in particular through the following planned actions and strategies -

-   Provide the political will for the entrenchment of gender equality and women empowerment principles at the level of policy and practice.
-   Show commitment to all the international treaties, declarations, and conventions on gender equality and women empowerment for which it is a signatory.
-   Review of existing constitution, laws, and legislations to incorporate gender equality standards;

- Strengthen government institutions with mandates for the entrenchment of gender equality and women empowerment, for example, the Ministries of Women Affairs and their collaborators.
- Build the technical capacity of the civil service and public institutions in mainstreaming gender into organizational/institutional policy and practice;
- Promote framework(s) for implementing National Gender Policy (NGP), and a number of affirmative action prescribed within international agreements and treaties
- Promote gender education at all levels – primary; secondary; tertiary. This simply means that textbooks and pedagogy are engendered across disciplines while in particular, the respective governments are to invest in Gender Studies as a discipline.
- Support research and media programmes that propagate gender equality and women empowerment values.
- Empower women for political participation, and to hold leadership positions in both public and private institutions;
- Promote economic empowerment of women by providing infrastructural supports for informal trades; cross border trades; and the streams of rural dwellers across the country;
- Ensure a gender friendly work environment for women employed in the formal labour market, a good example of what is to be done, is to locate child rearing in the public space, such that child birth/rearing becomes a public service. The long run implication of this is that Nigerian educated women would better learn the act of complementing their reproductive and productive roles, rather than grow up to shun marriage because of competing career demands;
- Mainstreaming gender in all works of life if indeed we are to achieve sustainable development, especially in

such sectors as – agriculture, education, health, environment, labour and productivity, commerce among others.
- Support engendering of academic institutions and their school curricula at all levels.
- Engender national budgets and national accounts (such that women's work are valued and adjudged as a veritable part of the national accounts);
- Engage in electoral reforms to ensure electoral efficiency and transparency in party politics and make party politics more gender responsive among others.

b. National Political parties

Leadership of national political parties would also need to address the following areas -
- Engendering of constitutions and manifestos
- Building the capacity of party leadership in gender analysis, gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting among others;
- Embracing the rule of law, and shunning violence to ensure that the political space is gender friendly.

c. The Private Sector

With the current efforts at building a private sector driven economy in Nigeria, it is important to strengthen the human capital across gender groups, and ensure engendering of all the private sector institutions. In such arrangement, men and women are better able to build their technical competencies in meeting the human resource demands in this sector. The private sector must join the government in its drive for building an equitable and just society, hence, the private must put in place the following arrangements which are prerequisites for achieving the GEWE goals –
- Embrace the gender mainstreaming framework using a system-wide approach, and a dual agenda framework i.e. creating a gender equitable work environment,

while also employing 'smart economics' by using gender equitable principles to meet the strategic objectives of the organization (tapping talents across gender groups);

- Domesticate the national gender policy for the organization;
- Treat gender equitable issue as a social responsibility and a moral issue
- Design and deploy monitoring and evaluating systems to track impact of gender mainstreaming on productivity and performance.
- Zero tolerance to gender stereotypes; sexual exploitation and sexual harassments at work (a typical disturbing example is the common experience in the banking sector, where *feminist mystique* is exploited for profit motifs, and girls are forced to use their femininity to catch rich male clientele for the banks).

d. Community level interventions

To correct the structure of gender inequality at the community level, the gate keepers at this level (traditional leaders; religious leaders; and leaders of social associations) must evolve new gender relations arrangements which allow men and women as equal partners in the development process. A start point is to build communities that are alert to the following, and make necessary adjustments to achieve equity in practice-

- Gender gaps in social relations; and in the distribution of assets and resources in communities and families;
- Women's lack of access to critical resources (land, capital, labour and entrepreneurial skills etc)
- Gender abuses, especially the abuse of the girl child
- Inability of women to participate in decision making in homes and at the community level.

e. **Individual Level:**

At this level, both men and women, boys and girls have important roles to play to improve the structure of gender relations in the society. The following actions are needed at this level –

- Both men and women should embrace gender equity principles;

  Individuals must build their competencies to better improve their role in nation building;

  Both men and women must start to see themselves as 'partners in progress'; shun retrogressive cultural practices that either hurt human dignity and/or make it difficult for families to move out of poverty.

