

Women Marginalization and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

In order to combat many forms of discrimination against women, Nigeria adopted the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, larger percentage of women remain disenfranchised in economic, social and political spheres especially in Nigeria. Existing studies on women marginalization used mainly historical analysis. Hence, the objective of this paper is to examine the impact of women marginalization on sustainable development in Nigeria. Secondary data were obtained from the databases of World Development Indicators (WDI), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Women (UN Women). These data were analyzed using descriptive and econometric methods. Findings from this study positive and significant relationships between sustainable development and female labour force (flf) ($p=0.0003<0.05$), female labour participation rate (flpr) ($p=0.0000<0.05$), female employment in service sector (fes) ($p=0.0000<0.05$) and female employment in Industry (fei) ($p=0.0000<0.05$), while there exist a negative and insignificant relationship between female primary enrolment (fpenr) ($p=0.6787>0.05$). The study recommended policies that will enhance complete inclusion of women in politics, governance and in top level business management and in all facets of national development should be in place of achievement of sustainable development.

Keywords:Sustainable development, SDGs, Women marginalization, FLMOLS, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The contribution of women in today's society is enormous. However, these contributions have been limited in most societies where their potentials have not been annexed. With gender equality being the top most battle of this century, marginalisation of women remains a universal and long-term issue (Mandy and Jawad, 2018). Despite their limitless potentials, most countries, cultures and religious settings do not recognise their contributions in parenting house chores.

Despite the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1985 and the National Gender Policy of 2006 in Nigeria, inequality still persists mainly because of a variety of structural and cultural issues. Marginalization of women persists in all spheres of human endeavour (Adegoke et al, 2016; Anyoba et al, 2015; Sam, 2014) from inequality in labour market, lower wages, high rate of unemployed women and lower political participation, the sphere of marginalization of women seems to be unending. Politically, women are being fenced out from the mainstream of political activities as they are strategically positioned to occupy second fiddle offices of 'deputy' and 'vice' (Awofeso and Temitayo, 2014). The 2023 National Assembly polls are proving the fact of the extent to which women are being marginalized in the political space in Nigeria, only 15 of the 423 legislative seats declared by the electoral body are women while 408 are men. Thus, women represent 3.5% while men has 96.5% of the 423 seats (Kayode, 2023) this is a far cry for a nation struggling with developmental issues.

By the virtue of population of Nigeria, the potential female labour force is 50% but the actual value is 31% as they are more prominent in the informal sector (Salako, 2019). Majorly, 60.5% women are involved in trading activities and rendering of services, 15.65% are

involved in agriculture; 14.3% are in skilled manual work while only 0.6% and 0.3% are in clerical and unskilled manual work (Akeju, 2022).

The traditional system in Nigeria relegates women to the background (Oluwakemi, 2021), they are underrepresented in decision making virtually in all sector of society (Ewuim et al, 2015). A significantly low number are engaged in professional career or are elected or served as appointed officials in government position, very few women make up activists groups (Fatile et al, 2012; Olojede, 2009)

It is clear that dominant patterns of development is bias towards female gender, the disproportionate effects of economic, social and environmental shocks on women intensify unsustainable patterns of development (Neumayer and Plümper, 2007) causing persistent poverty amongst women. Sustainable development promotes growth in every sector of a state (Oluwakemi, 2021). It serves as an enabling tool for people to reach the highest level of their ability, through freedom of economic, social and family actions, etc may leads to sustainable environment (Society for International Development, 2018; Damilola, 2015).

