

Women and Socio-Economic Growth in Nigeria: A Development Strategy

Kingdom Sunday Mboho

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus
kmboho360@gmail.com
08024144507

Abstract

The contribution of women to the socio-economic growth of developing nations has received little attention in the existing literature in terms of their roles in the process, and Nigeria is not an exception. This paper is an attempt to fill this gap, bearing in mind, the fact that the agricultural sector employs 60-70% in most of African countries, (the dominant activity in rural Nigeria where women's contribution is higher), and the overall contributions of women to the growth of the Nigerian economy. The study adopted participatory development as its theoretical framework. It also adopted the survey research design with the use of random sampling technique to select respondents. Primary and secondary data were used in the study. combined with in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and supplemented with observations. Chi-square was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that 1% increase in women's contribution raised the level of GDP by 58.4%; that income generating activities of women to include agricultural produce, marketing of farm produce, crafts making and food processing; and that despite all the efforts women put in development, their capacities are not optimally utilized due to socio-cultural and political hindrances such as access to land, loans, education. Other hindrances are gender issues which lead to marginalization and non-inclusion of women in the nation's decision-making positions. The paper therefore recommended women empowerment, policy initiatives to upgrade their roles which is one of the important objectives of the global development strategy, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), where Sub-Saharan Africa plays a 'latecomer role' in its realization. It was also recommended that government and non-governmental agencies should integrate more women into top policy making positions for their optimum capacities to be utilized.

Keywords: Women, Socio-economic growth, Empowerment, Development; and Agriculture.

Introduction

Organizing Nigerian women for socio-economic growth and self-reliance is a major thrust in planning process aimed at enhancing women's participation in socio-economic growth activities. Nigerian women, particularly rural women's primary contributions to their households' food production and in universal economies cannot be overemphasized. Their contributions to socio-economic growth are progressively being more recognized within the country and Africa. For a where cognizance is given to the dilemma of third world women and of course Nigerian women are the 1995 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for Advancement of Women held in Kenya, the 1995 Beijing Declaration, the 2000 Millennium Declaration of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNDFM), the Food and Agricultural Organization

(FAO) and Gender and Development Plan of action 2007, among others. These bodies have articulated laws that offer enabling milieu for women integration into national economic mainstream. They have also approved full action plans to advance the conditions and rights of women in their communities, in order to promote women's socio-economic reliance. These plans include: creation of employment, access to resources and credit, eradication of poverty and hunger, combating malnutrition/poor health and illiteracy of women as well as to ensure the inclusion of women in all efforts at ensuring sustainable development (Chen et al: 2015). Karl (1995) stressed that the goals of socio-economic growth cannot be attained without women's full participation in growth process and also in shaping its goals. Women themselves have improved their own recognition over the years through vigorous and conscious efforts in organizing and articulating their concerns and in making their voices heard through prominent groups such as Women Non-Governmental Organizations (WNGOs) with the hope of empowering themselves.

The WNGOs have women and the girl-child as their main targets with the aim of emancipating the female gender, attempting to improve their standards of living and fighting against gender inequality (Akpabio, 2017). International Agencies and National Government Laws provide opportunities for women's inclusion into the nation's economic mainstream coupled with women's own efforts for self-reliance; nonetheless, these are yet to translate into significant socio-economic advancements for rural women. Also the enthusiasm exhibited by women in economic, cultural and social lives of their communities through organizations and informal networks has not been channeled into creative models of participation and leadership. Socio-economic growth is not an isolated activity. It is a process by which people are motivated to explore opportunities within their reach (Olopodenia, 2014 & Pradip, 2010). Socio-economic growth therefore starts with people and progresses through their activities (Seer, 2016 & Gwanye, 2009). Majority of the population in the less Developed Countries (LDCS), live in rural areas with approximately 70 per cent being women (Kongolo & Bamgose, 2012). In Africa, rural women contribute almost 80% to the production of food consumed in most rural areas, yet they are marginalized in terms of their needs to progress and are not often featured in socio-economic growth initiatives (Kongolo & Bamgose, 2012).