  The girl child must be re-oriented such that –

    o She values personal integrity and self-esteem;
    o She becomes more assertive and pro-active;
    o She is well prepared for the challenges of schooling, wage labour, and in some cases, participation in politics and the political life of the local communities;
    o She embraces motherhood, but she is also equipped to challenge the world around her as she makes demand for social network of supports to balance her multiple gender roles;

On the part of the boy child, he is socialized into the principles of a gendered world, and a world of gender equality. Also, he shuns gender restrictions, and gender role prescriptions.

f. **The School System:**

The school system has important role to play in shaping the lives of boys and girls; while education becomes a veritable asset in the emerging knowledge economy. It therefore important to restructure the school system to meet gender equity demands achievable through –

- Engendering of the learning environment and the school curricula;
- Building the skills of teachers to manage gender equity issues; and meeting the gender demands of their students;
- Helping students to build positive image across gender groups among others.

g. The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

The CSOs have played very prominent roles in the engendering process. The government and other stakeholders would need to collaborate with this group to bring about requisite change in gender role relations at the grassroots.

h. International Community and Development Partners:

This group has the following important roles to play -

- Technical and financial support to public and private institutions in Nigeria to mainstream gender and build structures to support its sustainability;
- Provision of supports to women political aspirants (both in cash and kind as appropriate);
- Building the skill of female politicians in fund raising, and possibly advocating that where needed, specific African Government creates a special government account to support female politicians for comparative financial advantage with men, at least in the short run;
- Regular dialogues with government to ensure commitment to international treaties/national policies in the gender sector.

6.1.2. Engendering Social Science Disciplines

As exemplified in this lecture, 'gender' cross-cuts with elements within sustainable development discourse, including production of academic knowledge. 'Gender' makes expression across academic disciplines – Science, Technology, Social Sciences, Medicine, and the Humanities. As a point of departure, I am making a case for a Social Discipline that is repositioned to better contribute to

engendering process, first by engendering the process of teaching, research, and community engagements; and second, to become more relevant in formulating development priorities both at national and regional levels. To do this, Social Science Faculties must engage in agenda setting, and development of gender frameworks adaptable to both internal and external demands of their respective institutions in order to contribute meaningfully to setting agenda for the Nigerian sustainable development. In this regard, gender mainstreaming is a strategy aimed at achieving gender equality through a better understanding of the interdependent and/or complementary roles of men and women. This process introduces gender equality perspective in all development policies, strategies and interventions, at all levels and stages of engagement. More importantly, it helps to reshape knowledge production both in terms of basic assumptions, analytical processes, and evaluation. It therefore involves theory construction, and the use of gender analytic frameworks (e.g. development of gender indicators). A gender analysis paradigm assumes differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers amongst others, between women and men in their assigned gender roles. For social scientists, using gender analysis approach requires redefining and reframing social science concepts and minimum terms to meet the realities of a gendered world.
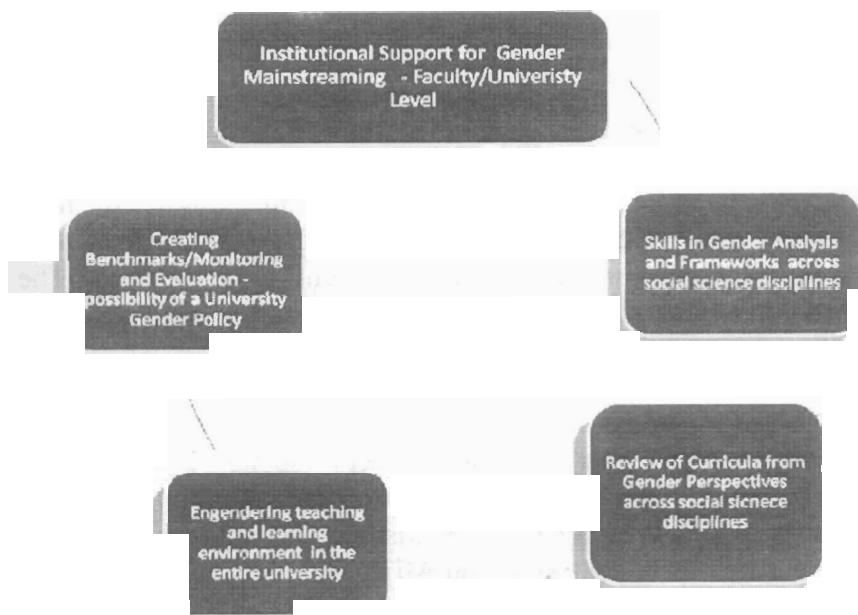
Importantly, gender mainstreaming process is guided by 3 principles which are -
- That gender issue is systemic and requires being treated as a cross-cutting issue in both teaching and research processes.
- That the treatment of gender issue or concern that is not based on evidential data is often treated casually or with sentiments. It is therefore important to start off with a situation analysis which provides basis for a baseline argument and evidence. This allows future monitoring for change and evaluation

