

Transformative Empowerment in the Lagos State Civil Service: *A Gender Policy Discourse*

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Abstract

Transformation means positive change to new values and direction. This research is concerned with the relationship between empowerment processes that are transformatory and gender equality in the workplace. Its scope includes integrating a transformatory view into women's and men's consciousness and autonomy over their career, education and health. This research adopted a case-study approach by using the Ministries of Education, Health, Establishment, Training and Pensions and the Civil Service Commission in Lagos State, employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods as its empirical research

methodology. The field work was carried out in Lagos State in the months of June and July, 2014 while the interview was in July and August, 2014. This study demonstrated that gender-blind policies disempower women and perpetuate gender inequalities in the Lagos State Civil Service. Further, it shows that the manifestation of transformatory empowerment is jeopardised by women and men's compliance with the existing expectations and inaction to bring about changes in policies and practices that are detrimental to the attainment of gender equality in the work place.

Keywords: Transformation, Empowerment, Gender, Policy, Civil Service

Introduction

Women empowerment is one of the contemporary issues which has featured prominently in both national and international debates for quite some time now in both developed and developing countries of the world. This has obviously thwarted women status in the public service (Alade, 2012). Today, there is a growing concern over gender relations around the world. The scenario is particularly rife in continental Asia and Africa (Ele, 2013). As a result, over the past three decades, the global policy process has become more gender sensitive and individual countries have endorsed the protocol for integrating women more actively into the development programmes with emphasis on empowerment and equity (Payne, 1991).

There are many issues that are engendered which deeply affect the quality of life of the population. There is the need to redress the balance of gender relations, especially in the public policy process, which had hitherto focused on men and ignored the changes imposed on women's lives and the way in which relations between women and men are changing under this process. Policies are being formulated without any reference at all to the gender factor, that is, it does not cater for the distinct needs and the specific problems of females. The faulty perceptions of women or bias in policy making and policy implementation revealed both ideological and structural barriers to considering women differently. Standt's (1985) study clearly demonstrates this dual barrier. The ideological barrier makes it difficult to consider women when they are nothing other than objects that can easily be excluded by reticence on the part of planners from decision making. While the structural barrier already assumes that women are not part of the formal institutions that channel policy and information, because of the organisational construction of women as "other", standing apart from the planning process.

Women empowerment in Nigeria today has entrenched itself into the National Question. Over the years, women have been oppressed, marginalized and exploited by their male counter-parts in politics, economy and other spheres of our national life while in reality they have contributed immensely towards national development (Ele, 2013). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life. Equality in decision-making performs a

leverage function without which it is highly unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government policy-making is feasible. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

Statement of Problem

There is increasing interest in the problems of women in the society. The problem is not how to get women into the service but getting them at the number commensurate with the female population of the state and at the appropriate level where they can decide, influence and also implement policies. There is also the need to identify those factors, which could impair women's ability to bridge the gap between male and female in the work place and ascertain the level of their relevance in modern governance. The general objective of this study therefore, is to identify to what extent gender equality in education and employment have been matched by access to decision-making roles in the policy process.

Objectives of Study

This research aimed at outlining the extent to which formal structures of the State are gendered and its reflection in the public policy process within the framework of empowerment.

Other objectives of the research are:

- 1) To draw attention to the under-representation of women in managerial positions and decision-making positions in the Lagos State Civil Service and the over-representation of women in low cadre professions.
- 2) To highlight the consequences of the continued exclusion of women from public policy-making positions.
- 3) To examine the reasons, if there is an increase of women in the decision-making levels in the Lagos State Civil Service, why there has not been a corresponding outcome of changes in policies as they relate to gender equality.

Research Questions

The study is based on the following research questions:

- a) How can attention be drawn to the under-representation of women in managerial positions and decision-making positions in the Lagos State Civil Service and the over-representation of women in low cadre professions?
- b) What are the consequences of the continued exclusion of women from public policy-making positions?
- c) Examine the reasons, if there is an increase of women in the decision-making levels in the Lagos State Civil Service, why there has not been a corresponding outcome of changes in policies as they relate to gender equality?

