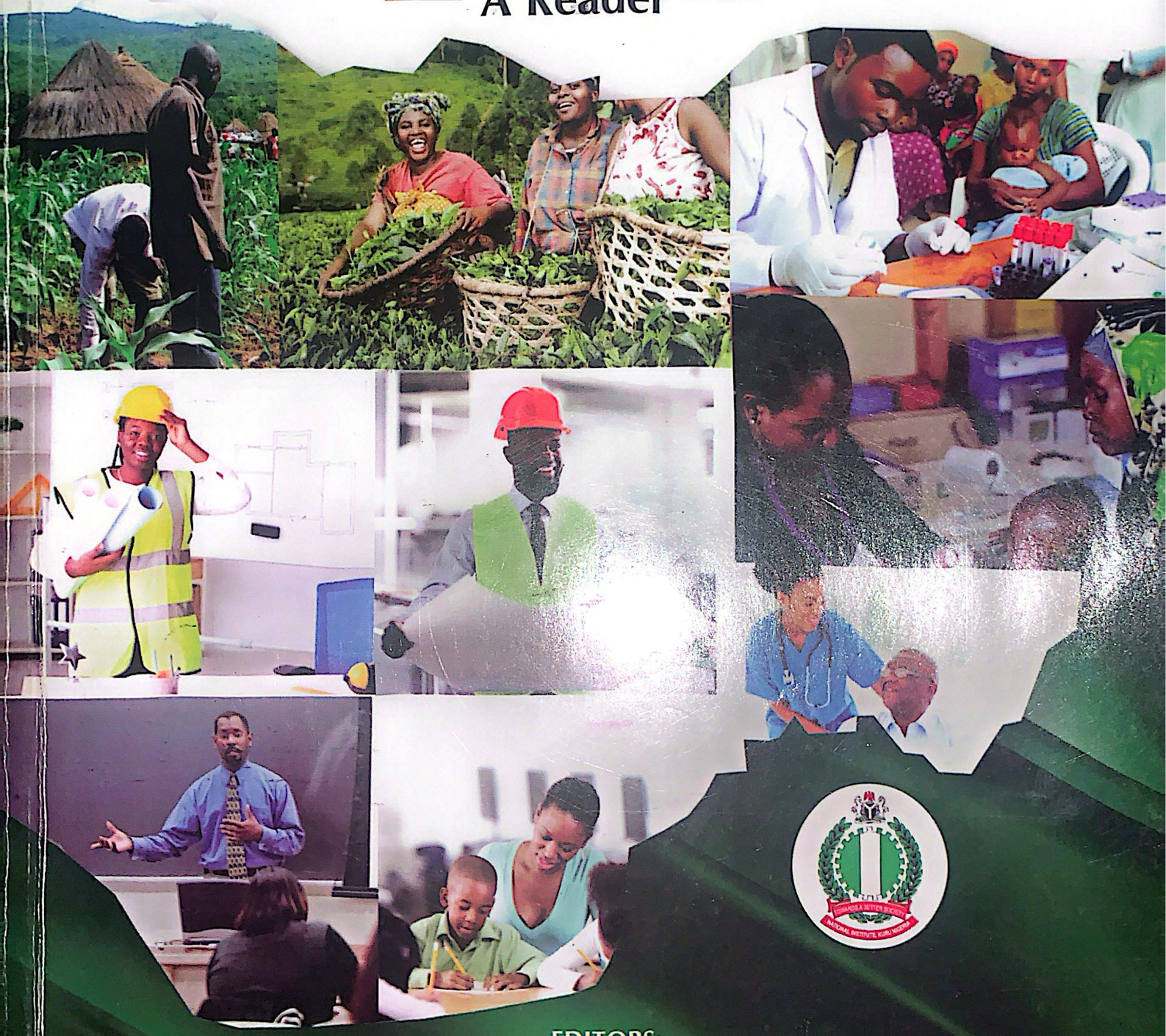
GENDER & DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:

CONCEPTS, ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

A Reader



EDITORS:
OLUWAFUNMILAYO J. PARA-MALLAM, and MOJÚBÀOLÚ O OKOME

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:
CONCEPTS, ISSUES AND STRATEGIES - A READER

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:
CONCEPTS, ISSUES AND STRATEGIES - A READER

Edited by
Oluwafunmilayo J. Para-Mallam
& Mojúbàolú Olufúnké Okome

© National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS)
GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: CONCEPTS, ISSUES AND STRATEGIES - A READER.

Published, November 2023
Printed in Nigeria

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the copyright owners.

ISBN 978 978 198 163 0



Printed by: Polaris Doxa Printery
16, Kudeti Avenue, Commercial Reservation Area, Jericho Onireke, Ibadan.
polarisdoxapress@gmail.com
+2349034500000