- That gender mainstreaming is a means to an end rather than being an end in itself. It is therefore dynamic, for it allows a process for change and alternative options which are also subject to future changes.

To be effective, a gender mainstreaming process must be institutionalized, thereby requiring management support, shared responsibilities of stakeholders, and building capacities and competences in this area. The model in Figure 6 could be adapted to a university-wide engendering model, or specific to a particular sector of the university. It is important that there is an institutional support for gender mainstreaming to have an institutional wide effect, and a technical capacity to drive the process. It is also assumed that with an institutional support, gender equity funds could be accessed through the university and/or donor support agencies.

Fig 6: A Model for Engendering the Social Science Disciplines

Institutional Support for Gender Mainstreaming - Faculty/Univeristy Level

Creating Benchmarks/Monitoring and Evaluation - possibility of a University Gender Policy

Skills in Gender Analysis and Frameworks across social science disciplines

Engendering teaching and learning environment in the entire university

Review of Curricula from Gender Perspectives across social sicnece disciplines

An important element of the mainstreaming process in higher education is a curriculum review from a gender perspective. As social realities change, these must also be reflected in Social Science enterprise. Hence, as a new understanding of gender role relations and relations of gender power are identified as important drivers of social change, social science must be eclectic in its theorising and mode of doing research, in particular, a mastery of feminist research logic.

With its foundation in critical theory, feminist research is not only critical but emancipatory thereby perceiving reality, science, and research within this context. Feminist research has not only reshaped theory construction, it has overtly affected mainstream research methods in the social sciences. Within gender research a mix of methods are used and results triangulated. Both quantitative and qualitative data processes are sought, while the explanation of gender problematique now goes beyond the woman, but also to the other gender (the man), and the role of the state in shaping and reshaping the social conditions/livelihoods of women and men alike.

Also important to this debate, is the importance of gender disaggregated data, and the use of gender statistics. Presently in most Nigerian Universities, gender data are almost in non-existence, thereby constituting problems of providing evidential data for the necessary gender equity interventions at this level. The dearth of gender statistics (data) thereby blurred our vision of serious gender gaps in most the academic disciplines which also deserve attention and interventions.

African feminists do not only query social injustice and dehumanising traditional ethos, they have written frantically against imperialism and neo-colonialism and skeptical of the over-arching effects of globalization on Africa economy and other social formations that exploit the African continent, and undermine the position of women in the African society. Feminists generally,

have major roles to play in the construction and reconstruction of gender identity and cultural contestations and paradoxes in explaining the status of the African women. As new identities are being created for women by the state, we must ensure that these are crafted within women's own realities and experiences.

The resurgence of interest in drawing up gender responsive policies in Nigeria is the direct result of our inter-connectedness with global feminism, a direct gain from the global action against women oppression, and evidence of a growing global identity for women as a social group – irrespective of race, ethnicity, and class. While Feminists would continue to challenge the structure which continues to perpetuate gender discrimination in the society, they must work to retool the framework for engendering social policies and institutions. We therefore need more feminist scholarship to lead policy analyses, formulation, and implementation. Both public and private institutions need feminists who will provide evidential data and discourse on gender role relations and gender identities on which social policies are anchored. More importantly, the present weak structures in feminist/gender education and gender research in most universities in the country would need to be strengthened. A major challenge is creating and/or investing into the development of feminist knowledge, because of its centrality in the intersection of knowledge production and social policy.

6.2.   Conclusions

I must not conclude this lecture without making recourse to my academic benefactors and mentors. Without the initial sponsorships from The Ford Foundation (Lagos Office); and CODESRIA (Dakar) it would have been impossible for me to undertake my post graduate studies. Also, CIDA in 1991 granted me a Fellowship in Women's Studies in two Canadian Universities (Mount Saint Simon University, and Dalhousie University – both in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada). In 1995, I received the US fellowship support in Women's Studies, and as a visiting Scholar at the University of Wisconsin at Parkside (Kenosha, WI); while in

1996, I received the British Council Chevening Scholar for a Certificate Programme in Gender Policy and Planning at the University College London. All of these helped to further strengthen the 'home grown' training I received from Ife of which I am indeed ever very proud of even at international fora.