In Nigeria, women are generally the most neglected and they have consistently lost out in the course of socio-economic growth. This situation is worse for the rural women. Based on this situation, the Lagos Plan of Action for economic development of Africa, in line with the UN charter advocates the needs, rights and concerns of all women to be fully incorporated into individual country's development planning to benefit all sectors of the population. This does not seem to be feasible in the rural areas of Nigeria. This is why focusing on Nigerian women for socio-economic growth is apt in this study. Nigerian women do not only care for their families, also, they are responsible for marketing the excess farm produce from their husbands' farms and are involved in other petty trades which enhance the economic base of the family, yet they are oftentimes not included in socio-economic activities. The problem of this paper is thus situated on the seeming reluctance on the part of government and the society in organizing Nigerian women to achieve socio-economic growth.

The Concept of Growth

There is no acceptable definition of the term, Growth. In simply terms, growth refers to the benefits from socio-economic growth. Socio-economic growth is associated with

decrease or eradication of poverty, inequality and joblessness in the context of an emergent economy. Growth could further be said to involve a deep transformation of the entire economic and social structure of a community, increase production, accomplishment and enhanced growth which may consequently promote economic growth, particularly, if it improves infrastructure (Onokerhoraye, 2014; Jacobs, Garry & Asokan, 2010; Riggs, 2010). In other words, socio-economic growth includes other important and related attributes notably equal opportunities, political freedom and civil liberties. The overall goal of growth is to increase the economic, political, social and civil rights of all people across gender, ethnic groups, religion, races and countries. Hence, Ojo, (2013) summated development as the welfare and quality of life of the populace. Socio-economic growth is a multidimensional process involving the re-orientation of the whole economic and social systems. It not only includes improvements in incomes and outputs, it naturally involves extensive changes in institutional, social and administrative structures, as well as in accepted attitudes, mores and beliefs of the people (Tadora, 1992). It is also acknowledged that at the level of individuals, growth implies increased skills and capability, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and comfort (Rodney, 2014). The achievement of any of the above attributes of personal development is greatly associated with the state of the society as a whole. In like manner, Obasanjo and Mabogunje, (2016) explained that growth is a process that deals with a people's capacity in a defined area over a defined period to manage and induce positive changes. Nwachukwu, (2016) outlined Mustafa's meaning and concept of growth to include, among others the following:

- Self-reliant development within natural resources constraints
- Cost effective development using different economic criteria to the traditional approach, that is to say, development should not degrade environmental quality nor should it reduce productivity in the long run.
- Health control, appropriate technologies, food, self-reliance, clean water and shelter for all.
- People centeredness or human beings being the resources in the concept of development.

Corroborating the above, the Human Development Report (2005) asserted that human development is about freedom and building of human capacity. This includes the range of things that people can do and what they can be. In other words, individual freedom and rights are central to development. This is because people are restricted in what they can do with their freedom if they are poor, ill and illiterate, discriminated against, threatened by violent conflict or denied a political voice. Hence United Nations (UN) advocates a "larger freedom" which is human development. This is why progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) offers a proof for progress in human development. MGDs also posit that the most essential potentials for human development include: leading a long and healthy life, being educated and possessing adequate resources for a decent standard of living and having access to social and political participation. From the above discussion, development is only relevant to the extent that it brings about positive transformation that enhances the well-being of citizens, as human beings are the primary beneficiary of development.

Roles of Women in Socio-Economic Growth of Nigeria

In Nigeria, Africa's largest and most populous country, more women are engaging in work than ever before. By 2011, more than half (57%) of women 15-64 years old were in some form of employment. The increase in women working has been driven by women

with the least amount of schooling finding work – these are the women who are more likely to be out of work than those who have had access to more schooling. This is good news. Jobs for women can be very good “jobs for development” (in the language of the World Bank World Development Report on Jobs) in that they can increase growth now and for the future, give women more control over their lives and those of their children, and foster investment in skills and health of children. Jobs define much of who we are and how we live and when Nigerian women engage in work, they are likely to develop a stronger say in their own destiny. Promoting women's access to gainful employment can unleash a strong force for innovation, productivity and economic growth. With income opportunities also comes more control over household resources and there is evidence that women are more likely than men to invest resources in children's health and education. This is good for long-term economic growth as well. All of these changes are needed as Nigeria tries to move towards more diversified and inclusive economic growth.