Literature Review

It has been widely acknowledged that gender-based differences play a significant role, not only in leadership styles, but also in the nature of service delivery in the civil service (Hauwa, Badru & Abdulmumini, 2015). Meanwhile, Norberg (2003) has pointed out that one of the world's crudest injustices is the oppression of women. The discrimination and oppression are rooted in cultural beliefs and practices regarding the different gender role.

The history of State policies concerning women in Nigeria can be examined in three distinct periods, chosen on the basis of Linda Trimble's (1990) typology. Her typology delineates three different types of state policies that are enacted with respect to women: policies of marginalization (1900–1960), policies of toleration (1961-1984) and the policy of inclusion (1985 to the present). State policies echoed the social marginalization of women by not recognizing them as active participants in the developmental process. The policies of inclusion seek to achieve gender equality through the realization of equality of opportunity, rights and responsibilities in both the public and private sphere. These policies recognize that societal impediments have become systematic. Cockburn (1991), however gave an analysis of women's experiences from a theoretical socio-political context. She said the work culture is basically still a male culture in need of socialization and gender balancing because women's work is not only undervalued but often not visible or recognized until they conform to male behaviour.

Acker (1989) posited that there is an underpinning gendered relation in all organizations. Deeply embedded in the cultural context of work are expectations of all employees to conform to what men do. Walby (1990) called this a patriarchal society, which she described as a system of social structures and practices that men use to dominate, oppress and exploit women. It presupposes fixed gender relations from birth which render women less powerful than men. Researches have really been conducted on a wide scale in European countries to ascertain the level of progress and what more needs to be done (Hirdman 1990, Karvonen & Selle, 1995, Gustafsson, *et al.* 1997, Solhoy, 1999, Bacchi, 1999).

The role of women in the Nigerian Civil Service can be traced to the colonial period (Ighodalo, 1990). During this period, more men than women were educated and recruited into the new emergent power structure, the Civil Service, and in so doing confined the women into the domestic sphere that made them lose some of the economic autonomy in trading and subsistence farming they were used to during the pre-colonial period. This control was also reinforced by the introduction of mission schools that tutored female along the line of teaching and nursing. Women were encouraged to take subjects which were complimentary to their domestic roles while men were oriented towards professions which tended to enhance leadership (Olojede, 2009). At independence in 1960, it was only those qualified that were chosen to take over from the colonial masters. This put the women in a disadvantaged position because of their low level of expertise in contrast to the men. Even the rules and regulations governing the civil service before independence, was maintained and this was not in favour of the women. One of such rules was that married women should not be given permanent appointment and could only be appointed on a monthly basis. Furthermore, women on maternity were asked to reapply afresh after their leave, and this was without salary for the period of the maternity leave. Of the total number of 212,657 persons employed in 1960 in the Civil Services, only 9,945 i.e. 4.7 percent were women and majority of these women were in the lower cadre of clerical officers, or lower middle cadre of nurses and teachers (Manpower Studies, 1980).

Public officers and civil servants are much more involved and important in the aspects of policy formation in developing countries (Grindle & Thomas 1991). The political executive has more influence on policy making in the developing countries than in the developed states because of the weakness of aggregating structures like political

parties, professional association and labour unions. The political executives participate in decision making process in the following ways:

- bills could be initiated by the Presidency/Governor or from a particular ministry
- the President/Governor was given the constitutional power of signing bills properly passed by the National Assembly/State House of Assembly into law.
- the political executives can mandate any Ministry to implement any policy option adopted for implementation, but it could equally implement some policies without involving other agencies.