My gender research work had been supported by national and international bodies including:

> The Carnegie Corporation of New York; Ford Foundation; WHO; IDRC; UNIFEM (now UN-WOMEN); UNFPA; UN Habitat; DFID; MacArthur Foundation; HBF; the Social Science Academy of Nigeria; and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development amongst others.

I have also been opportuned to influence social policy at the national level, being the lead Consultant in facilitating the writing of the following policy documents –

i. The National Gender Policy (2006)
ii. The Gender Policy for the Nigeria Police Force (2012)
iii. Member of the Special Committee of Women, Children, and the Vulnerable Groups for the Nigeria Vision 20:2020

I have not only made 'the gender variable' relevant for policy formulation, but also sought its integration into academic curricula beyond the shores of Sociology as a discipline. For example, I did not only drink from the brook of knowledge provided by my PhD supervisor, Prof Similolu Afonja; together, we forged a relevance for gender research at OAU when in 1996 we presented a proposal to the University for the establishment of the Gender Centre at OAU Ife, which is today one of the foremost Gender Centres in Nigeria. The Centre is not only geared at carrying out academic responsibilities of teaching and research, it is to help the University create a gender responsive learning environment. A major

achievement of the Centre is helping the University to formulate a Gender Policy (thus making OAU to become one of the few Universities in Nigeria with a Gender Policy).

At the national scene, my 4-year term as the president of the Nigerian Anthropological and Sociological Association is also helping to standardize curricula across Departments of Sociology (Anthropology) in Nigeria, through the initiative I started in 2011 – Committee of HODs and Professors of Sociology and Anthropology in Nigeria. The current passion of Sociologists and Anthropologists is not only to continue to professionalize our discipline, but also to further strengthen collaborative research with sister disciplines. Also, currently at OAU (Ife), Sociologists (Anthropologists) are more than ever before helping to strengthen social science research across faculties. A case in point is the introduction of gender studies/gender research into the curriculum of Public Health Training in the University. Today, our university is now producing feminist economists, feminist environmentalists, and feminist agriculturists to mention but a few. Our excitement is the current realization that we all live in a gendered world, of which we must make a sense of both at the level of policy and practice – in the homes; offices; classrooms; hospitals; market places; farms; Churches; Mosques; and even in the virtual space among others.

This lecture will not be complete without *'giving honour to whom honour is due'*. Here at Ife, Professor Similolu Afonja introduced me to the act of Sociological imagination (she remained the C. Wright Mills to my career paths). Prof Adejuwon was the serving Dean when I was allowed to change from the Department of English to Sociology. Many of my teachers are now retired, but their memories are ever green. Professor Adewuyi (sat through my PhD data analysis and thought me the act of data analysis); Professor Akinsola Akiwowo (provided me with the academic library that prepared me for a career in Sociology); Prof Odebiyi (moved from the position of a teacher to a big sister); Prof

Oloruntimehin (was my spiritual mentor); Dr. Adewale Rotimi (my mentor, my teacher and my blood uncle); Professor Tola Pearce (my devoted teacher); Dr. Aweda (my Social Research Methods teacher and a mentor); Professor Ogunbameru (my course mate at the post graduate level, and a friend indeed) and others outside my faculty and across Nigerian Universities - Professors Bolanle Awe; Layi Erinoso; Felicia Oyekanmi; Christie Okojie; and Amadu Sesay. To my students, at both undergraduate and post graduate levels, you made the journey worth the while.

For all others who contributed to my academic journey, too many to list, I dove my cap.

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, the journey to academic discoveries is like going to the world unknown. Through the voyage, there are many rough waters, but in it all, God remains supreme, and therefore, Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, permit me to end this lecture with a note:

"TO GOD BE THE GLORY, GREAT THINGS HE HAD DONE, SO LOVED HE THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE US HIS SON, WHO YIELDED HIS LIFE OUR REDEMPTION TO WIN, AND OPENED THE LIFE-GATE THAT ALL MAY GO IN".

Thank you for listening. God bless YOU ALL!

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