PROLOGUE

60th IMPACT BIRTHDAY BOOK
IN HONOUR OF
PROF OLUWAFUNMILAYO JOSEPHINE PARA-MALLAM

Gender & Development in Nigeria: Concepts, Issues and Strategies

Women continue to provide a groundswell of development in any society. This has been an undeniable fact of human existence from the beginning of civilization. Whether this social fact is accepted or denied, its reality remains undisputable. Patriarchal power structures strive to ignore the invaluable contribution of women in the development process in extreme cases. But such comes at great costs to the Nigerian society. Women have a role to play and the earlier this is recognized, accepted and mainstreamed into Nigeria's development agenda, the better for our democracy and economic well-being. This book: ***Gender & Development in Nigeria: Concepts, Issues and Strategies***' is a goal mine of ideas for those who seek to be better informed about the gender disequilibrium which exists in our society. Living in denial of the role and contributions of women is a male infested intentionality in perpetuating discriminatory practices nurtured in patriarchal incubations. Women should not be discriminated against. Instead, women should be seen as positive partners of development and the progress for the betterment of the Nigerian nation. In truth, that is what they are. Let's celebrate our women and promote their aspirations. We will in the end be better off as a people. Launching this book during the 60th Impact Birthday of my dear wife Prof Oluwafunmilayo Josephine Para-Mallam (nee Fawehinmi) celebrates the toils and joys of the woman I know, who genuinely wants to see the betterment of the Nigerian woman not as a competitor but a complimenter of the Nigerian man, indeed men, all over: local and global!

The Revd Dr. Gideon Para-Mallam
October 2023
Jos, Nigeria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our profound and heartfelt appreciation to each and every contributor to this book. Without their chapters, the book would have been impossible to produce, since it is meant to reflect the rich diversity and brilliance of Nigerian scholars and expert practitioners' thinking on the subject matter of the book. They are to be commended for rising to the challenge and making this a significant contribution to knowledge on this important subject.

We thank Dr. Steve Ogidan, mni and members of the book unveiling subcommittee for assiduously working to get the book published on time. They went over and above the call of duty to ensure that the work was done with great excellence.

Our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Samuel Osime. He is to be commended for the stylistic editing that makes the book such a great read.

Great appreciation to Dr. Titilope Ajayi, whose able assistance contributed to the ability to manage and complete the assignment.

We thank the book reviewers who peer-reviewed the chapters for their astute and constructive criticisms. This elevates the quality of the contributions and increases the relevance of the book as a contribution to knowledge.

We thank Professor Ayo Omotayo, the Director General of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, for providing valuable ideas about the production process and writing the Foreword

We are very grateful to Rev. Dr. Gideon Para-Mallam for supporting the production process. This is an invaluable contribution for which we have the greatest appreciation.

We are grateful to Dr. Muoyo Okome for moral and material support that made it possible to complete the assignment.

The book has indeed been a collective assignment. Our people are right. It takes a village to raise a child. This book is that child. All thanks to God for the grace to bring it to fruition.

Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome and
Oluwafunmilayo J. Para-Mallam, mni.

PREFACE

Gender Studies is a young and dynamic area of intellectual inquiry. This book, *Gender and Development in Nigeria: Concepts, Issues and Strategies, A Reader* is an attempt to contribute to the development and production of knowledge in this interdisciplinary field of study. Although I have much unfinished research and writing projects, I could not say no to a book such as this because of the respect and admiration that I have for Professor Olufunmilayo Josephine Para-Mallam, mni. She was intent on wanting to contribute this co-edited volume as part of her birthday impact activities. Besides, while I was on sabbatical at NIPSS, we had numerous wide-ranging conversations on all manner of issues, particularly those concerning Nigeria and its gender relations. Public policy and politics and their relevance to development were also prominent in our conversation. We discussed, debated, argued, and always said that we ought to write a book together on Nigerian gender politics. This book is a beginning of the fulfilment of that intent. There are yet more books to come.

This*Reader* seeks to fill a gap in our knowledge as well as produce academic source materials for Nigerian scholars and students that are also globally relevant to academic production of knowledge. Undergraduate and post-graduate students, as well as scholars and practitioners interested in gender analysis in Nigeria and globally need to understand the historicity and contemporary ramifications of the driving paradigms, perspectives, debates, critiques methodological approaches and development interventions in gender studies as they emerge. It is also important to present the work of African scholars in academic terrain where they remain marginalized and ignored.

Current agitation for the decolonization of the academy also means that the production of knowledge in the academy should meaningfully include the documentation of the involvement, interaction and analysis of Africa-based scholars who foreground Africa-centred perspectives and intellectual products. Further, the interplay between gender and development in Nigeria and their effects on national development are yet to be

exhaustively analysed. Yet, there is worldwide commitment to the need for gender equality, as is evident from global, African and national commitments. These include the International Conference on Population and Development, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, Beijing Platform of Action, UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security, Sustainable Development Goals, the Maputo Protocol, and even Nigeria's constitution, which has a clause on non-discrimination.The implications of sex identity and gender dynamics for national development have not been coherently and systematically articulated to make them accessible to students, lecturers, researchers, analysts, activists and policy makers. Thus, much of international, regional and national gender and development discourse is neither applicable nor functional in the Nigerian context. This Reader contributes to these efforts.

This chapters in this book consider the conceptual and theoretical frames of analysis that explain gender identity, status, roles and relationships across Nigeria's richly diverse and culturally complex ethnic nationalities. It explores the implications of such diversity and complexity for gender and development thinking, planning and policy. With its diverse and huge population, rich and varied historical, cultural and linguistic trajectories, Nigeria is fertile ground for the development of contextually relevant gender theory and practice.

This Gender and Development Reader aims to fill the gaps in our knowledge. It is an excellent resource for academic inquiry, policymaking and implementation. Without contextualized gender and development issues and analyses that draw upon and reflect the socio-cultural, political and economic realities in Nigeria, such analyses are less relevant. Without grounded and historicized analysis of the interaction between the Nigerian State and society, such analyses are unproductive. Without considering the interplay between gender and development from the perspective of those who live Nigerian realities, we cannot understand our peculiar situation, neither can we effectively respond to the challenges that we face. The Gender and Development reader aims to contribute to filling these gaps.