While administrators (Civil Servants) are also involved in the policy making process in any or a combination of the following:

- they can be called upon to assist in the collection of data (fact) and information about policy proposals.
- they assist in the preparation of the drafts of policy proposals. That is, they help to define policy before the legislative stage is reached.
- they assist in drafting the law which is designed to carry out the desired programme. However, this is often strictly in line with the guidelines on the adopted policy proposals by the formulators.
- they assist in the evaluation of the success of any policy implemented and recommend ways on how to improve upon the quality (content) of a policy (Adebayo,1995)

The State regulates existing gender relations by generating policies concerned with gender issues. These policies involve many areas, from housing through education to criminal justice. An example is the state's intervention in sexuality through population policies. The State's activity also helps to constitute gender relations and form gender identities. The categories of 'husband' and 'wife' are also partly constituted by State action through mechanisms ranging from marriage laws to tax policy. The State then becomes the key target in gender politics since goals are reached via the State. The demand for suffrage 'votes for women' was precisely a demand to participate in decision-making within the State. The State being in the heart of gendered power is itself liable to crisis and change. Current crisis tendencies which impinge on the State

include problems of legitimation and tensions arising from the gender division of labour e.g. equal opportunity and the glass ceiling for women.

Gender and Policy: A Discourse

Public policy is a process in that it involves decision-making and activity that started in the past and is carried on into the future. Eguma (1992) gave three broad stages, namely, policy formulation, policy implementation and feedback and policy evaluation respectively.

Policy formulation is the stage of problem identification, definition, agenda setting and deliberate and conscious effort to allocate political goods or values, using authoritative means. It raises the issue of scarce resources that must be authoritatively allocated. Once a public problem has been identified, it then becomes ready for policy adoption. It manifests in policy decisions and policy statements that authorise or give direction and content of policy as may be found in speeches by public officials (indicating the intentions and goals of government and what will be done to have them materialize) or in statutes, decrees, regulation, orders, rules, edicts and so on. Once a policy has been adopted, it then proceeds to the next phase of policy implementation. It connotes activities directed at translating goals and objectives of a policy into reality. Policy implementation is perhaps the most difficult phase of the policy process because considerations like the resource base; institutional base and the social base will determine its success. Monitoring and evaluation of the policy easily determine the outcome of the interaction of these factors.

Feedback and evaluation follow policy implementation. Feedback takes place when the issue, strategies and impacts arising from policy content, output and outcomes have been known, while evaluation takes place at any stage of the policy process, either before or after policy adoption. Underpinning policy feedback and evaluation is monitoring – the process by which necessary information is obtained to assess the overall performance or policy impact and outcomes respectively. The executive is the centre of network of institutions of the state, charged with the planning, initiation and execution of laws. Military rule has bastardized the policy process to mere decrees and commands. Out of the total 40 years of Nigeria's independence, the military had ruled the nation for 29 years without significant changes for women, apart from the token participation granted at the state executive councils. The Buhari administration directed

all military governors to appoint at least one female commissioner into each state executive council. None of the legislative council of all the military government featured a woman because members were drawn from the most senior military officers. In cases where women were included in the executive cabinets, the number of women and the kind of ministerial postings they are given suggest that the gesture is mere tokenism in the recognition of both women's number and capabilities.

There has been significant increase in women's career advancement as many women are now in high level executive cadre of public institutions. But their involvement in public life and decision-making are adversely affected by years of discriminatory practices in education, recruitment and promotion policies. Public life can be regarded as the activities carried out in the state or government and its complements (public institutions) by representatives who hold these positions for the people. While decision-making is the process of arriving at a consensus of agreement on a given issue that translates into public policies (Bobby Diei, 1995). The marginalisation of women, who constitute more than half of the nation's population, has been intensified by tradition and cultural attitudes. This has resulted in policy-making that is gender-biased and gender insensitive thereby perpetuating the discrimination against women. This is further aggravated by not giving women the requisite skills for the high-level manpower jobs that are usually invested with the responsibility of decision-making.

The "invisibility" of women in public life and consequently in political, economic and professional activity is both the cause and consequence of their being consistently barred from positions of authority. There is a glass ceiling or an invisible barrier beyond which women cannot climb. Generally, there is no legislation or service rule in Nigeria that categorically prohibits women from holding public office, no overt discrimination against women in the employment arena, in that they are accorded equal pay for equal work. Even young competent girls are also accorded equal access to scholarship awards, in that the National Education policy advocates universal education for all. Although all these are in place, Nigerian women fall victim of many negative and devastating attitudes which spring from traditional practices, customary injunctions, religious taboos and economic impotence that incapacitate them from contributing effectively to the running of the affairs of the country. Since all programme, actions and project flow from policy decisions, it is official that women get up to where such decisions are made.

Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Policy in Nigeria

Gender discrimination is a phenomenon that has negative implications on development of organizations and people. In this study, gender discrimination could be seen as obstacles against the employment or appointment into leadership positions or authority of an individual based on sex. It is a deprivation of rights of the individual that could have contributed positively to the development of the organization and the society at large (Gberevbie, Osibanjo, Adeniji & Oludayo, 2014). The phrase glass ceiling has been understood to represent a variety of biases that prevent qualified minorities and women, though they are members of an increasingly diverse workforce, from advancing into mid and senior-level management positions within the workplace (Gberevbie, Osibanjo, Adeniji & Oludayo, 2014).

Gender is an inescapable feature of social reality inscribed in policy, whether this is deliberate or unintentional, detrimental or beneficial to women. The Lagos State Civil Service is the public bureaucracy of the executive arm of government, which initiates majority of policies sanctioned by the legislature. When examining policymaking and its outcomes, the gendered nature of the state becomes an important focus. There are often large numbers of women employed in State bureaucracies, but few, are found at the top of the state hierarchies showing that the State is a gendered hierarchy with women having an uneven representation in the bureaucracy (Staudt 1989). The State is seen as a patriarchal institution, a vehicle of men's power. The State is gendered along these main themes. The State is the core of the whole structure of power relations in gender. The State, in traditional theories, could not see gender where only men were present, where no 'difference' was visible. This was a total exclusion of women because only men were present. There is a strong gender division of labour, with men concentrated in departments such as the military, police, infrastructure and economic agencies, while women concentrated in social welfare, health and education. It is typical of modern states that the centres of state power, the top decision-making units, are heavily masculine. This makes it easy for women's interests to be represented in more peripheral agencies than men's interests.

Years after the declaration of Human Rights, women still suffer discrimination in all its ramifications and violence against women did not abate. This lingering discrimination calls for women struggle to improve their status the world over in politics, economy,

education, social recognition and acceptance, etc. The women struggle along this trend ushered in empowerment which is a development strategy with a view to transforming the doctrine of subordination through changes in legislature, property rights and distribution, and all those other sectors which are male dominance (Alade, 2012).

Women's empowerment is described as a woman's strengthened agency that enables her as an individual and/or member of a group to access services, utilize resources, and make informed decisions. It also builds women's confidence in questioning and standing up against gender norms and structures that are discriminatory, and holding service providers accountable to provide gender-responsive services. As an outcome, women's empowerment results in greater access to and control over social, economic, political, and cultural capital. It further enhances the ability to understand and analyse the terms and conditions of gender discrimination (Martinez, 2006).

The Women in Development (WID) approach was introduced internationally in the 1980s to promote women's participation in the development process. The UN General Assembly in 1985, during the third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi, for the first time passed a resolution on violence against women. The Government of Nepal has made global commitments by signing a number of international conventions: the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and ICPD +10, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations Population Fund, 2007) (Kathmandu, 2013). Despite a relatively favourable policy environment, there is a gap in understanding, knowledge, and attitudes concerning women's issues across all levels of stakeholders, including policy-makers and implementers.

Legal Frameworks and policies for the advancement of gender equality and women empowerment

Nigeria has a population size of 51,199,237 males and 49,451,476 females at above 15 years of age (MacDonald, Wong, & Sheldon, 2015). Despite the huge population, it is disheartening to know that Nigerian women are under-represented in both democratic and corporate governance (Hauwa, Badru & Abdulmumini, 2015). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which was adopted in 1979 and ratified by around 100 countries, states that 'discrimination against

women shall mean distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.'

Nigeria, after several decades of ratification of CEDAW, has failed to domesticate the international instrument as part of her municipal law. This regrettably has seriously slowed down the pace of women emancipation in Nigeria. Consequently, women who constitute half the total Nigerian population, still continue to suffer intense marginalization and relegation to the background. They are discriminated against in virtually all spheres of life in Nigeria (Ifemeje & Ikpaze, 2012).

