Gender Mainstreaming as Index of Sustainable Human Development in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract

The concern with the effects of development on women is traced to over two (2) decades ago. The UN's Decade for the Advancement of Women (1976-85), which was preceded by the International Women's Year in 1975, was the culmination of successful pressure by women activists and academics on measures to fully integrate women in development policies and programmes. Gender issues are development concerns, as improvements in the women's Human Development Indices (HDI), have serious implications on the impact of development policies/programmes. Current fad and awareness has brought to the fore subject and practice of gender mainstreaming, which is focused more on empowerment of women. This study is concerned with an examination of variables associated with gender mainstreaming as it correlates with the sustainable human development of women. The study, specifically, examines how women could be sustainably empowered and fully integrated into various spheres of socio-economic, cultural and political life of the Nigerian society, as well as the inherent problems. The paper adopts the content and documentary analysis approach. The theoretical models adopted in the study are: the Women in Development Approach, Women and Development Approach (WAD), Gender and Development, and the Neo-Classical Approach. The paper examined the empirical and real problems militating against the mainstreaming of women in development programmes and the effects of low gender mainstreaming in Nigeria. In this paper, feasible strategies on government policies, traditional/cultural practices and International laws/conventions are highlighted. Such specific measures as effective legal provisions, equal employment opportunities and rights in abolition of harmful traditional practices, equal political rights/participation and access to compulsory education are proffered as means through which women and girls could be liberated and fully empowered.

Keywords: Gender, Mainstreaming, Empowerment, Political Participation, Human Development, Poverty.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender issue is one of the most discovered topics in recent times. There is now a growing awareness that females constitute more than half of the world's population (UNICEF, 1998) and an estimated 50% of the population of Nigeria is made up of women and girls (UNSN, 2001)

Gender is less a women issue as it is a man's issue. It is above all, both a human rights issue and development issue (NEEDS-2, 2007). Gender mainstreaming, as a concept, came into widespread use with the adoption of the platform for action at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, where it was unanimously affirmed that the advancement of women and the achievement of equality with men are matters of fundamental human rights and therefore, a prerequisite for social justice.

Hitherto, the labour of women had been used on a small scale in the formal sector of the economy; a result of the social discrimination in education and training, as well as the gender-based division of labour which is reflected in the formal sector of employment. Apart from the negative impact of this on the nation, it has become obvious that the marginalization of women in this sector has reduced their access to substantial regular income and social status in society. Particularly, rationalizing a substantial proportion of female workers out of the public and private sectors has been very feasible since they are usually on the lower rungs of occupational hierarchy.

Women's numerical strength in the population is not reflected in the political life and decision-making processes and structures of the nation. They are inadequately represented at the national and state legislatures, as well as local government councils.

This study therefore examines some thematic issues involved in gender mainstreaming. A discussion on gender mainstreaming implies some notions of gender equity. Gender equity is a principle that ensures equal rights and opportunities for women, men, girls and boys in all spheres/sectors of human endeavours. Gender mainstreaming in both state and national development plans, emphasizing political, economic and socio-cultural equity, is critical for social justice, economic equity and plan effectiveness (NEEDS-2, 2007). Gender inequality is a constraint to growth and poverty reduction while a more equitable gender relation is an accelerator to poverty reduction.

Within the framework of development concerns, gender issues have a relatively recent history. Gender relations and their roles in social life were not taken into account. While debates and practices have changed considerably over the past fifteen to twenty years; there is still a long way to go in understanding the nature and importance of gender relations in development and in bringing about social change that empowers women (Hazel Johnson, 1990).

The UN Decade for the Advancement of Women (1976–1985) was an important opening for different kinds of initiatives, from research to action. Different approaches to gender issues were tried and criticized; early approaches focused on women's welfare, particularly in the context of their roles as wives and mothers, latter approaches were concerned with establishment of equality between women and men or to combat poverty as the main source of women's oppression by prompting income generating projects for women. More recent approaches in the 1990s era of structural adjustment have emphasized the need to make women effective producers in the struggle for economic growth, while criticisms have come from many parts of the Third World about the externally imposed and often culturally- blind nature of "women in development" programmes and projects. The emphasis has now turned towards women's empowerment and the need for women in the Third World countries (such as Nigeria) to gain a voice in their own development struggles (through

effective gender mainstreaming). There has also been a greater drive to understanding and accepting the differences between women as well as their common problems and goals (Moser, 1989).