This Gender and Development Reader has well-illustrated content and structure suitable for user-friendly learning and focused on theory building, development planning and policy solutions. It is a compendium of chapters written by gender scholars and practitioners from various disciplinary/occupational fields under seven (7) broad thematic sections.

The thematic areas cover major disciplinary fields in view of the crosscutting nature of gender and development studies. It is a widely accepted saying that, "Every development issue is a gender issue; and every gender issue is a development issue." Both 'gender' and 'development' are broad and inexhaustive areas for scholarly investigation. Therefore, it would be overly ambitious to expect a single book to cover all areas. However, the editors attempted to ensure a very wide selection of experienced contributors with proven knowledge and expertise in their respective fields. The chapters are divided into thematic areas. It is a peer reviewed, edited volume aimed at presenting Nigerian perspectives and critiques on gender and development theory, methodology and practice. Its multi- and inter-disciplinary focus aims to broadly as well as specifically target the academic needs of university students focussed on gender-related courses, modules and study programmes.

Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome

"The Vision of African Union is that of an Africa Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful, an Africa Driven by its Own Citizens, and an Africa which is a dynamic Force in the Global Arena. AU ensures a just and peaceful environment where men and women live dignified harmonious lives to benefit equally from socio-economic development."

- The African Union Gender Policy of 2009, p.6

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prologue v
Acknowledgements vi
Preface vii
The AU Gender Policy of 2009 x
Table of Contents xi
Notes on Contributors xv
Foreword xxxiv
Introduction xxxv

SECTION ONE: CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

1 Gender Identity Development and the Social Construction of Meaning in the Nigerian Cultural Context
- Titilope Fakoya and Bolatito Kolawole 1

2 Socio-Cultural Upbringing and the Internalization of Gender Norms: Implications for Personhood and Power Relations
- Hon Praise Muweseter 16

3 Why Patriarchy is Still an Issue for Nigerian Feminist Theory and Practice
- Oluwafunmilayo Josephine Para-Mallam 55

4 Language is Life: Gendered Communications and Gender Stereotyping
- Sola Adeyanju 89

5 No Woman Wrapper in a Husband's House': The Cultural Production of Hegemonic Masculinity in Nigerian Society
- Oluwafunmilayo Josephine Para-Mallam 102

SECTION TWO: GOVERNANCE, POLITICS AND LEADERSHIP

6 Sex, Gender, and Politics: Issues in Nigeria's Governance Culture
- Mojúbàolú Olufúnké Okome 135

7 Women and Political Participation in Africa: The Structural and Institutional Question
- *Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi* 176

8 Geography versus Gender: Interrogating the Political Economy of Federal Character Principle in Nigeria
- *Dung Pam Sha* 193

9 Women and Grassroots Politics: Bottom Up Approaches to Political Empowerment
- *Grace Atim* 206

SECTION THREE: LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

10 Constitutional Inclusion of Women in Governance in Nigeria
- *Otive-Igbuzor* 211

11 Strategic Litigation as a Tool for the Emancipation and Empowerment of Women in Nigeria
- *Clement J. Dakas* 239

12 International Instruments on Gender and Equal Opportunity: Issues and Prospects
- *Ruth Abiola Adimula* 255

SECTION FOUR: ECONOMIC GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

13 Gender and Development Planning and Policy: Issues for Nigeria
- *Stella O. Odebode* 275

14 Socio-economic Hindrances to Women's Empowerment in Nigeria
- *Linda Kwon-Ndung* 290

15 Human Capital Investment and Economic Growth: How Does Gender Make a Difference?
- *Oby Ezekwesili* 309

16 Gender Barriers to Financial Inclusion: Research Evidence and Implications from Southwest Nigeria
- *Rosemary O. Soetan and Dorcas Funmilola Oke* 325

17 Innovations for Gender Justice - Breaking the Mould of Multi-Dimensional Poverty
- *Amina Salihu* 350

18 Measuring Empowerment: Abstract or Concrete?
- *Ejiro Joyce Otive-Igbuzor* 365

SECTION FIVE: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: EDUCATION AND HEALTH

19 Gender Issues in Education in Nigeria
- *Theophilus Sheshi* 387

20 Gender Disparity in Education and Women's Literacy in Nigeria: From Access to Empowerment
- *Felicia Agbo* 401

21 Female Education as Key to Human Development in Nigeria: A Case Study of Female Postgraduate Students in Church History Units University of Jos
- *Pauline Lere* 417

22 Policy and Legal Frameworks for Women's Health in Nigeria
- *Rotimi Jaiyesimi* 432

23 Integrating Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in Healthcare Systems: Strengthening Health Sector Response
- *Eleanor Nwadinobi* 449

24 Sexuality, Sexual Objectification and Mental Health: Issues in Healthcare Planning and Delivery in Nigeria
- *Minnie Oseji* 463

SECTION SIX: ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

25 The Denial of Human Rights to WASH in Nigeria: A Crime Against 'Womanity'
- *Boluwaji Onabolu* 477

26 Gender Mainstreaming in Domestic Waste Management and Energy Use in Nigeria
- *Rasaq Olabomi* 514

SECTION SEVEN: CONFLICT, PEACE AND SECURITY

27 Gender in Nigeria's Peace and Security Architecture: Strategic Pathways from Margin to Mainstream
- *Chris Kwaja* 537

28 Gender Issues in Terrorism and Insurgency in Nigeria
- *Kathrine Hoomlong* 547

29 Challenges to Stakeholders in Combating Women Trafficking in Nigeria: A Study of Edo State
- Irene Agunloye 577

30 Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Nigeria
- Oluwafunmilayo Josephine Para-Mallam 598