The normative framework for the promotion and protection of gender equality and women's right in Nigeria are: Constitutional; Legislative; Judicial; Policy and International human rights and Humanitarian Law Treaties. The combination of federation and a tripartite system of civil, customary and religious laws make it difficult to harmonize legislation and remove discriminatory measures (Mtsor & Idisi, 2014). A gender analysis of Nigeria's local laws and policies affirms that many legal instruments are discriminatory, and at best, gender blind. The tripartite nature of the Nigerian legal system makes it difficult to set standards, and to insist on a common parlance of the law in the area of gender discrimination and gender abuse.

The Nigerian constitution guaranteed fundamental human right to all its citizens and by interpretation, equal rights to both men and women. This had been adopted since 1959 and remained in each successive constitution up to 1999. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria prohibits discrimination against any citizen of Nigeria on the grounds of ethnicity, place of origin, sex, religion, political opinion and circumstances of birth. Despite this, the Constitution itself is shrouded in ambivalences and contradictory messages about gender relations. First, the Constitution exhumes patriarchal undertones and principles, evident in the language it utilizes, and many of its provisions (Mtsor & Idisi, 2014).

It is incontestable therefore, that in theory, the legal provision for women's right in Nigeria is quite solid but paradoxically, the rights of women have continued to witness violation in practice (Sani, 2001). This should no longer be the case in order to promote harmonious relationship between both genders and obtain women's maximal

contributions to national development (Ele, 2013). This is in spite of the various commitments undertaken by the government at international, regional and national levels. Examples of such commitments include the 35% women's affirmative action on government organisation. The country also saw the review of the national gender policy and its strategic implementation in July 2014, the endorsement of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA) that provides for affirmative action policy, Nigerian Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on gender equality and women's empowerment (Choji, 2014). However, regardless of gender related policies, women empowerment is still limited.

Theoretical Framework

There are five basic models that are recognized in the study of women based on the different ways women are affected. These are the welfare approach, the equity approach, the anti-poverty approach, the efficiency approach and the empowerment approach. The welfare approach assumes that women are passive recipients of development benefits because their major roles are reproductive ones – motherhood and childbearing. It came out of the physical concern for the survival of the families through the provision of goods and services, a focus on the nutritional needs of women and children. The equity approach recognizes women as active participants in the development process and in economic progress through their productive and reproductive roles. This approach aims at a redistribution of power through the legal means. The anti-poverty approach focuses on women as the central focus in strategies to overcome the hunger and malnutrition that accompany poverty. Furthermore, the efficiency approach was also an approach to women and development. It sought to increase productivity in order to enhance the quality of people's lives, rather than solely to achieve economic growth. Since women constitute half of the available labour force, increasing women's productivity would logically lead to overall development (Buvinic, 1983, Moser, 1989, Ostergaard, 1992)

This study used the empowerment approach because it focuses on increasing women's control over the choices in their lives. It is defined as a process of "conscientization" which builds critical analytical skills for an individual to gain self-confidence in order to take control of her or his life. Empowerment of women is an

essential process in the transformation of gender relations because it addresses the structural and underlying causes of subordination and discrimination. It also seeks to increase their self-confidence in order to be more active players in society (FAWE, 1997). 'Transformatory' empowerment draws a distinction between empowerment as capacity building for women to cope with the requirements of life more efficiently as against the capacity building to transform their conditions of life and assert alternative gender roles. Reshaping the balance of power between women and men involves making changes in institutions, as well as in discourses and people's ideological and mental constructs. Women's equal participation in decision-making is a question of social justice, a requirement of democracy and a component essential to achieve maximum use of human resources (Schuler and Kadirgamar-Rajasingham, 1992)

According to Randall (1988), the state plays a vital role in determining and reacting to the economic, political and social forces that combine to forge women's subordinate status. Furthermore, state policies are born out of a social ideology regarding women's place in society, which has a very real manifestation in the form of schools or administrative agencies that shape women's lives. Gender inequalities are therefore buried within the state, but through part of the same dynamic process, gender relations are also partly constituted through the state (Pringle and Watson, 1992). The state therefore partly reflects and partly helps create particular forms of gender relations and gender inequality. According to Manicom (1992), as part of the process in which categories are defined within practices of rule, state policy and practices are also constructing women as objects of rule.