Central to sustainable world is achieving gender equality and realizing the human rights, dignity and capabilities of diverse groups of women (United Nation, 2014). Contributing to exacerbating gender inequality in Nigeria is under-representation of women in political life, low labour force participation, low wages and religious and cultural underpinning. If half of the population is excluded, sustainable development is just a thought (Espinosa, 2020)

Empowering women in the economy and closing gender gaps in the world of work are key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, to achieve gender equality, and Goal 8, to promote full and productive employment and decent work for all; also Goal 1 on ending poverty, Goal 2 on food security, Goal 3 on ensuring health and Goal 10 on reducing inequalities. When more women work, economies grow. Women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, increases economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive development outcomes (Adrew, 2020)

Related studies centered majorly on the determinants of labour market participation by women. Other studies on gender analysis and women marginalization and as well as the impacts on sustainable development employed majorly historical and descriptive analysis (Mandy and Jawal, 2018; Godwin, 2015; Olayemi and Olayemi, 2019). However, this study employed both descriptive and empirical analysis of the impacts of women marginalization on sustainable development in Nigeria. Section 2 and 3 presented literature review and research methods. Section 4 centered on data analysis and presentation, while section 5 concluded the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Clarifications

Sustainable Development

The term "sustainable development" refers to both the structural transformation or changes in the productive and distributive input and output systems of the economy the sustained qualitative improvement in the overall standard of life of people in a community or nation (Gbadebo et al, 2018). World Commission on Environment (1987) defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present generation without hindering the future generation from meeting their needs. These entail food, housing, clothing, health, education, employment, industrial and agricultural development, preservation and protection of the environment to enable people to live a comfortable life (Gbadebo et al, 2018).

Women Marginalization

Marginalization is the exclusion or subordination experienced by a group of people, as a result of inequality in the control of 'resources and power structures' within the society (Kenny, 1999). Nigeria being a patriarchal society in which women are subordinate to men to varying degrees depending on where one reside in the country. Studies have linked cultural views, religion, early marriage, education, and sexuality to the causes and manifestations of women gender discrimination. "Traditional cultural attitudes in most societies discriminate against women, denying them opportunities in education and technology (Yila and Azeez, 2018). The contributing factor to this, is the systematic institutionalization of male superiority over the female in all spheres of human endeavour. Women are being made to play the role of dependant in their entire life circle, as children they depend on their father, as wives they depend on their husbands and at the later stage of their life they depend on their sons.

2.2 Theoretical Stance

The social inclusion theory (Sen, 2003; Whiteside, 2011) is the foundation of this study. Social inclusion attempts to enable underprivileged and marginalized people to benefit from expanding global opportunities. It guarantees that individuals have a voice in decisions that have an impact on their lives as well as equal access to markets, services, and political, social, and physical environments. In this study, social inclusion is defined as providing assistance to more vulnerable groups such as the marginalized women in Nigeria so they can achieve acceptable standards of living, which will then lay the groundwork for greater possibilities (mostly in the form of gainful job) and increased capacities (education).

Behind the concept of social leverage comes the core premise of social inclusion. This final idea primarily refers to initiatives taken, typically by state organizations, with the primary goal of integrating, on a social and economic level, society groups that exhibit a high degree of vulnerability. They are underprivileged individuals from marginalized socioeconomic groups (Sen, 2003; Whiteside, 2011).

2.3 Empirical review

Related studies spanned from various dimensions of gender inequality and discrimination that excludes women from socioeconomic and political activities in Nigeria. In the study conducted by Anyanwu and Adesanya (2021), long run elasticity among womens' labour market participation, economic growth and development in Nigeria. Using Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation technique, cointegrating relationships was established with time series data for the period of 1981 to 2015. Exploring the causes of low trend in female participation in a paid job in Nigeria using evidence from Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS 2013), Akeju (2022) employed logistic regression with the dependent variable determined by women currently working. Findings revealed that region, educational attainment, religion and marital status of women have a significant effect on female involvement in labour participation. Findings also indicate that the drive to cater for family and dependants pushes women into and out of jobs. Nweagu et al (2015) employed the logistic regression on a house hold survey data of employment and discovered that the determinants of female labour participation were not the same in urban and rural areas. The result suggested that age and literacy rate were the significant determinants in the urban sector. marital status, religion, poverty rate and per capita income were significant determinants in the rural sector.

