

An Appraisal of Rights – Based Approach to Achieving Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls in Nigeria.

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Abstract. Nigeria is a member of the United Nations community, she had a global index score of 46 in the Sustainable Development Goals and ranked 36 in gender equality despite the fact that she was a signatory to policy document on gender equality of which convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is one. Her human development index is low with high level of poverty most especially among women. 50% of Nigerians between the ages of 15-64 are of working age and 45.5% of women are employed but their employment does not deliver them from poverty as almost twice as many women as men live below the poverty line. In line with her ratification of CEDAW, and the Beijing platform for action (BPFA) she signed the National Policy on Women in year 2000 and further review of the document produced the National Gender Policy in 2006. All of which are yet to deliver desired results in the achievement of gender equality and significant human development. It is recommended among others that the domestication of gender related documents, good funding and the involvement of all will bring about a big difference from the present level to a desired level of development

Keywords: Right-base, gender equality, empowerment, appraisal

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a signatory to Gender Equality and the empowerment of women and girls which is number five of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals targeted from 2015 – 2030, and, resulting from a review of the Millennium Development Goals. Globally, females form half of the Population while in Nigeria they are about 49.4% of the population (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019 in Ebuka Onyiji

April 20, 2019). The coming together of one hundred and ninety-three countries to deliberate on the Sustainable Development Goals in which gender equality embraces the other sixteen goals is enough evidence that achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls is not to be toyed with.

Women's right to equality in economic, social, legal and political life was highlighted in the National Policy on Women in year 2000 supporting a thirty per cent representation of women in all spheres of life including, legislative and executive arm of government but inequalities remain pervasive. This was replaced by the National Gender Policy, which was drafted in year 2006 with protocols, conventions and amendments of the constitution also supporting the provision of a quota system for women's empowerment in all spheres, yet the scenario has been very pathetic. Below is the scenario:

1.1 The Socio-Economic and Political Scenario in Nigeria

- Nigeria ranks 103 out of 113 countries in Education Development Index (EDI, 2015) that is, in primary enrolment, adult literacy, and gender inequality and survival to grade 5.
- Poor governance and underfunding of the education sector negatively affect education outcomes (World Bank SCD, 2018:71).
- Out- of -school rate is higher among girls (32%) than boys (28%).
- Completion rates of primary education for boys is about 80% while, it is 66% for girls.
- Access to schooling increased among more affluent quintiles but declined among the bottom quintile. This reduces the human

- capital of vulnerable groups. (World Bank SCD, 2018:31).
- 40% of adult Nigerians are illiterates and females are more prominent (Ayimoro, 2017).
 - Of the female adult illiterates, only 13% are in the south (World Bank SCD, 2018: ix).
 - Over two thirds of girls aged 15-19 cannot read while it is less than 10% in the south.
 - Inequality also exist among states and tribes in human development indices which is aggravated by insecurity and insurgency
 - Only 3% of girls complete secondary school in the north.
 - 76% of girls are married by age 18 in the North West (World Bank SCD, 2018:20).
 - Till date, the majority of Chibok girls and Liya Sharibu are still in Boko Haram captivity.
 - Women with disability are marginalised from schools and skills acquisition programmes.
 - The net primary school enrolment rates for boys and girls are 70% and 58% respectively. (World Bank SCD,2018;ix)
 - The UN estimates 13.2m Nigerian children as out- of- school.
 - Nigerian Ministry of Education puts it as 16m.
 - Street children (Almajeris) abound
 - Instruction and teaching are done under trees and dilapidated buildings.
 - Nearly half of all children under five are malnourished in the north- east, compared to 22% in the south- east.
 - There is serious infrastructural deficit in Gombe, Bauchi, Adamawa and Kebbi.
 - Teachers with basic teaching skills are lacking.
 - Internally displaced camps (IDPs) through insurgency causes fear and trauma.
 - Retention level is very low. (Channel Television 10/12/19 10 p.m. Network news)
 - One third of Nigerians live in poverty (World Bank, 2015 vii & ix)
 - Almost twice as many women as men live below the poverty line.
 - 50% of Nigerians, 15- 64 years are of working age (World Bank, 2015)
 - Only 8% of the adult population are employed in the formal sector. Men are more employed in some form 56.4% than women 47.3% (ILOSTAT, 2018)
 - Women are characterized by low skills thus, trapped in low productivity and subsistence activities (World Bank, 2015: viii).
 - 45.5% of the Nigerian labour force are females(World Bank,2019)
 - Males dominate engineering, banking, veterinary, medicine and university lecturing
 - While majority of females are school teachers, nurses and secretaries
 - 73.15% of women are involved in farm activities while, 26.85% are engaged in manufacturing, sales and services.
 - Women with disability find it difficult to be employed as majority lack education and good skills.
 - Women provide an estimated 60-80% labour in agriculture but have less access to resources and a limited decision- making power over their plots (Ekerebi & Adeola, 2017:2).
 - They have limited access to land, inputs, labour, and extension services thereby, producing less than men.
 - There is a gendered harvest value gap (World Bank SCD,2018:20)
 - Women in Nigeria operate more in the informal sector economy without adopting advanced business practices because they are often constrained by household, related factors (World Bank Group, 2019:9).
 - Although, more than thirty-two million people have online access since 2012 in Nigeria, there is a large gender gap affecting women negatively, as many women are unconnected digitally and could not afford mobile phones(World Bank, 2018:42)
 - Only 33.3% of females use formal banking system.
 - 25.8% are users of other formal or informal Services.
 - 40.9% do not bank their resources(K4D, 2019)
 - Nigeria ranked 187 out 190 countries in global health ranking (WHO, 2017).
 - The reproductive health situation in Nigeria is poor.
 - A high percentage of girls engage in early sexual behaviour, early and forced marriage and pregnancy (Cortez et al, 2015)
 - Total fertility rate is 5.7
 - Till date, majority of married women do not have rights or voice on their sexual reproductive health rather, it is determined by the husband.
 - Maternal mortality rate is 545 deaths per 100,000 live births stemming from

- hemorrhage, infection, unsafe abortion, hypertensive disease of pregnancy and obstructed labour (Ayimoro, 2017)
- Contraceptive prevalence is 13%
- HIV prevalence is 4.4%
- Female Genital Mutilation and cutting persist especially, in rural Nigeria
- There are three tiers of health care delivery in Nigeria- the Primary Health Care (PHC) which is close to the grassroots, the State hospitals and Federal Hospitals.
- Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) is expected to be provided at all tiers of hospitals in Nigeria, the PHC which is closer to the rural areas and majority of people in Nigeria is lacking in the provision of major SRH. These include:
 - Cervical cancer screening.
 - Human papillomavirus vaccine.
 - Imaging for breast cancer screening (mammography)
 - Management of abortion complications
 - Emergency cesarean section
 - Permanent method of family planning like vasectomy and bilateral tubal
 - Gender roles and patriarchal tendencies inhibit access to SRH services (Adamu, 2019 p.5&6)
- Also, in State and Federal hospitals, SRH are not readily available because of lack of manpower and infrastructural facilities
- Politically, the representation of women have continue to dwindle. For instance, the 2019 elections had only 4.17% women representatives at the National Assembly as against 5.65% in 2015 elections. Nigerian women have never attained 10% representation in elective positions.
- 11% of women are raped in twelve months in Nigeria (Channels Television 10 o'clock p.m. News, December 8, 2019)
- Perpetrators of rape and sexual violence are seldom brought to book because of shame on victims who hardly report, tradition and patriarchal stereotypes
- Inadequate data of prosecuted cases of rape and sexual violence is evident.
- The law on the punishment of rape is too ambiguous
- Wife battery persist

- (ii) Eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
 - (iii) Eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female gender mutilation.
 - (iv) Recognising and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
 - (v) Ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
 - (vi) Ensuring universal access to sexual & reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing platform for Action and the outcome of their reviewed Conferences.
- Undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
 - Enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
 - Adopting and strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all woman and girls at all levels.

Metadata-Goal5pdf updated on 3rd of March, 2016.

<http://wbl.worldbank.org/abonties>
<http://www.genderindex.org/www.pwc.com/>

[global](#)

The above scenario clearly implies that Nigeria is far away from achieving gender equality which entails:

- (i) Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls

2. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a right

Gender equality is a basic right. This is implicit in the right to education, health, economy, culture, religion,

justice and decision-making. Globally, gender based discrimination is a huge problem but more pronounced in African countries including Nigeria, where patriarchy pervades the society even among the educated and so called elites.

It is in recognition of the fact that the female has been oppressed significantly and the recognition of the violation of her fundamental human rights that brought about feminists movement with the attendant instrument for protecting and promoting women's rights which will in turn empower them.

Nigeria is a member of the United Nations. She is a signatory to the relevant international instruments, treaties and conventions in which she ratified development instruments to eliminate gender discrimination. Some of the instruments include Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Beijing platform from which the National Policy on Women emanated in 2000 and the present National Gender Policy which was drafted in 2006.

CEDAW is a wide range bill of rights to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and enhance human rights of all. The international stance is that all member nations should:

- Embody the principle of equality of men and women in their national constitutions.
- Adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women.
- Establish legal protection of the rights of women on equal basis with men, and to ensure through competent national tribunal and other public institutions, the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination.
- Refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure the public authorities shall act in conformity with this obligation.
- Take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organisation or enterprise.
- Repeal all national provisions which constitute discrimination against women (Emakhu, 2013 p776)

As signatory to the above policy document, it is expected that its recognition must be implicit on its compliance and the enactment of laws to the achievement of gender equality as a right with its attendant punishment for violators as a basic human

right. But, this is still a white elephant project in Nigeria.

3. Rights-Based Approach and Nigeria's Gender Equality

The official document on human rights issues as it relates to Nigerian women, otherwise known as National Policy on Women was signed by former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000 to stem gender inequalities, stereotypes, patriarchy, originating from cultural norms and colonialism in order to move Nigerian people towards socio-economic development, equity, justice and improvement in their quality of life. Chapter II section 17 subsection 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that:

Every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligation and opportunity before the law.

The National Policy on Women thus, documents strategies to be utilized in enforcing this right through the objective of:

- Ensuring that the principles and provision as contained in the Nigerian constitution are effectively enforced.
- Mainstreaming gender perspective in all policies and programmes based on a systematic gender analysis at all levels of government.

Government thus, reiterate her commitment to the full integration of women into development process to enhance their capacities for improved economic, social and political status for developing the nation's human resources for national and economic growth. (National Policy on Women, 2000 & Sokefun, 2010) The mechanism to achieve these, aimed at planning intervention of re-awakening women's self-consciousness and re-evaluation of their self-concept to empower and encourage women to speak for their rights on the equitable distribution of resources and social justice while there will be a re-orientation of the society to accept equity of roles and respect for family values (National Policy on Women, 2000)

Again, the policy affirms that women's education status correlates with the level of development of a nation while tapping the abundant natural resources through science and technology, improved health concerns by reducing high maternal mortality rates associated with pregnancy and child birth, unsafe tract abortion, reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, cervical and breast cancer, teenage pregnancy, vesico-vaginal fistula. (National Policy on Women, 2000)

The policy notes that enhancing women's participation in labour, both in the formal and informal sector, creating conducive employment environment that will cater for women's special roles in reproduction and community management will assist the nation in attaining good development. Because of this, women's participation in agriculture and industry will receive a boost by enhancing women's access to land, water institutionalized credit, extension service training, appropriate technologies and tools, information networking, different investment opportunities and exposure of women's product to international channels.

There will be women's participation in the protection and management of the environment that will be accompanied with good rural road network, transportation system, housing and other utilities. Also, there will be no discrimination on the basis of sex or tribe in formal executive employment.

An implementation of thirty per cent representation of women in the three tiers of government to ensure women's advancement for a trial period to year 2010 including the sensitization of traditional and religious leaders to encourage women to participate in politics. (National Policy on Women, 2000). Government shall ensure that concerned institutions in national planning, institute data collection to desecrate all data on gender basis.

In line with the call in CEDAW, and taking into cognizance the complexity arising from a tripartite system of law in Nigeria which are sometimes contradictory (Statutory, Customary and Sharia) government shall ensure harmonization and legislative protection for vulnerable women (National Policy on Women, 2000). Government shall fix a minimum of eighteen years at first marriage, so that the girl-child can enjoy her fundamental rights to education and proper mental development (National Policy on Women, 2000).

All of the above looks good but, of what use is the document on paper without full commitment. Till date, quota system exist in federal schools and employment in Nigeria. Health institutions are ill-equipped, insecurity has exacerbated the rate of girls and boys drop out of school especially, in the northern areas like Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi and Kebbi. Resources are limited for enhancing women's productive capacities in agriculture and industry. A big lag still exist in male and female employment, decision-making, legislative and executive arms of governance.

The National Gender Policy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria of year 2006 is a step further from the year 2000's National Policy on Women. In the forward message of the document, the Honorable Minister of Women Affairs, reiterated that:

We all know that in Nigeria, traditions, customs, sexual stereotype of social roles and cultural prejudice continue to militate against enjoyment of rights and full participation of women in national development. The Gender Policy would help to eliminate all such barriers.

It went further to say that, its overall goal is to promote the welfare and rights of Nigerian women and children in all aspects of life, political, social and economic while concretely it will:

- Contribute towards women's empowerment and the eradication of unequal gender power relations in the workplace and economy in trade unions and in broader society.
- Encourage the participation, support and cooperation of men in taking shared responsibility for the elimination of sexism and redefining of oppressive gender roles.
- Increase the participation of women in leadership and decision-making.
- Increase awareness and gender sensitivity in all sectors.
- Defend and advance women's rights.
- Ensure that through labour legislation and collective bargaining, the particular circumstances of women are considered and that measures are promoted to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender
- Fight against stereotyping on the basis of gender in the workplace.
- Ensure that there is a gender perspective in all sectors of development (FGN, 2006 p.x)

Also, major achievements in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women were highlighted to include:

- Institutional arrangements on gender entrenched in Public Administration systems and processes
- Increased participation of women in public and private political life
- Integration of gender and social inclusion targets in economic policies, budgets and development frameworks
- Initiatives to partner with men and boys in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women (FGN National Beijing +20 Review, 2014 p.8)

All of the above looked apt, but the situation is far from what is written here. Nigeria has continued to grow worse in challenging gender inequality among her people. For instance, through the National Gender Policy Framework, the Federal Executive Council approved the establishment of Gender Units in all MDAs for a Directorate Cadre to head the units. The modalities are still being processed and fraught with lack of funding.

Although in 2011, the country exceeded the global threshold of thirty per cent in women's ministerial appointment to about thirty-one per cent, the present situation has become worse. Although, there is a gradual integration of gender and social inclusion targets in economic policies, development frameworks and government budgets FGN National Beijing+20 Review, (2014) the capacity of men and boys are also being built for gender equality and advancement of women AU Solemn Declaration Country Report (2013) in FGN National Beijing +20 Review (2014) however, this is also being affected by funding. One expects all tiers of government to give the issue of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls the seriousness it deserves as a development agenda for a developing nation. It is pertinent to review some international efforts since the Beijing Platform for Action at this juncture.

4. Literature on Recent International Efforts

It is amazing to see the efforts of men in developed countries, promoting gender equality, even at the level of significant achievements these male feminists still believe that gender equality is yet to be achieved and there is more to gender equality and parity than numbers whereas, Nigeria is at the low ebb of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The opening speech of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Antonio Guterres at the 63 United Nations opening session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) is captivating, moving one to the bone marrows. He renamed the session as Commission on the Status of Power which he believed is the crux of the issue as gender equality is fundamentally a question of power. Stressing that, women have been systematically marginalised, ignored and silenced in a male dominated world with a male dominated culture (UNCSW 63RD Edition 2019). According to Guterres, 2019 while quoting Professor Boyd, affirmed that "If women are not perceived to be fully within the structures of power, surely it is power we

need to redefine rather than women". As a nation, we must ask ourselves how far we have been able to lead the fight and raise our voices for the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. Why is it difficult for Nigeria to lend credence from this?

With the theme "social protection system, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls" the UNCSW63 agreed on these conclusions:

- Invest in social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure to support the productivity of women's work, including in the informal economy.
- Ensure that progress in women's access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure is not undermined by budget cuts and austerity measures, and levels of protection previously achieved are not reversed.
- Build on multilateral commitments to gender equality, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No.202), to strengthen access to social protection, public services and infrastructure for all women and girls;
- Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work by ensuring access to social protection for unpaid caregivers of all ages, including coverage for health care and pensions;
- Scale up investment in quality public care services that are affordable and gender-responsive;
- Identify and remove barriers to women's and girls' access to public services, such as physical distance, lack of information and decision-making power, stigma and discrimination;
- Guarantee the availability of safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation, including for menstrual hygiene, in homes, schools, refugee camps and other public places;
- Ensure that transport policies and planning are sustainable, accessible, affordable, safe and gender-responsive, taking into account the different needs of women and men, and adapted to be used by persons with disabilities and older persons;
- Promote the full and equal participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in policy dialogues and

decision-making relating to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure;

- Strongly condemn the impunity and lack of accountability rooted in historical and structural inequality that accompanies pervasive violence against women. (UNCSW63 document in Anyanwu-Akeredolu, 2019 p5)

5. The Indian Story

Everyone and nations have a critical role to play in achieving gender equality. India is not an exception as a developing country. She has been improving on her status of gender equality through her “National Policy for the Empowerment of Women”. There had been reduction in child marriages, number of deaths for girl children and increase in health standard through an home grown project called “ Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” and mission “Indradhanush”. Development rates increased in the 2015-2016 report as care visits to hospitals and clinics by women increased from thirty-seven per cent to fifty-one per cent from 2005. Women who marry before age eighteen dropped. Eighty-three per cent of women have a bank account. Women’s literacy rates rose to sixty-eight per cent plus (Saxena, 2019).

6. The Canadian Experience

Canada is a developed country with its sustainable development goals well spelt out. The Canadian Government prioritized Gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls by showing commitment to advance its feminist agenda both at home and abroad in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Although, Canada has made significant progress in education and workplace participation, women in Canada equally face challenges for full equality. For instance, like the developing nations, women are under-represented in politics and leadership roles, they earn less-on-average than men and continue to experience high rates of gender based violence (Government of Canada, 2018).

Indigenous women and girls, migrant and refugee women and girls, disabled women and girls and those who live in rural areas all face discrimination without their full rights. In addressing this, the Government of Canada prioritized diversity, inclusion and gender equality by encouraging increased representation of women in all fields, at all levels of decision-making, women's economic security and prosperity while

reducing poverty and eliminating gender-based violence. Also, pay equity is addressed, investment is made in women entrepreneurship and more women are encouraged to get involved in Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) (Canada Government, 2018).

Again, early learning and child care are being made more flexible, inclusive and affordable, more women can choose to participate in the work force while balancing work and family responsibilities (Canada Government, 2018). With the Canadian Gender-Based Analysis plus (GBA+), policies and programmes are to the benefit of all Canadians- It provides the foundation for gender-based budgeting, which was built upon to introduce Gender Results Framework in 2018, this advances gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at home and nationally (Canada Government, 2018)

Canada also operates feminist foreign policy that determines international policies and programmes in trade, security and diplomacy which addresses system barriers to gender equality. Again, through the SDGs the Government of Canada launched a new Feminist International Assistance Policy in June 2017, this is strategically aligned with the agenda of sustainable development for 2030. It aims to effect progress across all 17SDGs through six action areas without undermining the role of men and boys. The action areas include- human dignity including health and nutrition, education and humanitarian action; growth that works for everyone, environment and climate action, inclusive governance; and peace and security (Canada Government, 2018).

Additionally, there is Canada’s Progressive Trade Agenda which ensures that all segments of the society can take advantage and benefit from opportunities flowing from trade and investment (Canada Government, 2018). More gender considerations are being woven into Canada's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). This also include progressive trade initiatives in international economic forum such as the WTO, G7/20, the OECD and APEC (Canada Government, 2018). Also, to achieve gender equality there was a five years action plan on women, peace and security with five objectives:

- increasing the rate of women in conflict prevention and resolution, and post-conflict state-and peace building;
- Promoting and protecting women and girls human rights, gender and equality and the empowerment of women and girls in fragile, conflict and post conflict settings;
- Preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence;

- Meeting the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian settings; and
- Strengthening the capacity of peace operations to advance the women, peace and security agenda (Canada Government, 2018 p-16)

Furthermore to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, Canada participates in bilateral, multilateral and international forum. Prime Minister Trudeau established the Gender Equality Advisory Council which is co-chaired by Ambassador Isabelle Hudon and Melinda Gates in order to make them functional.

7. Senegal's Experience

Senegal, a sub-Saharan African country is a relatively stable African democratic nation. It has high unemployment and fertility rates with vast youth population, high levels of poverty and low levels of social protection with its attendant implications on gender equality. In year 2010, she advanced Parity Law, mandating parity between men and women in electoral lists for all elections (Equal Measures 2030 data hub). In 2012 legislative elections, the implementation of Parity Law brought significant changes in the representation of women from sixty-four of one hundred and fifty legislative seats and seventy of one hundred and sixty –five seats in 2017 (Equal Measures 2030 data hub).

Senegal adopted the National Strategy for Equity and Gender Equality 2016-2026 to ensure equal opportunities for all in participating and benefiting from development with gender budgeting at the national level. Senegal was scored 'medium'- fifty-two per cent in OECD's social institutions and Gender Index because of its discriminatory Family Laws regarding ownership assets. Inheritance and other legal rights (Equal Measures 2030 data hub). Also, child early and forced marriage are still wide spread despite its prohibition under article 108 of the Family Code.

8. The Distributive theory

The Nigerian constitution, Section 42 says no to discrimination on account of sex but, why is it that the Nigerian traditional laws, stereotypes and Sharia, a Muslim law in a country where there is right to choice of religion still discriminate against the female sex thereby, promoting inequality? According to Richardo in Asuru (2017) the distributive theory is the systematic attempt to account for the sharing of national income among the

owners of factors of production – land, labour and capital. However, Ricardo in Asuru (2017) asserts that poverty, hunger and general misery in the land are caused by distributive pattern of the wealth of the nation. In essence, the land owners are favoured than the workers.

Since in most cultures in Nigeria, land and heritage rights favour the male than the female, it implies that the national wealth are distributed in the favour of males. The reason domestic chores are still unrecognized and unpaid for, this is glaring inequality. Of course there are feminists movements, Nigerian Non-Governmental Organizations working to nib inequality in the bud in Nigeria but the question is, does the bureaucratic bottlenecks in Law allow for a good stance in dealing with inequality in our society? As the UN Secretary General puts it while quoting Prof Boyd "If women are not perceived to be fully within the structures of power surely it is power we need to redefine rather than women". If we promote equality in our society, everyone will win and development will be heightened.

9. Conclusion and recommendations

This study has been able to prove that the attainment of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is the fulfilment of human rights which must be taken serious. Although, no nation has been able to achieve this totally, but Nigeria seem to be toying with an impetus to her development process. Nigeria could lend credence and improve on the present fifty-two per cent score of Senegal's Global Index Score on gender equality by reducing her deep rooted religion and cultural resistance by ratifying and domesticating all gender equality related and constitutional reform bills, allotting a good proportion of the budget to all the development indices as highlighted earlier and involving all in the development process rather than chasing white elephant projects that bring tangential rewards, and in most cases hydra-headed to the beneficiaries of such projects. The goal of building a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens entails strong commitment to signed policies and laws.

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