Nigeria nonetheless has a long way to go to reap the benefits of a larger female work force. For one, as our new report, *More and More Productive Jobs for Nigeria* shows, women's transition into productive work is still slow in Nigeria. They have less access to both school and jobs; a girl child is less likely to be in school than boys are and women are still much less likely than men to be working. In fact, in 2011, 17 million adult women were neither working nor studying and women with low levels of education dominate this group. Moreover, when women do work, they are more likely than men to be in occupations and sectors that pay much less and have lower productivity levels, typically in farming or self-employed or unpaid family workers in non-farm household enterprises. Unlike men, their chances of entering wage work - a job with a salary and an employer which tends to offer the best working conditions in terms of both remuneration and security- does not increase with age. Even when they hold similar levels of education and experience, a Nigerian woman earns less on the job than a man.

What can be done to increase women's access to more productive jobs in Nigeria? Education and skills matter but are far from the whole story. While girls still have less access to school than boys, gaps have been shrinking in recent years. It may not be lack of education that creates a gender gap in employment opportunities, at least not now. In recent years, even women with secondary education or more entered the farming sector, rather than wage work. All over the world, women juggle work and family and Nigeria is no exception. Early marriage and family formation plays a critical role in women's access to jobs. And it is a very significant issue for young women from poorer households than others. Although girls are more likely to leave school earlier than boys, they do not then get jobs. Instead, young women are much more likely to marry earlier than men are. At age 20, less than 4% of men are married, compared to about 50% of women in rural areas. Among the poorer families, marriage before age 15 is infrequent, although 18 years is the legal minimum age of marriage. With early marriage comes early pregnancies and household responsibilities that effectively remove women from labour market opportunities. Thus, early family formation is associated with both early exit from school and fragmented work opportunities and experience for women. It is also reflected in continued high levels of fertility – Nigeria has a high fertility rate of 5.5 children per women – and rapid population growth.

Other cultural elements also impact women's opportunities and either limit access directly or inadvertently. Some regulations that are intended to protect women such as

limits on sectors and hours of work, may thus play against women in the work place. Women are also less likely than men to have access to land – land rights are not granted statutory protection under land laws and customary land is exempt from succession which limits their investment and expansion in farming or in non-farm activities where land can be used as collateral for credit.

Nigerian Women in Agriculture

Most farmers in Nigeria operate at the subsistence, smallholder level in an extensive agricultural system hence, in their hands lie the country's food security and agricultural development. Particularly striking however, is the fact that rural women, more than their male counterparts, take the lead in agricultural activities, making up to 60-80 percent of labour force. It is ironical that their contributions to agriculture and rural development are seldom noticed. Furthermore, they have either no or minimal part in the decision-making process regarding agricultural development. Gender inequality is therefore dominant in the sector and this constitutes a bottleneck to development, calling for a review of government policies on agriculture to all the elements that place rural women farmers at a disadvantage. The women-in-agriculture programme in Nigeria, which was established in cognizance of this and the shortcoming in extension services for women has been a huge success. Women's groups, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and civil societies have empowered and given rural women farmers a voice and effectively championed their cause. Women farmers now have better access to farm inputs and credits although many barriers remain and would have to be addressed to further enhance their role. Rural women farmers deserve better recognition and greater appreciation of their tangible contributions to agriculture and rural development and food security.