The UN's Decade for the Advancement of Women (1976-1985), which was preceded by the international women's year in 1975, was the culmination of successful pressures by women activists and academics (Prelta & Vickers 1991). The argument was that development policies, co-ordinated by the leading multinational agencies, such as the World Bank, UNIDO and FAO as well as many bilateral development agencies and NGOs, had ignored the needs of poor women in the Third World Countries. It was not just an economic terms that the marginalization of women needed to be addressed. There was concern that women were being left out in four cardinal areas: political rights, legal rights, access to education and training; and their working lives (Boyd, 1988).

Until the last two decades, the gains of women from development in Nigeria were minimal and temporal; and the entire process intensified existing gender inequalities in the country (National Policy on Women, 2000). Although there has been increased awareness by the United Nation's Decade for women about the strategies and practical needs of women, there has been little commitment to incorporate these needs into national and sectoral policies until the mid 1980s, when there developed the yearning for a National Women in Development policy to facilitate the full integration of women into social, economic and political life of the nation (National Policy on Women, 2000).

Mainstreaming gender from the foregoing implies that both men and women are involved. A practical assessment of what holds the society raises the question of who really needs to be mainstreamed. A vivid answer to this, points to the female gender.

This paper explicitly focuses on issues of gender mainstreaming (for the female gender in particular) as one of the potent strategies for enhancing human development in Nigeria, as well as fulfill their self worth.

The Problem in Context

National and state development programmes and institutional multinational agency initiatives has left the aspirations and interests of women out of context, on such issues and areas such as economics, education, health, law (Women Rights Law), politics, religion, peace and conflict resolution, widowhood and inheritance rights etc. (UNICEF, 1998, p. 1). Like in other areas of social interaction, women have, to a large extent, been excluded from the mainstream of development (Scott, 1986).

Even after the declaration of the International Year of Women in 1975, and several other programmes and initiatives for women, there is considerable concern about the lack of understanding of gender relations and the fact that development policies and projects are still in the male gender, blind if not totally biased against women.

Issues and questions worth examining in this paper borders on the following:

- Why has development affected women and men differently? Are women too weak and powerless to take advantage of the challenges and opportunities that development offers? Is it tradition or backwardness that keeps women in a secondary position in Third World societies?
- Do planners and policy makers discriminate against women because they make mistaken assumptions about women's roles and involvement in production and reproduction? Or more fundamentally, is the whole process of development, both as historical social change, and in terms of development policies and projects, deeply

rooted in the unequal relations between men and women, that it is necessary totally to rethink the objectives and strategies of development? (Pearson, 1990).

Also worthy to state here is that the mainstreaming, advancement and empowerment of women into national and international programmes is central to the achievement of the 3rd goals of the Millennium Development Goals, which is to promote gender equality and ensure women empowerment. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) came from resolutions of the Word Conferences organized by the United Nations during the 1990s. The World Bank (2010) views empowerment of women and girls as not only the right and fair thing to do, but that it also makes economic sense. This is because advanced and developing countries that invest in promoting the social and economic statuses of women tend to lower poverty statuses. Evidences abound from researches that both in policy and practice, resources in women's hand result in household expenditure that benefit children and other members of the household.

In assessing mainstreaming issues of women, using the UNDP Gender Development Related Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), Nigeria has not achieved significant empowerment in bridging inequalities between men and women and increasing women's opportunities and capabilities. Statistically, with a GDI of 0.383 in 1995, 0.449 in 2000 and 0.431 in 2005, there is an apt indicator that gender inequality exists and still persists in almost all spheres of life in Nigeria (UNDP, 2005).

The status of women in Nigeria has ever since been lower than that of men. Prominent among the factors that have hindered the full integration and mainstreaming of women in the development process(es) are:

- Inadequate political and economic sensitization and awareness;
- Poor training and skill development;
- Harmful patriarchal cultural practices subjugating women to the background;
- Low political participation;
- Disadvantaged legal status;
- Insufficient representation of women in modern sector employment;
- High levels of engagement in informal economy and agriculture;
- Inadequate budgetary allocation to women programmes and projects;
- Non-compliance with international laid down provisions for exclusive women development.