INDEX 637

12

INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS ON GENDER AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

Ruth Abiola ADIMULA

Introduction

Gender equality is at the very heart of human rights and United Nations' values. Equality and non-discrimination are fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter adopted by world leaders in 1945. Though protecting and promoting women's human rights is the responsibility of all States, many women around the world continue to experience discrimination in many forms (UN, 2023). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) estimated that gender discrimination in social institutions results in a staggering $6 trillion loss for the global economy. Achieving gender equality benefits and leads to better decision-making regarding children, increased productivity through gender-diverse teams, and macro-economic advantages such as stronger economic growth, financial stability, more employment opportunities, and reduced income inequality. Putting an end to gender discrimination is crucial for the well-being of everyone in the society. It improves health outcomes, promotes economic growth, and fosters a more equitable and prosperous future (Shang, 2022).

In the context of international human rights law, the rule of law requires that legal processes, institutions and substantive norms are consistent with human rights, including the core principles of non-discrimination and equality under the law. The advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is thus essential for the protection of human rights and all fundamental

freedoms (UN, 2023).

Some of the issues associated with gender and equal opportunity include laws and policies that prohibit women from equal access to land, property, and housing; economic and social discrimination; gender-based violence; denial of sexual and reproductive health rights; preferential treatment in labor markets, low political participation by women, and low education, among others (UN, 2023). It is important to note that some of this discrimination has been prohibited under some international instruments (UN, 2023). For example, discrimination based on sex is prohibited under almost every human rights treaty, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which under their Common Article 3 provide for the rights to equality between men and women in the enjoyment of all rights. In addition, the CEDAW is dedicated to the realization of women's human rights. Considered the international bill of rights for women, the Convention defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

Furthermore, in 2000, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which calls for the increased participation of women and the incorporation of gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts (including the participation of women in decision-making and peace processes, gender perspectives in training and peacekeeping, and gender mainstreaming in UN reporting systems). Since then, the UN Security Council has adopted several resolutions on women, peace and security. In 2008, it adopted landmark Resolution 1820 (2008), the first devoted to addressing sexual violence in conflict situations. The subsequent follow-up resolutions, 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), have focused on preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence, and have established the United Nations architecture to this end, including the appointment of the special representative on sexual violence in conflict and the establishment of a Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN, 2023).

The combined effects of the provisions of the international instruments addressing issues on gender and equal opportunity has projected some prospects to ensure some advancement in addressing and achieving equality for men and women in socio-economic cum political matters. Therefore, the aim of this study is to discuss the gender roles of males and females and how the provisions of inter-

national instruments have attempted to pursue equal opportunity for both genders.

Conceptual Clarifications

1. Gender

According to Soken-Huberty (2023), "gender" pertains to the socially constructed attributes of women, men, girls, and boys. When society discusses "gender norms", it refers to the specific behaviours and roles typically associated with individuals based on their gender identities. Gender is a social category system based upon biological differences, specific characteristics or behaviours that are culturally linked to being male, or female (Beverly et al., 1997). It also refers to the roles, behaviours, and expectations that society assigns to individuals based on their perceived sex. It is a product of social and cultural factors rather than biological distinctions. For example, the belief that men should be property owners, primary decision-makers, and heads of household is shaped by historical and cultural influences, rather than inherent biological differences between men and women (Makama, 2013).

Gender serves as a socio-cultural manifestation, representing specific traits and societal positions associated with distinct groups based on their sex and sexuality (jhpiego.org., 2020). Gender identity is not fixed, but has to do with their relationships with others, and the intricate ways in which gender becomes ingrained in social institutions (Hunt & Schiebinger, 2021).

Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context" (UN Women, 2022). Gender and gender equality is so important to development goals and thus is woven throughout the SDGs as it sits at the intersection of economic, social and environmental issues. It has its own Goal, SDG 5—with the ambition of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (UN Women, 2022).

2. Gender Equality

UN Women defines gender equality as

> equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women (UN Women, 2022).

Women's rights are human rights. This means that advancing gender equality, ensuring equal rights, equal opportunities and non-discrimination are a moral and human rights imperative. Yet despite progress, women and girls around the world do not fully experience equal rights and their potential as economic, social and sustainable development change agents remains untapped.

3. Equal Opportunity

An opportunity refers to the possibility of achieving a goal or gaining a benefit. Specifically, it implies the absence of obstacles that hinder the attainment of certain goals or benefits. Equal opportunities exist when individuals encounter similar obstacles or obstacles of comparable difficulty in pursuing specific goals or benefits. (Goldman, 2009).

Jonsen, Tatli, Ozbilgin, and Dietz (2015), note that equal opportunity represents an ideal condition where every individual is afforded an equal chance to participate and thrive in all aspects of their professional and personal lives. While many agree that equal opportunity is an essential aspect of justice, there are opposing viewpoints challenging this principle. Those on the left argue that equal opportunity can be used to justify unjust wealth and income disparities (Mason, 2023).