Nigerian Women and Socio-Economic Growth

The most significant evidence on the importance of women to socio-economic growth comes from a research by the World Bank's 'Gender Mainstreaming Strategy' launched in 2001 (Dollar & Gatti, 2010; Klasen, 2009). The research highlighted that societies that discriminated by gender tend to experience less rapid socio-economic growth and poverty reduction than societies that treat males and females more equally; and that social gender disparities produce economically inefficient outcomes. For example, it is shown that if African countries had closed the gender gap in schooling between 1960 and 1992 as quickly as East Asia did, this would have produced close to a doubling of per capita income growth in the region. The primary pathways through which gender systems affect growth are influencing the productivity of labour and the allocative efficiency of the economy (World Bank, 2015). In terms of productivity, for example, if the access of women farmers to productive inputs and human capital were on a par with men's access, total agricultural output could increase by an estimated 6 to 20 percent. In terms of allocative efficiency, while increases in household income are generally associated with reduced child mortality risks, the marginal impact is almost 20 times as large if the income is in the hands of the mother rather than the father. Identification of women as constituting a reliable, productive and cheap labour force makes them the preferred workforce for textiles and electronic transnational corporations. Perception of women as 'good with money,' including being better at paying back loans, has led them to be targeted with resources aimed at alleviating poverty, such as cash transfer programmes. The above shows how the justification for

including women in development in economic growth has been an efficiency argument, with equity concerns being somewhat secondary. Critics suggest this instrumentalist approach to engendering development, while bringing economic growth gains, will not fundamentally change the position and situation of women. It is important to note that while gender equality will help bring economic growth, economic growth will not necessarily bring gender equality. Advancing gender equality requires strengthening different dimensions of women's autonomy: economic and political autonomy, full citizenship and freedom from all forms of violence, and sexual and reproductive autonomy (Alpizar Dura, 2010).

Women Empowerment as an Effective Strategy for Enhancing Economic Development

One of the ways to enhance economic development in our country is to empower women. The neglect and discrimination of women in this area has enormously contributed to the poor economic development of the nation. In the past, women were not given right to some economic pursuits and this day, greater numbers of them are still being denied this right. Enemu, (2011) was of the view that empowerment entails the improvement of women in their political, economic and social conditions. It therefore involves the transformation of patriarchal society through a process of enlightenment, sensitization, and collective organization and therefore necessitates collective action by women to discard patriarchal beliefs and attitudes. On the same line of thought, Okpoko (2010) also opined that "empowerment implies that the person or group of persons being empowered have hitherto lacked power of authority by circumstances either by denial or fault". Therefore, empowerment leads to the involvement of community members in identifying issues and needs in the community.

The base of all economic development is investment. Current realities and future challenges of economic development give rise to three foundational principles on which economic development investments should be based. They are: exports, productivity and sustainability. Exports have motivated much of economic development activity in the economy of the nation in the past, but the shift from the manufacturing service based economy and increasing global competition has emphasized the importance of productivity. A growing awareness of the need for human development and the scarcity of natural resources also highlighted the need for a sustainable approach. Exports, productivity and sustainability are the three principles of economic development. With too much or too little investment in any one of the three, the structure becomes unstable.

The Global Role of Women Caretakers and Educators

Throughout history, the central role of women in society has ensured the stability, progress and long-term development of nations. Globally, women comprise 43 percent of the world's agricultural labor force - rising to 70 percent in some countries. For instance, across Africa, 80 percent of the agricultural production comes from small farmers, most of whom are rural women. It's widely accepted that agriculture can be the engine of growth and poverty reduction in developing nations. Women, notably mothers, play the largest role in decision-making about family meal planning and diet. Women self-report more often their initiative in preserving child health and nutrition.

The Role of Women as Caretakers

Women are the primary caretakers of children and elders in every country of the world. International studies demonstrate that when the economy and political organization of a society change, women take the lead in helping the family adjust to new realities and challenges. They are likely to be the prime initiator of outside assistance, and play an important role in facilitating (or hindering) changes in family life. Rural women play a key role in supporting their households and communities in achieving food and nutrition security, generating income, and improving rural livelihoods and overall well-being.

The Role of Women as Educators

The contribution of women to a society's transition from pre-literate to literate likewise is undeniable. Basic education is key to a nation's ability to develop and achieve sustainability targets. Research has shown that education can improve agricultural productivity, enhance the status of girls and women, reduce population growth rates, enhance environmental protection, and widely raise the standard of living. It is the mother in the family who most often urges children of both genders to attend - and stay - in school. The role of women is at the front end of the chain of improvements leading to the family's or the community's long-term capacity.