The goals of women's empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology (male domination and women's subordination), to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality. The process of empowerment must thus address all relevant structures and sources of power. Schuler and Kadirgamar-Rajasingham (1992) noted that "since the causes of women's inferior status and unequal gender relations are deeply rooted in history, religion, culture, in the psychology of self, in laws and legal systems, and in political institutions and social attitudes, if the status and material conditions of women's lives is to change at all, the solutions must penetrate just as deeply.

Garba (1999) modified and adapted for the Nigerian environment, Karl's (1995) four stages in the empowerment process. She came forth with a six-stage empowerment

process because of the degree of the entrenchment of institutional and cultural barriers. These are awareness, skills and capacity assessment, capacity building and skills development, participation and greater control in decision-making, action for change and evaluation (a feedback mechanism). For governments to make full use of women's talents as top-level managers, policy makers, diplomats and negotiator, equality in decision-making is essential to the empowerment of women.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the study purpose with economy in procedure. Descriptive and correlational survey method was adopted in carrying out this study. This method is appropriate because the population is large and also it enables researchers to properly interpret findings. The descriptive research is primarily concerned with finding, describing and interpreting data, in order to fully describe the problem under focus as related to certain influencing factors. The correlational design also establishes a relationship between the research variables.

Methods of data collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected. Two types of primary data were collected. Quantitative data were obtained through the distribution of administered questionnaires to civil servants especially in the management cadre and also the senior cadre of the Lagos State Civil Service. While qualitative data were collected from in-depth interview with the few women that had been and those that are still in the policy-making positions. The junior cadres were not left out as some of them were given questionnaires to fill so that they could point out obstacles militating against their rise to higher levels

Secondary data were collected through archival search of official records. These were sourced through library-historical method, government publications, textbooks, yearbooks, journals and newspapers. Additional data were obtained from the Federal Civil Service Manpower Statistics published by the Statistics Branch of the Planning, Research and Statistics of the Federal Ministry of Establishment and Management

Services, Lagos State Civil Service Manpower Statistics of the Ministry of Establishment, Training and Pensions as well as other sources.

Population and sample of the Study

The population here refers to the component of the Lagos State Civil Service. The study covers the whole civil service of Lagos State, and it was restricted to four ministries, Ministries of Education, Establishment, Training and Pensions, Health and Lagos State Civil Service Commission. The choice of the four ministries is instructive for two reasons. Firstly, it is observed that these ministries have the highest percentage of women in Lagos state. Secondly, time did not allow the authors to expand the study to other ministries and agencies in Lagos State.

The estimated population of workers in the sampled population stood at 4,000 and a simple random sampling technique was used in selecting respondents from each of the selected ministries with a simple fraction of 10% bringing the sample size to 400 as shown below.

Selected Ministries in Lagos State with Estimated Study Population and Sample Size

Ministries	Estimated population	Sample size
Ministry of education	1,300	130
Ministry of Establishment, Training and Pensions	500	50
Ministry of Health	1,150	115
Lagos State Civil Service Commission	1,050	105
Total	4,000	400

Participants and Procedure

The study employed the survey method of research. The survey instruments are questionnaire and in-depth interview. The questionnaire has 24 items which were administered to a sample of 400 respondents obtained using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The purposive sampling was used to ensure that different groups in the population are adequately represented in the sample. The

population was divided into senior and junior staff categories. Purposive sampling was employed to select specific functionaries that are critical for the study across the various agencies. All the respondents involved in the study are employees working in the various Ministries in Lagos state, Nigeria which are affected by gender composition.

Research Instruments

An instrument is any tool that is used in data collection. Babbie, (2001) defines a research instrument as a tool that is used for collecting data needed to find solutions to the problem under investigation. The researcher used questionnaire and in-depth interview as the major instruments for data collection.