4. International Instruments

According to Law Insider (2023), international instruments mean all of those texts that embody international human rights standards. Some of those texts are treaties that are legally binding on states which are parties to them. Those treaties are referred to as 'covenants' or 'conventions'. They are documents adopted by international bodies or fora in which both parties' regulators and competent authorities at a central level participate, including as observers, and which provide requirements or related procedures, recommendations or guidelines on the supply or use of a service, such as, for example, authorization, licensing, qualification or on characteristics or related production methods, presentation or use of a product (Law Insider, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted in this study was gender schema theory, propounded by psychologist Sandra Bem in 1981. The theory asserts that children learn about male and female roles from the culture in which they live. According to the theory, children adjust their behaviour to align with the gender norms of their culture from the earliest stages of social development.

Cherry (2020) explains that gender schema has an impact not only on how

people process information, but also on the attitudes and beliefs that direct "gender-appropriate" behaviour. For example, a child who lives in a very traditional culture might believe that a woman's role is in the caring and raising of children, while a man's role is in work and industry. While many of these influences are overt, others are more subtle. She says, "how men and women are meant to behave" inherently places women in a secondary position by rule. All of these influences add up to how gender schema is formed.

Thus, gender role in relation to this study is hinged on the societal beliefs that impose specific personality traits on women and men, subjecting societal expectation of women to be secondary to men. To address these traditional expectations, some international instruments have projected women to have equal opportunities with men.

Traditional Gender Roles for Women

Traditional gender roles impose specific personality traits on women associated with femininity, including passivity, humility, cooperativeness, expressiveness, kindness, vulnerability, and selflessness. Women are expected to display politeness, agreeability, and deference, especially towards men, in order to conform to the traditional feminine ideal. They are also encouraged to strive for a slim or curvaceous body, dress modestly, and wear makeup. These roles encompass expectations for women to be caregivers, homemakers, provide support to men, and pursue professions like nursing, education, caregiving, and secretarial work (Krainc, 2021).

Traditional Gender Roles for Men

Traditional masculinity is characterised by traits such as dominance, assertiveness, logic, independence, competitiveness, and strength. Men are expected to demonstrate physical prowess, athletic abilities, and control over women in accordance with the traditional masculine ideal (Krainc, 2021). They are also encouraged to meet physical standards that value strength, athleticism, specific facial hair styles, and grooming practices. Traditional gender roles for men include being breadwinners, leaders within families and society, protectors, providers for their families, and pursuing professions associated with masculinity, such as hunting, farming, construction, mechanics, welding, police work, and leadership positions (Krainc, 2021).

International Human Rights Legislation on Stereotypes and Wrongful Stereotyping

Stereotypes play a significant role in shaping gender norms and can result in

unfair and unequal treatment based on gender, known as sexism. Planned Parenthood (2023) reports that gender stereotypes can be categorized into four main areas: personality traits, domestic behaviours, occupations, and physical appearance. Personality traits are often attributed to women, such as being accommodating and emotional, while men are expected to be self-confident and aggressive. Domestic behaviours are often divided along gender lines, assuming that women will primarily handle childcare, cooking, and household chores, while men are responsible for finances, car maintenance, and home repairs. Certain occupations are stereo-typically associated with specific genders, such as the belief that teaching and nursing are predominantly female professions, while piloting, medical practice, and engineering are predominantly male (Planned Parenthood, 2023). Over the past century, progress has been made towards achieving gender equality, but gender roles persist in societies worldwide.

Statutorily, the international human rights legislation on stereotypes are basically the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

CEDAW

According to BHR-Navigator (2023), the CEDAW, often described as an international bill of rights for women, reaffirms the principle of equality between women and men. CEDAW defines what constitutes discrimination against women in various areas and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

The preamble of CEDAW acknowledges that achieving true equality requires transforming the traditional roles of both women and men in the society and within the family. It highlights the responsibility of state parties in bringing about these changes. By recognizing the need to address gender stereotypes and promote a fairer distribution of roles and responsibilities, the preamble lays the groundwork for the obligations imposed on state parties. This recognition emphasizes the crucial role of challenging and changing societal norms and expectations related to gender, as outlined in CEDAW, to advance genuine equality between women and men. Although the preamble does not refer to stereotypes explicitly, the terms 'traditional role' and 'role' can reasonably be assumed to encompass gender stereotypes, specifically sex-role stereotypes.

CEDAW includes provisions that mandate the addressing of harmful gender stereo-

types and wrongful gender stereotyping. Article 10(c) specifically focuses on eliminating stereotyped concepts of gender roles in education. It is the final provision that explicitly imposes obligations related to gender stereotypes and stereotyping. It requires state parties to undertake all appropriate measures to ensure the elimination of any stereotypical concepts regarding the roles of men and women in education at all levels and forms. This includes promoting coeducation and other educational approaches that contribute to achieving this objective, such as revising textbooks and school programs, and adapting teaching methods.

The obligations set forth in Articles 2(f) and 5 of CEDAW extend beyond gender stereotypes and stereotyping. State parties are required to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices that discriminate against women, including those based on gender stereotypes. The CEDAW Committee interprets these provisions as imposing an obligation to modify and transform gender stereotypes, while respecting freedom of expression (CEDAW Committee, 2020).

CEDAW, through its preamble and articles 2(f), 5, and 10(c), became the first international treaty to establish human rights obligations specifically addressing stereotyping and gender stereotyping. Importantly, the CEDAW Committee consistently engages in constructive dialogues with State Parties to examine the implementation of these provisions and holds them accountable for their obligations.