Theoretical Review: One theory was considered appropriate for this study and that is, The Participatory Development Theory

Participatory Development Approach is popularly referred to as "Popular Participation", "Participatory Rapid Appraisal", "Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and "Participatory Action Research (PAR)". The participatory development approach originated in the 1970's in Chang Mai and Kohn Kean Universities in Thailand. It emerged as an alternative to the conventional top-down approach to development. Participatory development theory had increased in popularity since the 1970s, when it grew out of the concern for meeting basic needs and reaching the poorest of the poor (Michener,1992).

Theis & Grady (1991) observed that participatory action research emerged as a result of the failure of the old development approaches built on the trickle down principle. With the unrealistic nature of transfer of technology, researchers and development experts began to appreciate the complex relationship between the environment, economy, culture and politics in societies.

According to Rahman (1981), the basic ideology of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) is that a self-conscious people, those who are currently poor and oppressed will progressively transform their environment by their own proxies. The role of others such as facilitators from the government or NGO's or other professionals, is to act as catalyst and play a supporting role, but will not dominate". PAR seeks to eliminate previous efforts at development of the people which was characterized by dominant/dominated relationship, irrespective of whoever sponsored the development effort. It places emphasis on the people's initiative to seek to improve their own conditions, in the generation of

indigenous knowledge to complement professional knowledge, which takes off from their traditional culture and seeks to preserve the physical environment with which they have an organic association" (Rahman, 1981).

PAR's major objective is to empower the poor to be self-reliant and free. The elements of empowerment according to Rahman are 'autonomous, democratic people's organization, and the restoration of the status and promotion of popular knowledge". In its simple form, participatory development is one, which carries the people along at every stage of the development process. According to Nyoni (1981), participatory development is a sine qua non of the success of PARs activities. He stated thus, "the very notion of participatory implies that nothing should be hidden from the people". They are involved in the identification and prioritization of activities to be undertaken, decision-making and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The Overseas Development Administration (ODA) sees the approach as promoting greater efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. According to ODA, (1995), project/programmes under stakeholder participation are:

- i) More efficient because, by involving all integrated parties, a wider knowledge pool that supports better designs and implementation is available; also, finance and costs can be shared.
- ii) More effective because stakeholders' varied interest can be identified and addressed in the designs; while shared ownership of project implies that there is a greater chance of achieving the intended outcome.
- iii) More sustainable because people are encouraged to use their knowledge and take initiatives. Also, they gain skills and confidence to maintain the benefit of the project/programme.

Participatory Development Approach takes off with a process known as problem posing (Modo, 1994). It enables professionals, consultants and government officials to learn from and with people, directly and face to face and also enhances their understanding of the perception, priorities and needs of the people for whom development is planned. Participatory development approach is important because of its potentials for the conscientization and empowerment of the people for whom development is planned.

The nature of this research demands that emphasis be placed on a theory which is capable of pointing a new way forward for the possible success of development policies in Akwa Ibom State. This makes the participatory development theory very valuable. It is a theoretical orientation of choice because it ramifies the possibility of combating poverty through socio-economic approach and institutional efficacy. In the 1970s, the participatory development theory was a new optimism that: the pursuit of growth with equity or a strategy of targeting basic human needs would succeed where economic growth failed (Wilber & Jameson, 1992). This theoretical approach is relevant within the context of this study because through collective learning and mobilization, it will empower the people to identify their own problem, needs and opportunities; provide practical research based on information that will help them to solve the problem and assist them to take advantage of the opportunities to improve their lot.

The adoption of this approach for this study is based on two (2) reasons:

- i) It will strengthen the women association and organization to negotiate with

- institutions and agencies concerned with development;
- ii) It enhances the chance of making development objectives and outputs relevant to the perceived needs of the people.

Evidence from several other counties gives credence and support to the application of this model to the development needs of people. Although participatory development theory of poverty reduction has been criticized by some theorists (Iniodn,1997; Modo, 1994 & Ekong, 2008) it remains the theory of choice since it focuses and gears toward the improvement in the standard of living of the people. It is also important because of its potentials for the conscientization and empowerment of the people to know their problems, needs and opportunities; and also helps them to solve their problems.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design with the use of random sampling technique. This is the method of selecting a sample in such a way that members of the population have equal opportunity or chance of being selected where the selection of one subject and the non-selection of another subject have no influence on each other (Adefila, 2008). It was conducted in the three (3) senatorial districts of the state using a sample of three hundred and fifty (350) respondents, randomly selected from three (3) Local Government Areas in each of the Senatorial Districts. A total of nine (9) Local Government Areas and thirty-six (36) villages were used as sample areas of the study. Data were elicited using a structured interview, and structured questionnaire schedule complemented with the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The research instruments were subjected to reliability and validity test. The analysis of the data was done using descriptive statistics (simple percentages (%)) to analyze socio-demographic data of respondents, and inferential statistics (chi-square techniques(χ^2)) was used in testing the research hypotheses.

Research Hypotheses I

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the roles of women and Socio-Economic Growth.

Table I. Computed χ^2 for Hypothesis I

CELL	FO	FE	FO-FE	(FO-FE) ²	$\frac{(FO-FE)^2}{FE}$
A	77	76.56	0.44	0.19	0.00
B	55	66.17	11.17	124.77	7.87
C	26	18.59	7.41	54.90	2.95
D	10	8.75	1.25	1.56	0.17
E	7	4.9	2.1	4.41	0.9
F	63	63.43	0.43	0.18	0.00
G	66	54.82	11.18	124.99	2.28
H	8	15.40	7.4	54.76	3.55
I	6	7.25	1.25	1.56	0.21
J	2	4.07	2.67	7.12	1.74

$\chi^2=13.67$

CHI – Square (x^2) calculated valve = 13. 67
 D/F = Degree of Freedom
 $D/F = (R-1) (C-1)$
 $= (5-1) (2-1)$
 $4 \times 1 \quad D/F=4.$

Level of significance = 0. 05
 Critical table value = 9. 49
 While the x^2 calculated value = 13. 67

Decision Rule

Since the x^2 table value of 9. 49 is lower than the calculated x^2 value of 13.67 at 0. 05 level of significance, we accept (Hi) and reject (Ho). This means that there is a significant relationship between the roles of women and socio-economic growth in the country.

Research Hypothesis II

Ho: There is no significant relationship between lack of financial empowerment and women participation in programmes that lead to National Development.

Tables 2 Computed X^2 for Hypothesis II

CELL	FO	FE	FO-FE	(FO-FE) ²	$\frac{(FO-FE)^2}{FE}$
A	80	70. 78	9. 22	85. 00	1. 20
B	40	56. 15	16. 15	260. 82	4. 64
C	11	9. 90	1. 1	1. 21	0. 12
D	15	7. 07	7. 93	62. 88	8. 89
E	5	4. 71	0. 29	0. 08	0. 01
F	70	79. 21	4. 21	84. 82	1. 07
G	79	62. 84	16. 16	261. 14	4. 14
H	10	11. 09	1. 09	1. 18	0. 07
I	5	7. 92	2. 92	8. 52	1. 07
J	5	5. 28	0. 28	0. 07	0. 01

$\Sigma x^2 = 21.25$

CHI – Square (x^2) calculated value = 21. 25
 D/F = Degree of Freedom
 $D/F = (R-1) (C-1)$
 $= (5-1) (2-1)$
 $= 4 \times 1$
 D/F = 4

The level of significance = 05
 The critical x^2 table value = 9.49

Decision Rule

Since the calculated x^2 value of 21. 25 is greater than the critical (x^2) value of 9. 49 at 0. 05 level of significance, we accept (Hi) and reject (Ho), meaning, there is a significant relationship between lack of financial empowerment and women participation in the programmes that lead to National Development.

Discussion of Findings

The primary aim of this work was to assess women's roles and socio-economic growth as a development strategy in Nigeria. Also to empirically examine the significance of infrastructural facilities in enhancing the growth and development of women as well as the factors influencing their effectiveness in relations to the socio-economic development of Akwa Ibom State.

From the analysis of hypothesis I, the result shows that “there is a significant relationship between the roles of women and socio-economic growth. This is in consonant with the view of (Neankwo, 2013) who posited that women's roles act as catalyst that accelerate the face of structural transformation and diversification of economy, enabling a country to fully utilize its natural endowment and to depend less on foreign supply of finished goods or raw materials for its economic growth, development and sustainability.

Research hypothesis II shows that “there is a significant relationship between financial empowerment and women participation in programmes that lead to National Development. This is in agreement with the view of Terzungwe (2013), who asserted that lack of government encouragement in entrepreneurial skills and programmes have contributed to women unemployment in Nigeria. Adebayo & Ogunrlnila (2006) stated that there is need for such programmes which can generate employment for women to enhance growth and development. This is because the establishment of these programmes and policies by the government helps in curbing unemployment problem in Nigeria as well as empower the people with practical skills that could enhance self-employment.

Conclusion

There is overwhelming evidence from what has been discussed in this study that women are a formidable productive force and a store of incredibly human resources which are required for national development. Their contributions cannot be discountenanced in household and national economics; the current role of women in national development is remarkable towards peace and direction of the economy and society. In order to identify and tap their resources so as to ensure optimal performance in national development, efforts should be made for holistic development of women along the following lines:

- a. Encouragement of the formation of more women agricultural and business cooperatives. This will lead to the encouragement of social network activities.
- b. Professional bodies should be encouraged to carry out enlightenment campaigns in secondary schools to emphasize the involvement of girls in choice of subjects.
- c. Education of the womenfolk especially the rural women, provision of basic education to the women, especially junior staff in government employ who should also be granted opportunities for in-service training. This will provide a multiplier effect to the education of youths in the state.
- d. Political parties should pursue vigorous enlightenment campaigns on the involvement of women in politics and bring out modalities for mainstreaming them for elective positions.
- e. The Nigeria nation owes the womenfolk the responsibility of removing those artificial and institutional barriers bearing on religion, culture or traditional consideration which have incapacitated the ability of Nigerian women to participate effectively and freely in national affairs particularly at the political and economic levels.

Recommendations

- (1) Traditional factors threaten development in the education and training of women and the girl child. In order to avoid gender discrimination of low enrolment of women or the girl-child, training programmes are needed to develop their technical competence. This will enable them to be better informed, better gain access to the political and economic structure and help them gain maximum competence and means of livelihood.
- (2) Since women represent about fifty per cent of the nation's population, there is need to have adequate representation of women in high decision making positions in government. This will also be in keeping with the Beijing Declaration recommendation of 30%.
- (3) There should be concerted efforts on the part of government in conjunction with the NGOs and development agencies to remove or curtail socio-economic and cultural constraints on women in accessing land, loans, and other inputs. Government must ensure that stringent measures in accessing these facilities are minimized through special Women's Banks.
- (4) National Action Plan in line with the Beijing platform for Action should be considered in broad consultation with women organisations, in order to complement local initiatives. This also should be adequately financed.
- (5) Women organisations in the communities and trade places should be acknowledged by governments and NGOs for meaningful change to occur in the lives of women and the society at large. These women organisations should be used as avenues to increase women participation and decision-making in the community.
- (6) Basic infrastructures and support services such as roads, electricity, good drinking water, health and day care centres as well as transportation must adequately be provided.