Other lines of studies employed historical analysis to analyse the issue of women gender and development. For instance, Godwin (2015), Mandy and Jawal (2018) utilized secondary materials and historical analysis to describe women's empowerment invincibility in sustaining development in Nigeria, contending that there will be negative impact on sustainable

development if women are not adequately empowered in the midst of teaming population of Nigeria. In addition, Olonode et al (2021) used historical analysis to show that treating both genders are correctly with equal participation and not discriminating will result in sustainable development of Nigeria. Another study using survey research design by Abolade (2021) on gender equality and and issue of sustainable development in Nigeria revealed that women are discriminated against and they still play the second fiddle and that the inequality hinders the coveted sustainable development in the nation. Gbadebo et al (2018) also found a positive and significant relationship between gender equality and sustainable development, whereas a negative significant relationship was observed between environmental performance and sustainable development in Nigeria. A number of researchers have drawn on neoclassical and overlapping generation models to show that the potential contribution of women to growth would be even more significant in the absence of household occupational constraints (Akanbi and Akintunde, 2019).

3. Research Methods

In order to examine the impact of women discrimination on sustainable development in Nigeria, the research design of Gbadebo et al (2018) was adopted. The study employed data from 1990 to 2022 compiled from the databases of World Bank (World Economic Indicators), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletin and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The data set was limited to these years as a result of inconsistency and or non availability of data.

We employed some of the United Nations measures of sustainable development based on the availability of data in Nigeria. Sustainable development was measured using Real GDP per capita growth Water quality measured by annual fresh water. Marginalization was captured using female primary enrolment (fpenr), female employment in service sector(fes), female employment in industry (fei),female labour participation rate (flpr), gross domestic product per capital(gdpc) and water quality(afw).

The functional transformation of the relationship among the aforementioned variables is presented as follows

$$SD= f(WMG) \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

SD is sustainable development and WMG is women marginalization

$$SD=f(fpenr, fes, flpr, fei,)\dots\dots\dots(2)$$

This functional relationship is transformed into an econometric model for the purpose of estimation as follows .

$$SD=\beta_0 + \beta_1fpenr + \beta_2fes + \beta_3flpr + \beta_4fei + U_t\dots\dots\dots(3)$$

However sustainable development SD is captured by gross domestic product per capital (gdpc) and water quality(afw), we have equation

$$GDPC = \Psi_0 + \Psi_1fpenr + \Psi_2fes + \Psi_3flpr + \Psi_4fei + U_{tx} \dots\dots\dots(4)$$

$$AFW = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1fpenr + \alpha_2fes + \alpha_3flpr + \alpha_4fei + U_{ty} \dots\dots\dots(5)$$

Equations 4 and 5 were estimated and the results presented

4. Analysis and Results

This section employed both descriptive and empirical analysis to present how marginalization of women have affected sustainable development in Nigeria. First, we used descriptive measures like percentages, charts and tables to analyzed various evidences of marginalization in Nigeria. Second, regression analysis showing the effects of marginalization of women on sustainable development was carried out. This was done in three levels. Unit root was conducted to examine the properties of the variables. In addition, conintegration was done to determine whether there exist long run relationship among the variables, before the regression analysis. These were done sections in 4.1 and 4.2

4.1 Evidences of Women Marginalization in Nigeria

Evidences of women marginalization abound in Nigeria. While majority of these evidences were under reported, some were not even documented at all. Issues about structure, religion and culture have impacted both the general status of equality between men and women and the development of the nation's human resources as the engagement of women in all areas of life is concerned. These forms of marginalization ranges from access to education and employment, violence against women and limited access to political participation.

4.1.1 Education and Employment

Apart from sociocultural discrimination that women go through in Nigeria, available statistics revealed that women have limited access to critical health services, basic education as well as employment opportunities. For instance available statistics in Nigeria showed huge gap between men and women in terms of employment and education,

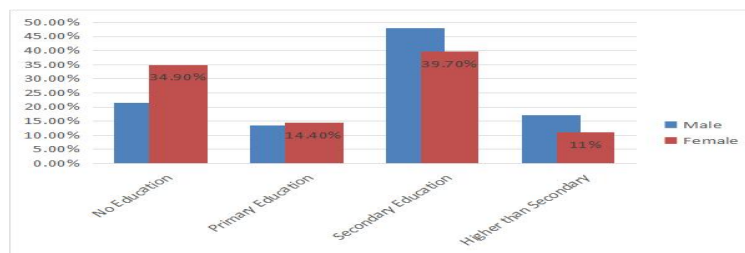


Figure 4.1.1(a): Percentage Distribution by Levels of Education attended 2013- 2018

Figure 4.1.1(a) showed the level of access to education for secondary and tertiary for population of ages 15 to 49, between 2013 and 2018. About 34.9% women as against 21.5% of men had no access to education, whereas only 13.4% men and 14.4% female had access to primary education. UNICEF reported 60% of out of school children in Nigeria were girls out of 18.5 million out of school children (UNICEF, 2022)

It was also shown that the percentage of males that have access to tertiary education far outweighed that of females. This was buttressed by enrolment of students into university at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels as presented in Figure 4.1.1(b)

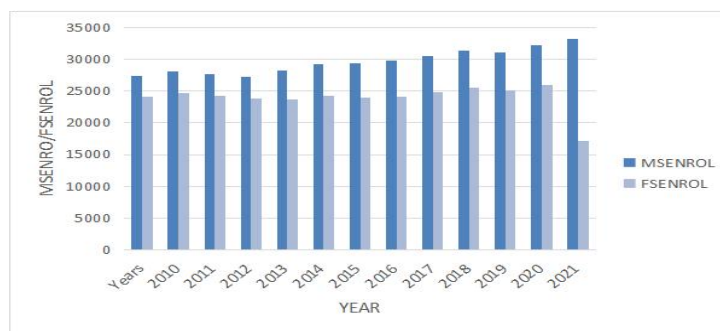


Figure 4.1.1(c): Number of People Employed by gender between 2010-2022

However, for sustainable development to be attained, Goal No.3 of socioeconomic goals is necessary such that necessary skills and competences especially to womenfolk who constitute almost half of the population should be pursued. Figure 4.1.1(b) below revealed that female enrolment in Nigerian universities at undergraduate level was 43.82% in 2018/19. The female enrolment for Postgraduate studies was below 40% 2018/2019 academic session. Generally, males dominated the students' enrolment in Nigeria University for Undergraduate and Postgraduate especially in some critical disciplines.

One of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all including women in order to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty. The share of female in the total employment in Figure 4.1.1(c), 2010 and 2022 showed that the share of women was far below male employment throughout the periods. Nevin (2020), reported that employment in agriculture and services have been skewed towards women as many of them are found in informal sector compared to men,

4.1.2 Violence Against Women

Despite many initiatives on counter terrorism to combat trafficking, sexual violence, child trafficking, evidence abound that women are mostly affected. Violence against women also include physical, psychological, emotional, and economic violence. Figure 4.1.2 presented sexual forms of violence experienced by men and women between 2015 and 2017.

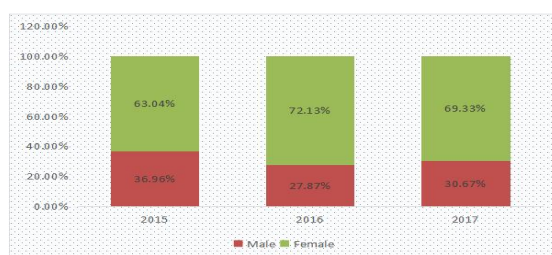


Figure 4.1.2: Percentage of Rape Incidences in Nigeria between 2015 and 2017

Women and girls in Nigeria have higher percentage experience of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, unfortunately, most of these violence are covered up while those reported are swept under carpet. As a result of this violence, women's low social and economic standing and their contributions to sustainable development have been hampered.

4.1.3 Women Marginalization in Leadership Roles and Governance Structure

Some of the highest forms of marginalization manifest in womens' leadership roles in national governance structure and corporate management. the aspect of political empowerment. According to National Bureau of Statistics data, there is a glaring imbalance in the representation of men and women in political ministerial and governing posts. Women are therefore underrepresented, which has an impact on their political and social chances.

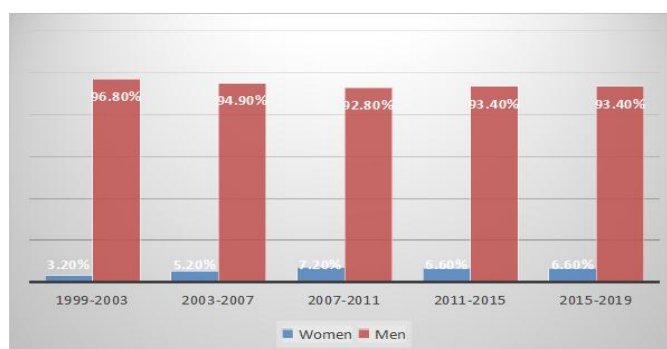


Figure 4.1.3: Gender Distribution in Nigeria National Assembly

Figure 4.1 showed that only 26 women made 7.2% of all federal legislators in the Senate and House of Representatives between 2007 and 2011, which was the lowest representation for women. Between 2015 to 2019 the percentage of female lawmakers decreased to 6.6%, with only 19 women. Women continue to have poor representation at all

tiers and levels of governance despite the fact that they make up nearly half of the electorate with their contributions to politics and decision-making (NBS, 2020). Figure 4.1. showed number of men and women appointed as ministers from 2015 to 2019. Only 7 women were appointed in 2016, while only 5 women were appointed in 2017. There were 6 and 7 female ministers appointed in 2018 and 2019, respectively. NBS (2020) reported that no woman has ever been elected President nor Secretary to the Government of the Federation since the return of democracy in 1999.

4.2 Analysis of the Impact of Marginalization on Sustainable Development in Nigeria.

In order to analysis the effects of marginalization of women on sustainable development, unit root was conducted to examine the properties of the variables. This was done with the use of Augmented Dickey Fuller test and presented in Table 4.2.1.

Table 4.2.1: Augmented Dickey Fuller Unit Root Test

Variable	Constant with trend @level	@difference	Order of integration
GDPC	–	-4.296729 (-3.991711)***	I(1)
FES	–	-4.356068 (-4.345772) ***	I(1)
FLF	–	-4.356068 (-4.300584) ***	I(1)
FLPR	–	-4.296729 (-3.915803) ***	I(1)
FPENR	–	-1.961409 (-4.584098)***	I(1)
FEI	-	-2.647120 -2.192919 ***	I(1)

* (**) (***) denotes significance at 10%, 5% and 1%.

Source: Author’s Computation using Eview, 2023.

The results of ADF unit root test showed that the hypothesis of no unit root cannot be accepted as all the variables female employment in service sector (fes), female labour force (flf), female primary enrolment (fpnr), female unemployment (fuem) and female employemnt in industry were stationary at first difference at 1% , 5% and 10% levels of significance. As a result, we proceeded to cointegration analysis. The result of Johansen cointegration test in Table 4.2.2 showed that the hpothesis of no cointegration cannot be rejected since trace statistics is greater than 5% critical value for at least two of the hypothesized no of constant elasticity, hence we concluded that there was a long run relationships among the variables. We proceeded to estimation of the regression.

Table 4.2.2: Johansen Cointegration Rank Test (trace)

Hypothesized No of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Trace Statistic	0.05 Critical Value	Prob.**
None *	0.959890	161.5645	79.34145	0.0000
At most 1 *	0.906619	84.37745	55.24578	0.0000
At most 2	0.475374	27.47186	35.01090	0.2536
At most 3	0.319013	11.99018	18.39771	0.3098
At most 4	0.108971	2.769078	3.841466	0.0961

After the ADF test, we employed Johansen cointegration technique to test if that there is presence of long run relationship in each variable. Since all the variable are I(1), the number of observations are small which can cause sample bias(small sample bias issue) and endogeneity issue arising from the fact that poor sustainable development can increase

woman marginalization and improved opportunities for women can cause sustainable development. The above are sufficient condition for fully modified ordinary least square technique (FMOLS). These were reported in Tables 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 using GDP per capita (gdpc) and water quality (afw) respectively.

Table 4.2.3: Test (trace) Fully Modified Least Squares (FMOLS)

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LFLF	5.473661	5.176894	1.057325	0.3018
LFLPR	12.49844	3.061808	4.082046	0.0005
LPENR	0.019553	1.078821	0.018124	0.9857
LFES	14.56414	1.524680	9.552260	0.0000
LFEI	5.170977	1.159589	4.459320	0.0002
C	-130.2770	27.72556	-4.698803	0.0001
R-squared	0.965522		Mean dependent var	
	12.16274			
Adjusted R-squared	0.956119		S.D. dependent var	1.368197
S.E. of regression	0.286607		Sum squared resid	1.807162
Long-run variance	0.052991			

Table 4.2.3 showed there exist positive and significant relationship between gross domestic product per capita and labour force participation rate (lfpr) ($p=0.0005<0.05$), female employment in service sector (fes) ($p=0.0000<0.05$), female employment in industry (fei) ($p=0.0002<0.05$). Other variables like like female labour force ($p=0.3018>0.05$) and female primary enrolment ($p=0.9857>0.05$) were positive but not significant. Since the R² and adjust R² were 0.955 and 0.943 respectively, we concluded that the model has a goodness of fit. In addition, 0.04 sum of residuals indicated that the model used was fitted with the data.

Table 4.2.4: Test (trace) Fully Modified Least Squares (FMOLS)

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
FLF	2.951589	0.696107	4.240138	0.0003
FLPR	2.739147	0.411704	6.653203	0.0000
FPENR	-0.060905	0.145063	-0.419853	0.6787
FES	2.558220	0.205015	12.47822	0.0000
FEI	1.105141	0.155923	7.087726	0.0000
C	-33.49518	3.728096	-8.984527	0.0000
R-squared	0.955686		Mean dependent var	1.604134
Adjusted R-squared	0.943601		S.D. dependent var	0.182364
S.E. of regression	0.043309		Sum squared resid	0.041264
Long-run variance	0.000958			

However, when water quality was used a measure of sustainable development, it was reported in Table 4.24. It was shown that there exist positive and significant relationships between water quality and female labour force (flf) ($p=0.0003<0.05$), female labour participation rate (flpr) ($p=0.0000<0.05$), female employment in service sector (fes) ($p=0.0000<0.05$) and female employment in Industry (fei) ($p=0.0000<0.05$), while there exist a negative and insignificant relationship between female primary enrolment (fpnr) ($p=0.6787>0.05$). The model also has a goodness of fit, implying that necessary variables were captured by the model. This was corroborated by the sum of squared residual value of 0.041.

5. Conclusions and Recommendation

Our analysis demonstrated that despite all policies that seek to ensure equality and protect the right of women in Nigeria. Marginalization and subjugation is still rampant in terms of employment in some critical sectors, leadership and political participation. We also found that contributions of women folk in terms of employment in critical areas have ability to drive sustainable development. This was demonstrated by positive and significant relationships between sustainable development and female labour participation rates, employment in industry and service sector. Hence, restricting women's access to more lucrative careers and opportunities limits both the potential of human resources and the sustainability of society as a whole. The study recommended policies that will enhance complete inclusion of women in politics, governance and in top level business management and in all facets of national development should be in place of achievement of sustainable development. Structures that will modify patriarchal systems such that regulations and procedures will be reformed by all traditional and religious institutions in Nigeria.

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