The Committee acknowledges implicit obligations in each of CEDAW's substantive provisions to address gender stereotypes, as well as obligations that extend to rights and freedoms recognized under other treaties or customary international law, which contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the achievement of substantive equality (United Nations, 2010).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), along with CEDAW, stands as the only international human rights treaty that explicitly addresses obligations related to stereotyping. Article 8(1)(b) of the CRPD plays a central role in defining the responsibilities of state parties regarding stereotypes and stereotyping (United Nations, 2006). It mandates that state parties promptly adopt effective and appropriate measures to combat stereotypes, including compounded stereotypes against individuals

with disabilities.

> Article 8(1)(b) of the CRPD states: "State parties undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life."

The first essential aspect of Article 8(1)(b) is the requirement for state parties to promptly adopt effective and appropriate measures to combat stereotypes. The terms 'immediate' and 'effective' indicate that the measures must be implemented without delay and have the potential to bring about tangible changes in practice. Article 8(2) offers guidance on the types of "appropriate" measures that state parties should adopt to fulfill the obligations outlined in Article 8(1) of the Convention, including Article 8(1)(b).

Aligned with the overarching focus of Article 8 on "awareness-raising", the measures specified in Article 8(2) primarily emphasize educational and training initiatives. These measures include conducting public education campaigns, fostering a culture of respect for the rights of individuals with disabilities within the education system, encouraging the media to portray individuals with disabilities in a manner consistent with the principles of the Convention, and promoting awareness-training programs.

Article 4(1)(b) of the CRPD strengthens Article 8(1)(b) by requiring state parties to take necessary measures to modify or eliminate discriminatory laws, regulations, customs, and practices against individuals with disabilities. This provision emphasizes the importance of addressing and eliminating discriminatory elements within the legal frameworks, regulations, customs, and practices of state parties.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention

ILO Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190 is the first international treaty to recognize the right of everyone to a workplace free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. The Convention, adopted in June 2019, requires state parties to put in place the necessary laws and policy measures to prevent and address violence and harassment in the world of work. The Convention represents a historic opportunity to shape a future of work based on dignity and respect for all.

Non-discrimination is included as one of the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact. Principle 6 states, "businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and

occupation." The four labor principles of the UN Global Compact are derived from the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

These fundamental principles and rights at work have been affirmed and developed in the form of specific rights and obligations in international labor conventions and recommendations and cover issues related to child labor, discrimination at work, forced labor and freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

Member states of the ILO have an obligation to promote non-discrimination, even if they have not ratified the conventions in question, as the rights and principles at work are universal and they apply to all people in all states.

Other International Instruments on Equality and Equal Opportunity

BHR-Navigator (2023) notes that the right to be free from discrimination, including on the basis of sex, is also firmly secured in other international human rights instruments, including:

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
2. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and
3. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Other relevant ILO instruments on gender equality include the following:

1. Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156)
2. Home Work Convention (No. 177)
3. Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183)
4. Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190)

Though some of these international instruments have been domesticated in Nigeria and some other countries around the world, their implementation in national laws and enforcement of such laws varies greatly. In practice, the provision of legal protection against discrimination in respect of employment and occupation is not consistent across countries (BHR-Navigator, 2023).

Issues on Gender and Equal Opportunity in Nigeria

Issues affecting gender and equal opportunity around the world including Nigeria are numerous. Some of them, including Gender-based violence; domestic violence, gender discrimination, political participation of women, cultural resistance, lack of awareness, inadequate legal framework are discussed below.

Gender-based Violence

Violence refers to the exertion of physical force with a strong likelihood of causing

harm, such as murder, injury, psychological damage, or other negative consequences. It can manifest in various forms, including physical, sexual, or psychological violence, as well as acts of deprivation or neglect. Violence is usually perpetuated against women because they are seen as the weaker sex (UN Women, 2023). Violence against women and girls is a violation of their human rights, specifically based on their gender. It encompasses immediate and long-term harm and unjust denial of freedom, whether occurring privately or publicly. The impact of such violence can be devastating and, in some cases, fatal. Examples of violence against women include rape, gang rape, sexual exploitation, and unwanted pregnancy. Others are domestic violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking, femicide, honor killings, and female genital mutilation (WHO, 2023). It should be noted that the male gender also goes through violence or abuse, but it is more common with the female gender.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence, also known as domestic abuse or intimate partner violence, involves the misuse of power to control and instill fear in an intimate partner. It encompasses physical assault, psychological abuse, social abuse, financial abuse, and sexual assault (Fawole, 2008). Economic violence is a form of domestic violence which revolves around maintaining financial control over the victim, restricting access to money and education, damaging property, and creating economic dependence. Psychological/emotional violence includes intimidation, threats, constant criticism, isolation from support systems, and manipulation of emotions to undermine the victim's self-worth (Kaur & Garg, 2008).

Physical violence entails causing physical harm or attempting to do so through actions like hitting, kicking, burning, slapping, or denying medical care. Sexual violence involves non-consensual sexual acts forced upon the victim, such as rape, sexual assault, coercion, and exploitation through pornography. Femicide refers to the intentional killing of women because of their gender, often committed by partners or family members due to ongoing abuse or power imbalances. Female genital mutilation (FGM) entails the partial or total removal of female genitalia for non-medical reasons, causing immediate and long-term health problems (Breiding et al., 2011).

Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination occurs when individuals are subjected to unequal and unjust treatment based on their gender identity. This form of discrimination manifests in various ways, sometimes

overtly and other times more subtly. The unequal treatment of individuals due to their gender has long-lasting and inter-generational consequences (Concern Worldwide, 2022). It can mean restricted access to education, a lower standing in society, less freedom to make decisions around their personal and family life, and lower wages for the jobs and work they do. Women and girls also experience rampant levels of violence and harassment (OECD, 2021). This type of discrimination can manifest in diverse ways, ranging from obvious instances to more nuanced and covert forms.

Political Participation of Women

The extensive marginalization of women in Nigerian politics can be attributed to various factors. Firstly, the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, where men hold power and dominance, has limited women's involvement in decision-making processes and political positions. Women face significant barriers to accessing political power and representation, as the prevailing social norms prioritize male leadership and authority. This gender imbalance perpetuates a system where women's voices and perspectives are under-represented in political discourse and policy-making (Oluyemi, 2016).

Secondly, women who enter politics face stigmatization, as they are unfairly perceived as compromising their values and being promiscuous. Society often imposes unrealistic expectations on women, expecting them to conform to traditional gender roles and prioritize their family responsibilities over pursuing political careers. This discourages many talented and capable women from actively engaging in politics. Limited access to education is another significant barrier to women's participation in politics. Many women in Nigeria have lower levels of educational attainment, which hampers their ability to engage effectively in politics. Without proper education and knowledge, women may lack the necessary skills, confidence, and understanding of political processes to actively participate and advocate for their rights and interests (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2022).

Cultural Resistance

One major hurdle is cultural resistance, as Nigeria's diverse cultural landscape harbors deeply ingrained norms, values, and traditions that hinder the acceptance and implementation of gender equality laws. Overcoming this challenge requires targeted interventions, such as community empowerment seminars, grassroot sensitization programs, and collaborations with cultural and religious leaders to foster understanding and acceptance of gender equality.

Lack of Awareness

Another issue is the lack of awareness particularly prevalent among individuals in rural areas and marginalized communities who may have limited knowledge of their rights and the existence of gender and equal opportunity legislation. This lack of awareness obstructs the effective implementation of these laws, as individuals may be unaware of how to exercise their rights or seek remedies when faced with discrimination. Addressing this challenge requires comprehensive awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and outreach programs to empower individuals with information about their rights and available legal protections.

Inadequate Legal Framework

Furthermore, legal frameworks, both implicit and explicit, pose significant obstacles to the effective implementation of gender and equal opportunity legislation. These may exist within the legal system, law enforcement agencies, and other institutions responsible for upholding these laws. Such laws can manifest as discriminatory attitudes, prejudices, or preconceived notions that undermine the fair and just application of the legislation.

Many times, where legal frameworks exist, the primary challenge continues to be in the implementation of the mandates agreed to, despite the templates, support, and guidance being offered and provided.

Government Efforts in Nigeria

Nigeria has made strides in legislation and policy frameworks. The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act was enacted in 2015, providing legal protection for victims of violence, including women and girls. However, implementation and enforcement of these laws remain a challenge, requiring greater commitment from the government, increased public awareness, and access to support services for survivors.

At the legislative level, among the proposed bills before the national assembly, one sought to enforce affirmative action by ensuring a minimum of 35% representation of women in political party administration and appointive positions. Regrettably, this bill was rejected, highlighting the challenges in achieving gender parity within political organizations. However, a related bill that required a minimum of 20% women as ministerial or commissioner nominees did manage to secure passage, presenting a step forward in promoting women's representation in government positions (Okafor &Ileyemi, 2023).

There was another bill specifically addressing indigeneship rights. This bill aimed to enable a woman to gain indigene

status in her husband's state after five years of marriage. Its purpose was to rectify the limitations faced by women regarding elective or appointive positions due to their marriage to individuals from different states. The fate of this bill remains uncertain as its progression through the legislative process is still ongoing.

According to Okafor & Ileyemi (2023), until 2004, Nigeria had laws that imposed restrictions on women police officers. The Police Act of 2004 required women to seek permission to marry and prohibited them from getting married within three years of their employment. However, the court nullified Section 124 of the Act.

Prospects for Gender and Equal Opportunity

1. Creation of Relevant Laws that Address Gender Inequality

Laws provide a crucial framework to safeguard the rights of individuals and promote gender equality. This legal protection sets the stage for creating a more equitable society. Moreover, legislation can contribute to cultural and attitudinal shifts in Nigeria. By challenging traditional gender norms and practices, laws create an environment that fosters greater gender equality. They encourage individuals and organizations to adopt more inclusive practices and question outdated beliefs about gender roles. Over time, this cultural shift can lead to a more equitable society where women and girls are treated with respect and have equal opportunities.

2. Empowerment of Marginalised Gender Groups

Legislation can also empower marginalized groups, particularly women, by providing them with access to education, employment, and leadership opportunities. When women are given equal opportunities, they can actively participate in economic and political spheres, contributing to overall social development. By empowering women and increasing their participation, they can tap into their full potential and benefit from their expertise, skills, and unique perspectives.

3. Alignment with International Treaties

Nigeria's commitment to promoting gender equality through legislation aligns with its international obligations. Many countries have ratified international conventions and agreements that prioritize gender equality and equal opportunity. By enacting and enforcing gender-based legislation, Nigeria demonstrates its dedication to upholding human rights and fulfilling its international commitments. This can enhance Nigeria's standing in the

global community and contribute to its reputation as a country that values and protects the rights of its citizens.