References

- Adebowle, B. A. (2014). Women Involvement in Hand-made Pottery and Marketing Concept Strategies. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, vol. 5, No. 6.
- Adefarison, H. (2010). Mobilizing Nigerian Women for Participation in National Development in Report of the National Seminar on Social Development Policy of Nigeria, Bauchi, 2. p. 14-25.
- Adekanye, T. O. (2014). Women in African Agriculture. *Journal of the Institute of African Studies* 3, 1-5.
- Adeniji, A. (2011). *The African Alternative: Putting the People First*. Arusha (CEA).
- Adisa B. O. (2013). Cited in Adams (1995). 'An Assessment of Participation of Rural in Community Based Development Activities (CBDs) in Osun State, Nigeria'. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol. 15. No. 7.
- Akpabio, I. A. (2017). Women NGOs and the Socio-economic status of Rural Women in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agriculture and Social Science*, No. 1813-2235-1-1-6(<http://www.fsnpublisher.org>).
- Alele-Williams, G. (2008). Research Priorities for Sustainable Women Empowerment and Development: An Overview", P. Adeniji (ed.) *Research on Capacity Building for Sustainable Development in Nigeria*.
- Alemayehu, B. (2014). The Impact of Education on Rural Women's Participation in Politics and Economic Activities. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*. Vol. 6 (2). p. 23-31.
- Alpizar in Zuala, C.C. (2010). Perceived Influence of Literacy Education Program on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Southern Nigeria, Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Department of Education Foundations: Enugu State University of Science and Technology.
- Bhasin, K. (2017). *Towards Empowerment Rome: Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations*. UN Pub.
- Carlisle & Eagle (Imogie A. O. 2009). Overcoming Hurdles of Stereotypes about Sex and Leadership. *Benin Journal of Gender Studies*. Benin Nigeria. Vol. I. No. 2., p. 195.
- Chen. M.C., Vanek, F.W. & Heintz. J. (2015). *Progress of the World's women work and Poverty*, (New York: Unifem, pp.75-83).
- Dollor A. and Gatti G. (2010). A Quantitative Analysis of the Adoption of Improved Food Production Technology in Oyo State, Nigeria. University of Ibadan, Ph.D Thesis.
- International Planned Parenthood Federation (2012, April 16). [http://www.ippf.org/resources/publications/what is gender equality?](http://www.ippf.org/resources/publications/what_is_gender_equality?) Retrieved October 16, 2012.

- Kongolo J. & Bamgose, M. (2012). Restoring the Balance: Population and a Total Development Policy". Development Forum.
- Klasen C. (2009). "The Condition of Patriarchy". In Kramarae C. and Spender D. (Eds.) *The Knowledge Explosion*: London. Athens: Teachers College Press.
- Lawal, T. & Oluwatoyin A. (2011). National Development in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, Vol. 3(4) pp 237-241. <http://www.academicjournals.org/jpapr>. Retrieved January 24, 2013.
- Neankwo, G. (2013). *The Creation of Patriarchy*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Makama, G. A. (2013). Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(17). Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences Nasarawa State University.
- Michener, O. (1992). The State and the Growth/Development Agenda: Africa and East/Asia in context. In Kolawole D. (Ed.). *Issues in Nigerian Government and Politics*. Ibadan: Dekaal Publishers. pp. 163-166.
- Ojo, O. (2013) Agriculture and Economic Development in Malaysia, 1960-1995: A Viable Model for Nigeria. *Journal Economic and Financial Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1.
- Okpoko A. (2010). The Issue of Gender Inequality in Nigeria. *Breeze Magazine*.
- Rajani, N. (2008). *Women Entrepreneurship and Support Systems*. Stud Home Comm Sci. 2(2). pp. 107-112.
- Riggs, C. (2010) *Potential Women Entrepreneurs*. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.
- Rodney, D. (2014). The Manufacturing Imperative. <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/themanufacturing-imperitive>. Retrieved January 15, 2014.
- Seer, J. (216) Imitation, Entrepreneurship and Long Run Growth. *Journal of Political Economy*. 97(3). pp. 721-739.
- Scott, J. and Gordon M. (2004). *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stacey, J. (1993). Untangling Feminist Theory. In Richardson D. and Robinson V. (eds). *Introducing Women's Studies: Feminist Theory and Practice*. London: Macmillan.
- UNDESA (2010). *The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics*. http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products./Worldwomen/www_full%20report_color.pdf Retrieved January 15, 2014.
- UNIDO (2012). *Gender Inequality and Its Effects on Industrial Development*. http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media/Publications/Pub_free/Industrial_development_report_2012.pdf Retrieved January 15, 2014.