Questionnaire: The survey questionnaire was distributed to respondents in selected ministries in Lagos State, *i.e.*, Ministries of Education, Establishment, Training and Pensions, Health and Lagos State Civil Service Commission in June/July, 2014. This was made possible after obtaining written permission from the Permanent Secretaries of these Ministries and the subsequent introduction of the lead-researcher and ten (10) research assistants to the various heads of units.

Interviews: This method was chosen for data collection because interview gives the opportunity of personal contact with respondents. By conducting a semi-structured interview, which is a list of topics and questions to be covered with the researcher varying the order of the question as per the situation and flow of the conversation. Additional questions were asked related to the research topic in order to gain more in depth knowledge and this is more flexible. Although the response rate is higher, it is also a time-consuming method and requires more time to analyse.

Secondary data: It is the information that has already been collected for some other purposes by someone else other than the present researcher. It may be available from internet sources, or may have been collected and published by another organization. It was basically gathered before the primary data so as to find out what is already known about the subject matter before starting one's own research. The secondary data available were books, journals, newspaper, articles, and internet as stated earlier in this report.

Validity and Reliability

The research instruments were given to two experts from the Departments of Sociology and Political Science of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, requesting their vetting of the contents of the questionnaire, the appropriateness in respect of the research questions and the title. Their corrections and comments were utilized to effect changes in the questionnaire.

A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the research instrument. The research instrument was administered to five respondents drawn from Lagos State Ministry of Health, the result of the pilot test was subjected to Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computation and the Cronbach alpha value of 0.864 was obtained. The reliability co-efficient of 0.70 or higher is considered to be appropriate in most social science research situation. This result, therefore, considered the instrument reliable for this study.

Data Management and Analysis

The main field work took place at the Lagos State Secretariat, Alausa, Lagos in the months of June and July, 2014, using 4 selected Ministries. Data from the questionnaire were scrutinised, coded, entered and processed through the use of Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) while data from the interview was transcribed verbatim from field notes and audio recordings. Frequencies were generated and description of the data was undertaken through use of percentages. Frequency and percentage tabulations were used to analysis the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire, while content analysis and ethnographic summaries were used to analyse the qualitative data obtained from interviews. The analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated for robust interpretation of findings.

Descriptive statistics for the variables of this study are presented. Four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the Ministries staff. From a sample of 400 questionnaires distributed, a total of 302 questionnaires were returned and found suitable for analysis. This represents 75.5 percent response rate. Content analysis of responses from interview was done.

Discussion of Findings

The findings about the demographic variables of the respondents show an imbalance gender representation for staff. More than half (56.0percent) of the respondents are married while significant few fall into the categories of single, divorced and widowed. The finding validates the near universality of marriage among the various societies in Nigeria. For the staff, majority of them are from Ministry of Education and Ministry Health and have put in between 16 and 20 years of service.

Research Question One: *How can attention be drawn to the under-representation of women in managerial positions and decision-making positions in the Lagos State Civil Service and the over-representation of women in low cadre professions?*

This question sought to find out how empowerment for change that is transformatory to confront the obstacles and challenge the marginalization of the female gender. The findings from the survey research revealed these challenges of under-representation on one hand and over-representation on the other hand and further brought to the fore ways that attention can be drawn to these situations.

According to Meyer (1999) and Ely and Meyerson (2000) who reported that the lack of adequate women's participation in public policy is attributed to their limited approach to tackling the realities of the gendered social order that leaves these practices intact. This implies that there has been wide disparity between male and female gender in public policy and participation in the public sector. This has been the case until recent period that Lagos State Government decided to support female gender in public policy and representation in civil service. However, the finding is at variance with studies by Bonepath and Stoper (1988:11) who identified women's gender roles as a challenge and argued that lack of political recognition of women's reproductive and labour roles made it difficult for them to campaign because they were busy washing dishes, dispensing cough syrup to children and cleaning the house.