4. Sensitisation, Awareness and Training

Another prospect is sensitization programs, training on gender-sensitive practices, and the promotion of diversity and inclusion within key institutions and penalties when cases of discrimination come up.

Conclusion

In conclusion, gender equality and equal opportunity are core principles that seek to establish fairness and justice for individuals, regardless of their gender. Achieving gender equality involves challenging societal norms, stereotypes, and biases that perpetuate discrimination, recognizing the equal participation and success of both women and men in all areas of life. This encompasses education, employment, leadership, and decision-making, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. However, there are prospects for progress through interventions like community seminars, awareness campaigns, and collaborations. Strengthening institutional capacities, promoting diversity and inclusion, and sustained efforts from stakeholders are crucial. Nigeria can strive towards a more equitable society by addressing these issues and ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of laws centred on gender equality.

Recommendations

1. Legal Protection to Address and Prevent Violence

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that efforts to address and prevent violence against women and girls should focus on raising awareness, promoting education, advocating for legal protections, and supporting survivors. It is crucial to challenge societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination as these are underlying causes of violence. By addressing the root causes and providing support systems for survivors, progress can be made towards eliminating violence and ensuring the safety and well-being of women and girls worldwide.

2. Equal Access to Quality Education

Also, closing the gender gap in education and ensuring equal access to quality education for girls and women is essential for empowering them to engage meaningfully in political activities and decision-making processes (Nkereuwem, 2023). The CEDAW Committee has provided recommendations to state parties to overcome gender stereotypes as barriers to girls' and women's education, including gender training for teachers, revising education materials, and promoting non-

traditional fields of study and employment for girls.

3. Intervention by Civil Society Organisations

The role of civil society includes oversight on governance and implementation, transparency and holding governments accountable. Civil society organizations are non-state, not-for-profit, voluntary entities formed by people representing a wide range of interests. With necessary collaboration and intervention, they are a powerful force that should be leveraged effectively to ensure relevant contributions are made toward the development of women and girls – and make spaces in areas where the space seems to be closed.

4. Collaboration and Good Practice

Collaboration requires humility. Each party must know their strengths, share those strengths with others and support those who exhibit the skill/expertise that others do not have. There are several examples of civil society organizations coming together to effect legislative change in Nigeria, e.g., VAPP 2015. The back stories are very interesting but it was true collaboration with lots of ebbs and flows that led to the eventual success.

5. Post-CEDAW Review Recommendations

Post-CEDAW review recommendations in the concluding observations provide a working environment for civil society and state to work together to develop comprehensive plans to address issues highlighted in a sustainable manner, like immigrant integration – bridging communities through engagement and dialogue; disaster preparedness and climate action, and review of the regional gender agenda, among others.

6. Funding Opportunity

There is a need to designate resources for civil society integration – conferences/ educational opportunities, laws and activities geared towards gender equality and equal opportunities by the UN and all tiers of government.

7. Technology and Communication

Leveraging on techniques and technologies that make the most sense, have the farthest reach can also help, including the electronic and print media for massive dissemination of information.

...international instruments ...

...Democracy and Gender ... in Nigeria: The way forward ... Journal June 2013 ... http:// ... /pdf/13(6).pdf

... (2023, May 18). Equal opportunity ... Definition, Examples. https://www. ... /equal-opportunity

... (2023). Why women haven't ... in Nigerian elections. ... https:// ... /2023/06/09/why-women-haven-t-been-successful-in-nigerian-elections-pub-89707/Why Women Haven't Been Successful in Nigerian Elections

... (2021). Gender discrimination in ... terms, measuring the invisible. https://www.oecd.org/stories/gender/social-norms-and-gender-discrimination/

... C., Sileyeanu, M. (2023). IWD 2023: Nigeria failing in women's political participation. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/gender/587049-iwd-2023-nigeria-failing-in-womens-political-participation.html

... O. (2016). Monitoring participation of women in politics in Nigeria. Paper Presentation National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Abuja, Nigeria. (unreported). ... /unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/FiniandOct2016/Documents/Nigeria_paper.pdf

... Parenthood.org. (2023). What are gender roles and stereotypes? Planned Parenthood Federation of America Inc. ... /www.plannedparenthood.org/...

... /gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/what-are-gender-roles-and-stereotypes

Shang, B. (2022). Tackling inequality definitions, trends and policy designs. https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/001/2022/232/article-A001-en.xml

Seken-Huberty, B. (2023). What is Gender Discrimination? Human Rights Career. https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/what-is-gender-discrimination/

United Nations, (2010). Concluding Observations. CEDAW/C/BFA/CO/6. Office of the High Commissioner. https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cedawcbfaco6-

United Nations, (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Adopted on 12 December, 2006 by Sixty-first session of the General Assembly by resolution A/RES/61/106. https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities

UN.org, (2023). Gender and Equality: The unfinished business of our time. In United Nations- Peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet. https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/-equality

UN.org., (2023). Human Rights and Gender https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/thematic-areas/human-rights-and-gender/

UN Women. (2022). Gender and sustainable development goals. https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/09/explainer-sustainable-development-goal-five?gclid=CjwKCAiw5rem...

zqhoCAaMQAvD_BwE

UN Women, (2023). Ending violence against women. https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women

WHO, (2023). Female Genital Mutilation. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation