

Gaps in Gender Equality and Sensitivity in Nigeria Democratic Era: Bane of Sustainable Development and Nation Building In The 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Gender Equality and sensitivity is very crucial in galvanizing and articulating growth and development in various sectors of the national spheres. The Gender equality policy is one of the 17 global goals that make up the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. An integrated approach is fundamental for human progress, growth and development and other multiple goals of United Nation Development Programme (UNDP). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to build on these achievements and to ensure that there is an end to discrimination against women and girl's child in the society. Premised on this background, this paper focuses attention specifically on the link between gender equality and sustainable development; the impacts and relevance of gender equality and sensitivity to Sustainable Development and eradicating Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Nigeria; investigate factors undermining and militating against gender equality and sensitivity in Nigeria. The paper also focuses attention on the Nigeria Government Efforts towards Achieving Gender Equality by 2030. Roles of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in activating and implementing gender equality policy in Nigeria; investigates the challenges encountered by United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) in implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its gender equality policy in Nigeria; and proffered policy options and recommendation aimed at curbing various challenges confronting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gender Equality in Nigeria. The data for this study was collected through primary and secondary sources. Consequently, secondary data were retrieved from textbooks, journals, newspapers, articles, internet materials and literatures in relation to the subject studied. The paper revealed that the gender equality policy in Nigeria has created legal system for women and child rights defenders; promoting and protecting the practice and culture of gender equality. The paper concludes that gender responsive policies and services which respond to gender specific needs play relevant roles in sustainable development.

Keywords: Gender, Equality, Sustainable, Development, Growth

I. INTRODUCTION

Since year 2000, the United Nation Development Programmes (UNDP) together with the United Nation (UN) partners the rest of the global communities to make Gender Equality its priority and major concern. In achieving and accelerating sustainable development in Nigeria, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is very crucial and important. Ending all forms discrimination and gender inequality against girls child and women is not only a basic human right violation, but it's also has a great multiplier effect across all other development areas.

Gender equality is one of the 17 global goals that make up the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. An integrated approach is decisive and fundamental for progress, growth and development across the multiple goals of United Nation Development Programme (UNDP). The Sustainable Development Goals aim to build on these achievements to ensure that there is an end to discrimination against women and girl's child everywhere in the society. There are still gross inequalities in access to paid employment in some region and states in Nigeria, and significant gaps between men and women in the labour market. Sexual violence and

exploitation is still order of the day in our society, the unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work and discrimination in public decision making all remain huge barriers.

On a global scale, achieving gender equality also requires eliminating harmful practices against women and girl's child which including sex trafficking, femicide, wartime sexual violence and other oppression tactics. Accordingly, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) stated that, "despite many international agreements affirming their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor and illiterate. They have less access to property ownership, credit, training and employment. They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence".

According to Muhammad (2006), promoting gender equality is now globally accepted as a development strategy for reducing poverty levels among women and men, improving health and living standards and enhancing efficiency of public investments. The attainment of gender equality is not only seen as an end in itself and human issue, but as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development. In the same vein, Ojo and Adedayo (2021), sees gender inequality in working place as internal and external violent conflicts that dramatically affected the social, economic, and political conditions of entire populace.

According to UNDP, Gender Equality Project (GEP) has trained nearly millions women worldwide in small and artisanal livelihoods, marketing their products and expanding their businesses. As most women who participate have no formal education, the programme also offers a month-long class that teaches the necessary business skills, including reading and circulation (UNDP Reports, 2011).

Nigeria is one of the third world countries where the gender equality has been a major challenge. The Northern region and the some state in southern region for instance exhibit this tendency with high degree of intensity where women and girl's child are nothing to their ethnic and cultural practices, though their subsisting cases of injustice and inequality against gender equality practice all over the world. Various stakeholders around the world are demanding for leadership role and direction in the fight against gender inequality. To turn these agitations into actions, world leaders adopt the agenda for sustainable development. The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which will guide government policy and funding for the next 15years, beginning with a historic pledge to end gender equality all over the world. The Federal Government of Nigeria under the current leadership of President Mohammadu Buhari makes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) programmes and policies priority of its change agenda.

Nigeria as a member of the United Nations signed and ratified the various relevant international instruments, treaties and conventions without reservation. These instruments have always emphasized that member nations put in place all the necessary mechanisms needed to eliminate gender discriminations, ensure equality and human dignity to all men and women. Yet there persists discrimination in national and state statues, customary and religious laws. Nigeria traditions, customs, sexual stereotyping of social roles and cultural prejudice continue to militate against the rights and full participation of women on an equal basis with men in national development (Ciroma, 2006).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a development agenda applies to all countries, the agenda has promotes peaceful, inclusive societies, create jobs and tackles the environmental challenges. The new global goals were saddle to comprehend the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) policy (Paul Ladd, 2015). This paper is a critical study of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gender Equality and Sensitivity in Nigeria. Gender inequalities and Gender based violence has continued to threaten the country's development, peace, security and stability. The uncontrolled gender inequality and gender based violence has become a major threat to Nigerians. Apart from causing vulnerability and serious human right violations, the phenomenon undermines development efforts.

Recent developments in Nigeria have shown that and gender inequality and gender based violence has increased the intensity as some gender based violence and threat against girl's child and women in the society such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), slavery, sexual assault and harassment, rape, victim of wars and unrest, inferiority complex and deprivation of rights and freedom in some communities across Nigeria states. Increasingly, gender inequality and gender based violence are now recognized as a security-related humanitarian problem that needs to be tackled by states on a national, regional and international level. It is a well known fact that gender inequality and gender based violence exacerbates humanitarian problems and crises. These menaces are major contributing factors to the spread of social violence and insecurity that needs to be curbed.

Therefore, this paper established and ascertained the link between Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gender Equality and Sensitivity in Nigeria. assessed the roles of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in activating and implementing gender equality policy in Nigeria; examined the impacts and relevance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to gender equality and eradicating Gender Based Violence in Nigeria; investigate factors undermining and militating against Gender Equality in Nigeria; investigate the challenges encountered by United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) in implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its gender equality policy in Nigeria; and proffer policy options and recommendation aimed

at curbing various challenges confronting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and gender equality in Nigeria

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria

According to UNDP report, since the year 2015, the global action were draft and adopted with a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is affirmative action to deliver sustainable development agenda globally. The 17 goals to be implemented basically is to ensure; zero hunger, good health and well being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry innovation and infrastructure, reduction of inequalities, urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for Sustainable Development amongst others. These goals capture the essence of development in any nation. Amongst the vision of the goals is to improve standard of living and protect the planet for future generations as well to realize the future want.

Nigeria prospect of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are expected to be pursued in an inclusive and people centered manner, thereby focus on institutional and policy strengthening supportive of the programme and projects. The Nigeria road map to the SDGs is however designed to focus on six thematic areas namely: policies, data management, institutions, partnership, communications and finance. The implementation programme is designed to be carried out in 3 phases and according to the specific needs of each zone of the country (Adefulire, 2015).

As national processes for the roll-out of SDGs are being established globally, Nigeria is taking the lead on the continent by showing best practice in early domestication, integration and implementation of these goals through sub-national mainstreaming, inter-agency coordination and institutional strengthening (Premium Times, 2018).

According to Adefulire (2015), the objective of the SDGs is to stimulate action over the next 15years in areas of critical importance, namely poverty and hunger eradication, preventable child death and all inclusiveness in Nigeria economy. In corroborating this assertion, “world leaders have an unprecedented opportunity in 2015 to shift the world onto a path of inclusive, sustainable and resilient development” (Helen Clark, 2015)

Gender Equality in Nigeria: Analytical Perspective

According to (Akubue 2001) and Acha (2009) women form about half the world population and any society which neglect such a large number of human resource potential cannot achieve any meaningful development. At the local and international level, population problems especially to women constitute the cornerstone of discussions about the gap between the actual numbers of women to employ, educate, equip and so on. In Nigeria, the underestimation of the female population growth has been blamed for the marginalization of women because the actual number is far higher than the number accounted.

Nigeria population census reveals no change as figures released from Nigeria’s census indicates that the country’s mainly Muslim northern states accounted for just over half of the country’s 140million population in 1991. This is roughly the same result as shown in the last census 15years ago. The combined gross enrollment for primary, secondary and tertiary schools for female was 57% compared to 71% for males in 2002 (Ojo, 2002). This translates into fewer women in certain economic fields as well. The percentages of female workers in some selected professions were as follow: Architects 2.4%, Lawyers 25.4%, Lecturers 11.8%, Journalist 15.2% and Quantity Surveyors 3.5% (Ojo, 2002).

Accordingly, Peter (2010) said “there is no doubt that in any contemporary society, population either in terms of size or composition has far reaching implications for change, development and the quality of life. For instance, high population exerts pressure on the ecosystem leading to issues around food security, land tenure, water supply and environmental degradation. And on the economy, rapid population growth will demand that government spend more on provision of education, health, shelter, employment and other social facilities. This gives rise to need that actual number of women should be used to achieve and ascertain Millennium Development Goals three (3), that is, to promote gender equality and empower women, instead of using small fraction of the women population. To correct these anomalies, scholars rightly suggest that gender analysis be made a standard tool for economic analysis and of project design and monitoring.

Gender equality in Nigeria is influenced by different cultures and beliefs. In most parts of Nigeria, women are considered subordinate to their male counterparts, especially in Northern Nigeria. It is generally believed that women are best suited as home keepers (Wikipedia, 2016). Feminism hadn’t appeared in Nigeria much until roughly 40years ago, due to a woman named Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti. She was born in

Nigeria and was educated through the British schooling system. She supported and fought for women's rights, as well as for women having larger impacts in the Nigerian Government. She was a part of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), which helped more women to gain government positions (Odim, 2016).

Roles of Gender Equality in Sustainable Development

Globally, women's roles are found to be in the midst of change. These changes may stem from technological improvement, as industrialization has made extensive home-based production obsolete and reduced the demand for children. Instead of the gendered specialization in autarkic households, contemporary specialization in the market place may have led to lower fertility and consequent shifts in women's economic roles. As historic hierarchical gender valuations appear in many different guises, adjustment to these changes pose challenges on many different levels (Mikkola, 2005).

Gender equality is a multidimensional term assuming economic, cultural and social dimensions. In perspective, if we confine the observations to only employment-related factors, such as activity rate, and define gender equality as the absence of gender-based discrimination, the relationship between gender equality and economic growth. When gender equality was present in the labour market, work in society is distributed rationally between all the genders based on aptitude and skill. This means that a given occupation is allotted to the person most appropriate and not due to biases or discriminating rules or practices. This leads to a better economic outcome than in alternative cases because skill and ability determine the outcome rather than historic socio-economic boundaries and stereotypes (Entrepreneur Media, 2018).

Gender equality is not just the concern of half of the world's population; it is a human right, a concern for us all, because no society can develop economically, politically or socially when half of its population is marginalized. Gender equality is of great importance for the global business. Gender is a cultural construct, within which our different values, roles and responsibilities to women and men. However, in addition to culture, the gender issues are close relation with the global business.

Nigeria Government Efforts towards Achieving Gender Equality by 2030

According to National Gender Policy (NCP), there are various strategies, plans and steps put in place by Nigeria in order to accomplish Gender Equality by 2030.

The governments establish the framework for gender-responsiveness in all public and private spheres and strengthen capacities of all stakeholders to deliver their component mandate of the gender policy and national gender strategic framework. The targets of the policy are to develop and operate gender sensitive sectoral policies, building effective partnership, promoting gender equality principles and practices and to ensure that all partnerships with national and international organizations with adequate human, technical and financial resources for effective performance by the year 2030.

The government was able to establish and strengthen appropriate educational, training, institutional and operational frameworks that link the macro-policy environment effectively with the macro level where women, men and communities are experiencing the manifestations of gender inequality. In addition, the strategy aims to remove all gender-based barriers (including tenure security, access to credit and inputs) facing women in agricultural production and enhance the visibility, productivity, valuation and documentation of women's work in the agricultural sector.

Government adopts gender mainstreaming as a core value and practice in social transformation, organizational cultures and in the general polity in Nigeria. To this end, government entrench a culture of gender sensitivity and equality principles in all institutions and structures of government, private sector and communities with gender policies. This policy also includes elimination of all harmful cultural, religious and social gender-based practices.

The Nigeria government in her effort also incorporates the principles of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other global and regional frameworks that support gender equality and women empowerment in the country's laws, legislative processes, judicial and administrative systems. The targets are to achieve equity and equality in employment opportunities and eliminate all discriminatory and abusive practices (on the grounds of sex, ethnicity, class, religion, age, disability and marital status) against the employment of women in the public and private sectors of the economy by 2030.

Nigeria government plans to achieve minimum threshold of representation for women in order to promote equal opportunity in all areas of political, social, economic life of the country for women, as well as for men. The targets of this goal is to provide equal opportunities for women and men to enjoy and attain an acceptable minimum threshold of universal access to potable water, sanitation, electricity, transportation, road

networks and general security of life and property by 2030. Government also adopt special measures, quotas and mechanisms for achieving minimum critical threshold of women in political offices, party organs and public life by pursuing 35% affirmative action in favour of women to bridge gender gaps in political representation in both elective and appointive posts at all levels by 2030.

Government has undertake women and men specific projects as a means of developing the capabilities of both women and men, to enable them take advantage of economic and political opportunities towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. To this extent, government plans to ensure equal access of women and men to critical resources (capital, labour, land, technology and entrepreneurial skills) through special initiatives and reduce the number of citizens in core poverty group particularly women by 2030.

Nigeria government also educates and sensitizes all stakeholders on the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to the attainment of overall national development. The target of these plans is to guarantee equal access to women, men, girls and boys to both formal and informal education and skills development opportunities through special programmes and initiative by 2030; to improve demand and supply factors that hamper retention, completion and high school performances, especially for the girl child at all levels- primary, secondary, tertiary and in the informal setting by 2030; mainstream Gender studies in the taught and evaluated curriculum of all formal and non-formal educational institutions/courses at all levels-primary to tertiary by 2030; strengthen and reposition the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) as the lead Gender machinery and the National Centre for Women Development as the primary gender research, training and documentation institution, to enhance capacities of all stakeholders for effective gender mainstreaming and women empowerment by 2025.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) or gender budgeting has both intrinsic and instrumental relevance. GRB have been one of plan put in place by various signatory countries to SDGs programs in order to eliminate gender inequalities with significant improvements in social, educational, health and economic.

Nigeria government is not exceptional in implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) or gender budgeting. This strategy have been helping the government to fast-track it gender equality agenda across broad. The approval of the National Gender Policy is the first step in accomplishing this vision of change and social transformation. It is envisaged that the National Gender Policy shall be operated within the current structures of governance.

III. METHODOLOGY

The data for this study were collected through primary and secondary source. The primary data was collected through the administering of interviews by the researcher to the some selected stakeholders. Consequently secondary data were retrieved from textbooks, internet materials, newspapers, magazines, relevant material and literatures from academic journals in relation to the subject study

Theoretical Framework

The Gender Equality and Sensitivity and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria can be explained within the context of Gender Equality Theory.

Gender Equality Theory: Gender equality theory is a theory which state equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviours, aspirations and needs equally. Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) fearlessly fought for gender and racial equality. Sojourner Truth was an African-American abolitionist who dedicated her entire life to fighting and defending gender equality. Gender equality between men and women entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. The theory believes that different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality theory established the fairness of treatment for both male (men) and female (women), according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

The gender equality includes the claim that the abolition of gender segregation of occupational roles is necessary for the attainment of women's equality. According to Schlegel, neither segregation of work roles nor participation in production, this determines the status of women and men. Sanday's (1981) avers that production and present status of women are to that of men. Schlegel's, claimed that gender equality is needed in a high mythical and cultural evaluation as well as women's participation in sacred roles.

By application, the aims and objectives of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) programmes in Nigeria are to balance and close to gaps of gender inequality at various levels. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which to bring fairness of treatment, equal ease of access to resources and freedom to develop

gender personal abilities by equivalent the rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities between men and women in Nigeria State. Conflict arises as a result of disagreement between two antagonising parties and classes (Raji & Adedayo, 2021). For any given society to develop, there is need to bring fairness of treatment, equal ease of access to resources and freedom to develop gender personal abilities by equivalent the rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities between men and women in Nigeria.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This aspect presents the result and discussion of specific objectives of the study.

Women in Nigerian politics are incredibly too few. In the national parliament (both the Senate and House of Representatives) and State House of Assemblies. Nevertheless, there was an increase in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 compared to the representation in Nigerian National Parliament (Senate and House of Representatives) from 1999 to 2003.

Table: Women in Nigerian Parliament

Nigeria Position in World Ranking	House of Representatives				Senate			
	Election Dates	Seats	Number of Women	%	Election Dates	Seats	Number of Women	%
181	March, 2019	360	22	3.0	March, 2019	109	7	6.5
181	March, 2015	360	24	5.6	March, 2015	109	7	6.5
125	April, 2011	360	24	6.8	April, 2011	109	7	6.4
117	April, 2007	360	25	7.0	April, 2007	109	9	8.3
107	April, 2003	360	21	4.9	April, 2003	109	3	2.8
104	April, 1999	360	12	3.4	April, 1999	109	3	2.8

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The number of women elected to Public offices (Legislative arm) in Nigeria did not increase after 2019 election. Instead, there was a decline to women political participation since the inception of the fourth republic. According to Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), 2019, 62 Women have been recorded as elected, a meager 4.17 per cent of elected officials. This figure shows decline from the 2019-2023 period. In the 2019 General Election, 235 women, forming 12.34 percent of candidates, contested for a seat in the senate of which seven (7) (6.42 percent) were elected. In the House of Representative, 533 women contested, with the major parties fielding a total of 31 (15 APC and 16 PDP) candidates. However, only 11 (3.05 percent) have been elected.

Table: Women in States House of Assemblies across 36 states in Nigeria From 2019 to 2022

S/N	States	Number of Seats	Number of Women	Percentage
1	Abia State	24	0	0%
2	Adamawa State	25	0	0%
3	Akwa Ibom State	26	0	0%
4	Anambra State	30	1	1%
5	Bayelsa State	24	0	0%
6	Bauchi State	31	0	0%
7	Benue State	17	0	0%
9	Borno State	30	1	1%
10	Cross Rivers State	32	1	1%
11	Delta State	29	0	0%
12	Ebonyi State	18	0	0%
13	Edo State	24	0	0%
14	Enugu State	23	1	1%
15	Ekiti State	26	4	16.7%
16	Gombe State	24	1	1%
17	Imo State	32	1	1%
18	Jigawa State	30	1	1%
19	Kaduna State	34	0	0%
20	Kano State	40	0	0%

21	Kastina State	34	1	1%
22	Kebbi State	24	1	1%
23	Kogi State	25	0	0%
24	Kwara State	24	1	1%
25	Lagos State	41	2	4.9%
26	Nasarawa State	24	0	0%
27	Niger State	27	0	0%
28	Rivers State	32	2	6.25%
29	Plateau State	25	0	0%
30	Ondo State	26	1	1%
31	Ogun State	26	4	16.7%
32	Osun State	26	0	0%
33	Sokoto State	30	0	0%
34	Taraba State	24	1	1%
35	Yobe State	24	2	8.33%
36	Zamfara State	24	0	0%
	Total	957	26	2.71%

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The participation of women and men in formal and informal decision-making structures varies greatly between countries, but is generally in favored of men. Institutional as well cultural, economic and societal factors limit women's opportunities and abilities to participate in decision making. Women's low political representation is therefore often used as an indicator of gender inequality. Specifically, the 'proportion of seats held by women in national parliament' was chosen as one of the indicators to measure progress on SDG on Gender Equality and women empowerment. Women are underrepresented not only in the political sphere but also in decision-making within the private sector, and in civil society. At the state and federal level, men usually dominate positions of power.

Poor levels of participation and representation in political process and decision-making bodies is exacerbated, for both men and women, by intersecting discriminations relating to ethnic group, socioeconomic status, religion, disability and sexual orientation.

A) Roles of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in activating and implementing gender equality policy in Nigeria

As gathered, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) activities in Nigeria has preventing and ending gender inequality and insensitive to some extent, the gender equality policy of SDGs has also introduced legal systems, creating women and girls child rights defenders, promoting and protect the concept and practice of gender equality. The intervention Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria have build political will, legal and institutional capacity to end gender inequality, gender responsive policies and services which respond to gender specific needs.

In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have also end discriminatory cultural and traditional practices, tackle harmful social norms, promote equal decision-making power of female (women), and support local civil society and women's organization in Nigeria states. The program have also empower women and girls child to seek and claim their rights including establishment of voice and agency to this effect. For instance, the Ekiti State Government through the Ekiti State House of Assembly has enacted various laws that provides equal opportunities for all persons and prohibits all forms of gender-based violence, discrimination and inequalities. These laws were domiciled in the office of the Ekiti State First Lady Office, Erelu Olabisi Adeleye Fayemi for effective monitoring, implementation and management. Sustainable development requires an institutional framework that will be able to promote strong central guidance, intergovernmental and interagency coordination, combined with participation from the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Treurnicht, 1997). By implication, it becomes imperative for Nigeria Federal Government and every state to take a serious look at the scourge of conflicts among various ethnic groups, tribes, religions, political parties etc, and to design viable and workable mechanisms for building indigenous conflict resolution strategy that will aid sustainable development (Familugba & Adedayo, 2020).

B) Impacts and relevance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to Gender Equality and eradicating Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Nigeria

By accessing the cross-cutting impacts and relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to Gender Equality and eradicating gender based violence in Nigeria. Based on the information gathered in this study, I have identified some consequential effects that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as it contributed

immensely to campaigns on gender equality and gender development and it also eradicate gender based violence to some extent and the program has improve gender equality in various sectors especially in government institutions, political participation, religion institutions.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has create more equitable, unbiased and non-discriminatory structures in Nigeria i.e. government both at the national and local level, the justices sectors and private corporations now promote women's full and equal participation, because global development embed gender equality in policies and practices. The SDGs have also increase more balanced gender power relations in Nigeria landscape as such women and men are now equal in decision making at all levels, from household to across economic, political and social spheres and the results of this are seen in improved outcomes for women and girls child in Nigeria. The SDGs have designed various programmes to empower women at all levels in Nigeria states.

C) Factors undermining and militating against gender equality in Nigeria

As it was observed and gathered, the major factors undermining and militating against gender equality in Nigeria cut across political, cultural, religious, economic, psychological and social lines.

There are some many factors hindering female participation in Nigeria political system such as, public policies that are not beneficial to women, political and economic experience, level of education, because it's not all women acquired adequate political education.

In addition, cultural belief is one of the major factors hindering gender equality in Nigeria, because it is an ethos issue. In the traditional society, female (women) are made to stay out of politics. In a most traditional Nigerian society, politics is believed to be the duty of the man, since he is the head, participating in politics automatically bequeaths one with power; it is generally accepted in some Nigeria states that only men be allowed to wield such political power.

It was observed that there is psychological factor hinders female participation in developmental programmes, events, community projects and open politics by implanting various reasons or motives in the mind on why female (women) cannot participate fully in developmental events and open politics. This psychologically threats discourage female (women) from participating in developmental programmes in Nigeria. In addition poverty and disempowerment also hindered gender equality in Nigeria society. We can conclude that the most empowered gender is the male (man), some female (women) are also empowered but cannot exceed the number of empowered male (men), and being empowered attracts authority, dominance, wealth and so on.

D) Challenges encountered by United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) in implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its gender equality policy in Nigeria

The major challenges encountered by United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) in implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) policy and its gender equality policy in Nigeria, includes; political will, inadequate education on gender equality, coordination, networking and monitoring, resource mobilization, inadequate sensitization programmes on sustainable development and gender equality, lack of gender sensitive research and data, inadequate social cultural orientation, lack of legislative and administrative framework to collaborate SDGs projects in Nigeria and lack of gender management system in Nigeria.

On the challenges encountered by United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) in implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its gender equality policy not mentioned earlier, it was also observed that major challenge to achieve the policy objectives are moving from the policy prescriptions to the actualization of the policy goal and targets. For the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be functional, greater synergy is required among stakeholders. According to Orelope-Adefulire, the major challenges of SDGs in Nigeria are inadequate resource flow due to the global economic downturn and in-coordination from the both private and public sector agencies and organizations. It was also discovered that gender education and capacity building are not been handle by gender professionals and technical expertise.

E) Policy options and recommendation aimed at curbing various challenges confronting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gender Equality in Nigeria

The section presents the findings from the analysis of recommendations to achieve genuine aimed at curbing various challenges confronting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gender Equality in Nigeria.

According to Orelope-Adefulire, in order for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be stimulated stronger in Nigeria, SDGs required more holistically approach and collaboration between committed stakeholders including government, public and private sector agencies and organizations, United Nations, multilateral agencies and citizens. She further said that government have created opportunity for all stakeholders to come together to design a model that would fully complement the UN expectations of a universal agenda.

Additionally, workable policies must be implemented by Nigeria government in order to curb various challenges confronting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and gender equality. In implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria states, the political office holder should not be allow in directing various activities or project of SDGs. The gender equality must be passing into law by all states legislative arms and the

gender equality law must be fully implemented by the executive. The issue of corruption and impunity must be tackled head on in executing SDGs programmes in various Nigeria states.

In addition, the activities various Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) groups working under the guise gender equality in Nigeria must be monitored by relevant government ministry, agency or department. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) should step up her communities' sensitization on issue of sustainable development and gender equality. Furthermore, overarching institutional restructuring and increased professionalism is required in order to meet demands of this Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) policy.

Major Findings

This aspect presents and discusses the major findings of the study.

It is tremendously obvious that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) policy on gender equality in various communities in Nigeria states have made positive impacts on various sectors in the society. For instance, the gender equality policy has made meaningful impacts within some ethnic and racial groups by putting ends to some of their traditional and cultural conduct. Some religion organizations have embraced this gender equality by giving some leadership roles and functions to women, major and leading political parties in Nigeria make sure that women play active roles in decision making and occupy major positions both at the party level and in government setting.

The gender inequality and gender based violence posing a grave threat to human security, growth and development in Nigeria. Observing the deteriorating implications of gender inequality and gender based violence, the study reveals that people of the various communities within Nigeria States are aware of these menaces. The following are the major findings that emanated from the study.

- a. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have made meaningful progress and achievement in promoting gender equality in Nigeria states
- b. Gender inequality and gender based violence is predominant and rampant in Northern region and some states in the Southern Nigerian which women and girl's child are victims of this menace.
- c. Gender inequality and gender based violence in Nigeria have succeeded in damaging and depressing the social lifestyle of many citizens of the country and if not controlled it will violate international humanitarian law.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Gender scholars, researchers and experts have come to a conclusion that gender equality policy of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is one of the core policies of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has played significant efforts in reducing gender inequality, gender based violence, injustice and issues of development in Nigeria. It is also conclusive to state that the tendencies of the gender equality goal have improved, facilitated and fast-tracked social interaction and humanitarian development and have given equal opportunity to humanity to some extent within Nigeria states.

However, structural issues such as traditional practices and cultural beliefs, norms, values, attitudes and customs in some communities and states in Nigeria remain a major drawback to the efforts of full implementation of gender equality in the country and in order to bring the needed result and much desired development in Nigeria states and regions at large.

The gender equality policy of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has also put an end to some cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to some extent, inferiority complex of women in the society, molestation and harassment of women in various Nigeria states. It has also improved enrollment of girl's child in schools especially in the Northern Nigeria states.

In view of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gender Equality and Sensitivity in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proffered:

- a. Federal government of Nigeria should make gender equality its priority by being gender sensitive in appointing people into political and government offices.
- b. The Nigeria National Assembly should enact and pass into law the gender equality bill before legislative arms or the existing gender equality law should be strengthened and reviewed because it is outdated and ineffective to meet present challenges.
- c. Government at all levels should establish departments in various ministries that will be in-charge of gender equality and should double efforts in bringing sustainable development to their people, particularly those in the local communities.
- d. Federal Government of Nigeria should introduce gender education into the school curriculum.
- e. Transparency, Accountability and Good Governance should be the hallmark of every level of Government in implementing, articulating and executing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and gender equality policy.
- f. Policy on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially gender equality should be adopted by all sectors as a way of preserving and sustaining the traditional occupation of the populace at large.

- g. The National Orientation Agency should partner with credible Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and the media to mount enlightenment and orientation programmes on the practice of gender equality awareness and Stiffer and more stringent law should be made to check gender based violence

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