It is also pertinent to state that apart from patriarchal and socio-cultural factors, poverty of women in Nigeria hinges on their underdevelopment as a human resource. This underscores the fact that gender mainstreaming should be seen as a strategy that does not look at women in isolation, but looks at women and men – both as actors and beneficiaries in the development process (NEEDS -2,2007, AK-SEEDS, 2004).

It must also be stressed that it is important to mainstream gender perspectives in all spheres/sectors because the interests and needs of women (as well as those of men) must be systemically pursued in the formulation of all government policies and programmes.That is, attention to equality issues cannot be confined to a sector called "women's development", or addressed through isolated or marginal programmes within sectors. Instead, government agencies and the private sector must recognize that women are a major part of the public they serve in the different sectors.

Without a voice in decision – making, women's concerns are not prioritized, and no resources are allocated to them. Without these resources and relevant political platforms, women have less chance of transforming social norms and attitudes. They have less access to the cultural, social and educational institutions that contribute to influencing and shaping attitudes in society. Without a change in perception and attitudes, women would continue to be marginalized. The standard causes of this inequality will not be dealt with adequately and women would still face significant obstacles and barriers in their efforts to get their voices heard in the public forum.

Realising that the underdevelopment of women in any society is almost always synonymous with society's underdevelopment, the development of women should be given top priority in government's mainstream gender in the development process.

In joining other nations to adopt the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, Nigeria affirmed its support for the alleviation of the numerous constraints to women's full integration into its development process. Mechanisms for the planned interventions were aimed at:

- Re-awakening full self-consciousness and re-evaluation of their self-concepts;
- Empower and encourage women to speak for their rights to equitable distribution of resources and social justice;
- Specifically, the planned interventions were meant to cover such development issues as:
  - Equity, social order and wellbeing;
  - Resource allocation;
  - Economic growth and efficiency;
  - Patriarchy, ideology and legal framework;
  - Culture

  (National Policy on Women, 2000, pp. 11-13)

All these issues, though, have been vigorously pursued with only limited achievement on women.

Objectives

This paper explores specific thematic issues relating to how women could be sustainably empowered and fully integrated in various spheres of socio-economic and political life of Nigeria. It highlights some of the conventions and platforms of actions for women mainstreaming, and the problems affecting such noble actions.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Gender Mainstreaming as a concept

Gender mainstreaming is not a new strategy. The concept was first proposed at the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya. The idea has been pushed in the United Nations Development Community. The idea was formerly featured in 1995 at the Forth World Conference on women in Beijing, China and was cited in the document that resulted from the conference, "the Beijing Platform for Action". It builds on the years of previous experiences in trying to bring gender perspective to the centre of attention in policies and programmes.

Most definitions of gender mainstreaming conform   to the UN Economic and Social Council formally-defined concept:

> *Mainstreaming, a gender perspective, is the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women as well as men's concerns and experience an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality, (UN Report of the Economic and Social Council, 1997).*

In the narrowest sense, gender mainstreaming means integrating gender issues into policy-making and over-all development process. This implies a thorough gender analysis of projects or programmes, at all stages (Nwakeze, 2006, pp. 172-173).

Gender Mainstreaming, according to NEEDS-2(2008), is the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned actions, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels.   It also refers to a strategy for promoting gender equality, involving integration of the gender perspectives and the promotion of gender equality in all activities that is moving them into the mainstream of activities. In structural terms and operations, gender mainstreaming (integration) entails that account must be taken of gender perspectives in all programming and the activities of all projects throughout their life cycle.

Gender mainstreaming aims at the introduction of gender conscious thinking and procedures in structural fund activities. This means taking conscious note of the significance of gender and the impact of gender differences on the activity, while ensuring that the activity promotes gender equality in addition to other objectives. The aim is for programming and project activity to take conscious account of the significance of gender, rather than being gender neutral.

In such a case, programming and project work involves the application of gender conscious mindset and working practically.

According to Ekong (2003), the concept of mainstreaming or making women and men as people's centre of development requires the institutionalization of gender, sensitive planning, execution, monitoring and reporting.

In more specific terms, the mainstreaming strategy for achieving gender equality emerged as a result of dissatisfaction with earlier approaches to narrowing gender gaps. These earlier strategies often focused on women (providing them with more education, more resources etc) and on specific targeted initiatives.

The gender mainstreaming strategy seeks to ensure that, across the entire policy and issue spectrum:

- The analysis of issues and the formulation of policy options are informed by a consideration of gender differences and inequalities; and
- Opportunities are sought to narrow gender gaps and support equality between women and men.

Gender and Sex

Gender is the social construction of the expectations, behaviour, privileges and constraints associated with those identified as male or female. By being a social construct, gender is dynamic in the sense that gender identities do change and are culture bound. This is to say that the roles and expectations as well as the opportunities and privileges of the different genders do change over time and vary across space (Ahonsi, 1997, p. 4). According to Ostergaad (1992), the term 'gender' refers to the qualitative and interdependent character of women's and men's positions in society.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines gender in the following way:

> *"the term gender denotes the qualities associated with men and women that are socially and culturally, than biologically determined. Gender includes way in which society differentiates appropriate behaviour and access to power for men and women. Although the details vary from society to society and change over time, gender relations tend to include a strong element of inequality between women and men and are strongly influenced by ideology"* (United Nations Development Report, 1986, p. 258).

Although sometimes used synonymously with sex and women, which is often erroneous, arguments put forward by a feminism scholar, Scott (1986) put it straight by stating that gender is not only a "constitutive element of social relations based on perceived differences between the sexes", but also a "primary way of signifying relationships of power".

Gender differentiation is well pronounced in patriarchal societies where a group of individuals have been tagged and groomed to be the decision makers for another group considered inferior, weak and subordinate (Gauley, 1987).

Gender equality is one of the indicators of Sustainable Human Development (SHP), and one of the indicators of success of social development programmes. In order to quantify the progress being made by the different countries of the world and for comparative purposes, the gender Related Development Index (GRI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) were introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Gender Development Index (GDI)

GDI measures the overall performance of men and women along some criterion. Simply put, this is a measure developed by the UNDP towards the achievement of the Human Development Index (HDI) to reflect the inequalities between men and women in the following areas: a long and healthy life as measured by life expectancy, knowledge as measured by adult literacy rate and combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio.

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)

Concisely, this UNDP formulated measure focuses on women's opportunities other than their capabilities. The measure captures gender inequality in three key areas, viz: political partition and decision making power, economic participation and decision-making and power over economic resources. GEM is relevant in this study because it provides a picture of gender participation.

On the other hand, sex refers to the biological state of being male or female. Gender roles are those activities that are considered appropriate to a man or woman in a given society. Gender based inequality starts at the household level where women are left with the burden of most domestic chores.

Gender Equity and Equality

The word 'equity' simply means fairness, justice or equalitarianism. Gender equity, therefore, may be defined as the process of being fair to women and men. Gender equity also means that women and men enjoy the same status. Put differently, gender equity means that women and men have equal conditions for actualizing their full human rights and potentials which would enable them participate in the development process be it political, economic or social. This implies that they should be in a position to enjoy equally, benefits arising from the development efforts.

Gender equality on the other hand, refers to equal valuing by society of both the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles that they play (Nwakeze 2006, p. 172). Gender relations simply mean the socially constructed form of relations between women and men (Monsen, 2004).

Theoretical Underpinning: Gender and Development Perspectives

In this study, the following participatory approaches and theories are applied. Applying participatory model in women issues will yield fruitful results in view of the strong emphasis of the sectoral policies in changing values, norms, perceptions, attitudes and orientation about women and their roles, at all levels of society:

- Women in Development Approach/ Model (WID);
- Women and Development Approach/Model (WAD);
- Gender and Development Approach/Model (GAD);
- Neo-classical Approach/Model.

Women in Development (WID)

This theory, according to Kwiers (1996, pp. 8-10), has been in existence since the last century. The theory holds that women are the core of development itself. This theory is geared towards an active participation and decision making of women in the social, economic, political and cultural fields to bring about positive change. According to Kwiers, Women in Development (WID) concerns human development and the recognition of women's rights.

Different development framework which employs different scale of economic and social policy approaches to development emerged. They are: the welfare, equity, poverty, efficiency, equality and empowerment. Each of these frameworks attempt to correct the perceived gap in the development process.

However, each of these frameworks also redefines woman and gender concerns across a broad spectrum of sectors and differs from the other with respect to the way entrenched inequalities are transformed. In each one, there is a conscious effort to bring women into the development process. Each of the frameworks is discussed below:

- **Welfare Approach**: This approach focuses on providing residual measures to women as the most vulnerable group. Such welfare measures essentially give relief aid to low income women in support of their reproductive roles (Buvinic in Ebuk, 2000). Mosea (1995), posited that this approach is mainly concerned with meeting women's practical gender needs relating to their reproductive roles.
- **Equity Approach**: This approach recognises meeting strategic gender needs through active state intervention and emphasising women triple roles, the political and economic autonomy to women and reducing inequality.
- **Efficiency Approach**: This approach focuses on what women could do for development, rather than what development could do for women. The believe is that understanding men and women's roles and responsibilities as part of the planning of development interventions could improve project effectiveness.
- **Empowerment Approach**: This approach focuses on enabling women to gain self confidence and self-esteem by authorizing them to actively participate in development programmes/projects and decision making process. When the Women in Development (WID) movement emerged, research, apart from being scientific, also become political. Women were considered not as objects for research, but as equal partners with researches possessing the ability to identify their own needs through research projects.

Under the WID rubric, research was meant to liberate women's own resources and raise their consciousness about their conditions apart from collating data (Ostergaard, 1992, p. 4). The mobilization of women for "development" becomes popular under the WID dispensation as government explored means of integrating women into development and it embarked on the provision of necessary structures to institutionalize this new concern.

However, although WID brought women into development, it did not really give them any special place. Apart from this, the various structures, either in the Ministry of Social Welfare or Departments of Women Affairs, failed to address the sources of the problems of women and their collective concern which is the social conception of women and the resultant differences in the elections, opportunities and constraints of men and women. Although the WID approach attempted to address the unequal access to resources between men and women, it did not address wider relations between them, of which the former is only a relation (Bammeke, 1991, 2001).

Gender and Development (GAD)

The weaknesses of WID approach led to the adoption of another gender approach which was considered better suited to achieve the goals of "Equality, Development and Peace" (UNDP, 1995, p. 2) set for the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985). The Gender and Development approach considers the varying social roles men and women are expected to play in different societies within the contexts of their different cultures and at different times. Rather than look at issues of importance to one sex by considering it in isolation, the gender and development approach places such issues within the context of socially constructed relationships between men and women.

This theory is universally recognized and extensively well articulated. According to Dr. Kate, Young, Director of Women Kind Worldwide in London, and other of her colleagues in England, it is maintained that Gender and Development (GAD) acknowledges that women in less developed countries presently, have disadvantaged and subordinate positions that prevent their full participation as both decision makers and beneficiaries in development process. The

major objective of this theory is to empower women and improve their positions in the society relative to men.

GAD considers the totality of social, economic and political life in analyzing the forces that affect women's ability to direct and benefit from development process (Journal of International Studies, Tokyo, 1999 – 2003).

Neo-Classical Theory

This theory assumes that in competitive conditions, workers are paid according to their productivity levels. It follows from this assumption that observed male-female differentials in earnings are due to either the lower productivity of women and market imperfections.

This approach, according to Bullion Publication of the CBN (1999) by Princess E. B. I. Oladumni, also assumes that women have lower levels of educational training and on the job experience than the men; because families tend to allocate household resources to the education of male family members, while expecting the females as they grow up to spend their time on house work and children care for which training does not require much, because while the child grows in the home, the number of people who train and instruct increases (Etuk et al., 2004).

The Neo-Classical Theory explains gender differences in employment in terms of differences in human capital where women are disadvantaged because of her responsibilities, physical strength, expected education, training, hours of work expected of them, absenteeism and truancy (Momsen, 2004, p. 174).

Applying this to the context of this study, it therefore follows that the traditional norms and practice of relegating women to take care of only domestic chores and child rearing hinders this ability to take part in political affairs and in other decision making spheres.

Problems of Mainstreaming Women in Development Programmes and Policies in Nigeria

The inability of women to benefit from development policies has accounted widely for their low human development indices as already elucidated in subsisting sections of this paper. Some of the important factors of low gender (women) mainstreaming are highlighted below:

- Gender discrimination in the society generally;
- Harmful traditional/cultural practices;
- Patriarchy (male dominance/interests);
- Denial of the rights of women and girls;
- Non integration of gender across the seven other MDGs. The attainment of gender equality and gender equity could have been highly attained if an integrated approach was adopted to make gender mainstreaming a cross-cutting goal across all MDGs indicators;
- Gender-based violence – taking many forms, is a major element of the massive and continuing failure of human rights of most women;
- Lack of political will and the inability of the national policies to align with international standards and conventions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls;
- Poor access to credit and finances for economic activities;

- Discriminatory practices in labour and employment in the area of maternity, sexual harassment and unhealthy employment practices;
- Low enrolment of women and girls in formal educational institutions.

Other associated factors are also shown in the introductory part of this study.

Mainstreaming Women in Development: Feasible Prospects

Mainstreaming women in the development process requires a multi-dimensional approach, which no single approach can be exhaustively handled in a single research work of this nature.

Several papers, seminars and conferences have made propositions and policy statements on how women can be integrated into the development processe(s). This paper in line with the theoretical framework reviewed, and the National Policy on Women (2002) has the following alternative feasible prospects:

- In order to correct the current state of imbalance in political representations and appointive positions, it is considered necessary to provide adequate legislations that will encourage and enable women to participate freely and equally in politics and decision making. The 30% affirmative action at all levels–the legislative houses, executive arm, party hierarchy and structures should be strengthened.
- Women should be incorporated into legislature and the judiciary to enable them enact and enforce appropriate legislation that would ensure the protection of their rights.
- Women should be empowered through appropriate educational and skill development programmes to utilize their great potentials for the economic progress of the country.
- Government and non-governmental agencies should further strengthen their modalities in the promotion of programmes and measures to replace deleterious practices, images, stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices against women through appropriate changes in socialization patterns, gender equality and enlightenment through the mass media, popular culture and informal education.
- It is necessary to provide educational support services for education of girls/women in science, technology and mathematics. It is also necessary to make the enrolment and retention of girls in schools compulsory.
- All forms of discriminatory practices against employment of women in the public and private sectors of the economy should be eliminated.
- Labour laws should be enhanced to ensure that women's right of employment and protective measures are in place, break the traditional attitudes and stereotypes about women's work, as well as encourage women to actively participate in labour relations.
- Women in agriculture should be encouraged to access credit facilities and production inputs, to enhance their productive abilities and ensure sustained income and means of livelihood.Government should further strengthen/facilitate the development of women cooperatives for effective participation in agricultural programmes.
- Gender studies and women issues should be instituted in universities and research institutions. This may serve as channels of communication to sensitize, train and mobilize women to participate fully and actively in politics.
- There is need for training sessions on participatory methodologies for gender related studies, gender and development officials, non-governmental organizations and

change agents to acquire relevant skills for meaningful gender and development policy implementation.

- Gender and Development Units in all public institutions should he strengthened and provided with needed human and material resources to function effectively in its collaborative, advocacy and mobilization roles.
- Gender-sensitive men should be targeted to advocate women's progressive participation in politics;
- Harmful widowhood practices should be prohibited using legislative sanctions. They should be given the opportunity to participate in decisions of their late husband's family. Adequate sensitization and awareness programmes should be carried out on the consequences and dangers of harmful widowhood (traditional) practices to human development.

CONCLUSION

A gender impact assessment, which this study is, has analysed the impacts and measures of human development in terms of gender and gender equality.

The implications of not mainstreaming gender into development issues are quite enormous, and this portends great negative effects in achieving human development in Nigeria. As highlighted in this study, the strategy for gender mainstreaming in development process should ideally include gender in the spheres of community development, political participation/inclusion, economic holdings, share in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, share in both National/State Parliaments, appointive executive positions etc. As regards the human development and empowerment of women in Nigeria, wage employment outside the agricultural sector is an important indicator. It is worth concluding too, that another empowerment domain is participation. These are all issues that border on gender equality and gender equity. In conclusion, low level of gender mainstreaming leads to low human development for women and girls (measuring in indices such as access to productive wage employment, elective/appointive political positions, access to quality education and other social services); and vice versa. What this paper has shown further is that the centrality of gender issues in the entire process of sustainable human development lies in the extent and level of active involvement of women in both policy instruments and strategies. The need to ensure gender equity and gender equality; and the empowerment of women through gender mainstreaming should therefore be the central focus of future development framework (the Post-2015 Development Agenda; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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