In Nigeria, culture and patriarchy are still deeply entrenched in many societies; hence women's participation is seen as a "gift" from the government rather than a right, which undermines the respect they have earned in their own right to be in positions of leadership. An appeal to change the culture or cultural heritage is argued to reduce gender inequality. It is also observed in the study that the patriarchal nature of Nigerian environment also contributes to the marginalisation of women in senior management

level in the civil service. This is corroborated with the findings of Charles and Ikenna (2009:113) that the greatest manifestation of women marginalization is in public service. Despite constitutional declaration of the equal status of both sexes in most countries of the world, gender discrimination remains fully entrenched in the power configuration of the society, with consequences of limiting women's participation in the policy process. In spite of the constitutional provisions, local and international declarations of gender equality, and the attempts by government and the political structures to solve the problem of gender imbalance, series of injustices are still always meted out to the womenfolk. This is also supported with the findings of Olojede (2009) that men dominated key decision making levels in Federal Civil Service between 1991 and 2001. The civil service is still a male dominated arena and very few women have ventured to play active roles in policy making in Nigeria. Emerging from the findings is that women remain politically and administratively endangered species in Nigeria.

The findings support Chitiga's (2005) position that even though many organisations implement programmes to strengthen the effectiveness of women in policy making process, the general lack of a complementary policy framework has jeopardized the decision making fortunes of many women. Another very important area of concern is that of education which invariably is connected to health. Investment in girls' education yields some of the highest returns of all development investments, yielding both private and social benefits that accrue to individuals, families, and society at large by:

- Reducing women's fertility rates. Women with formal education are much more likely to use reliable family planning methods, delay marriage and childbearing, and have fewer and healthier babies than women with no formal education
- Lowering infant and child mortality rates. Women with some formal education are more likely to seek medical care, ensure their children are immunized, be better informed about their children's nutritional requirements, and adopt improved sanitation practices.
- Protecting against HIV/AIDS infection. Girls' education ranks among the most powerful tools for reducing girls' vulnerability. It slows and reduces the spread of HIV/AIDS by contributing to female economic independence, delayed marriage, family planning, and work outside the home as well as greater information about the disease and how to prevent it.

- Increasing women's labour force participation rates and earnings. Education has been proven to increase income for wage earners and increase productivity for employers, yielding benefits for the community and society.
- Creating intergenerational education benefits. Mothers' education is a significant variable affecting children's education attainment and opportunities. A mother with a few years of formal education is considerably more likely to send her children to school.

Literacy is a tool that can help women and men understand themselves, their communities and society at large. Literacy involves change because it offers possibilities of new ways of looking and doing things.

The principles of policy states that equality of opportunity is not a minority matter, but a key issue which directly or indirectly affects all aspects of every man and woman's working life. Inequality of opportunity is not only illegal, it is morally and socially unjustifiable and is wasteful of people, the main asset of the Civil Service. Women's associations across the world have prioritised several areas for gender-sensitive public sector reform. These include recruitment quotas to ensure a greater presence of women in the bureaucracy; the introduction of gender equity concerns in performance measurement; consultation with women clients of public services; measures to respond to the women's complaints; and reforms to legal frameworks and judicial systems to improve women's access to justice.

Research Question Two: *What are the consequences of the continued exclusion of women from public policy-making positions?*

This study found that polices made had no gender colouration. There is no gender desk in all the various Ministries studied. According to Grown (2003), he asserted that "without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspectives in all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved." The patriarchal ideology rests on the premises of separate spheres for men and women. From the viewpoint of Amali (2009) about 55percent of the workers in the Nigerian public service, GL-01-06 are women, only about 9percent of the workers in the GL-01-06 are women. The main reason adduced for this position of

women is that the number of women who benefited from formal education is generally less than those of men.

Olojede (2007) however, conclude that on one hand, the constitution prohibits discrimination on ground of gender among other considerations. On the other hand, the same constitution permits discriminatory practice in the appointment of persons to public offices or as members of the Armed Forces and Security Service. This ambiguity negates the expressed principle of equality of every Nigerian citizen before the law. Thus, prejudice against women continues to exist in the civil service of Nigeria, as does the glass ceiling that limits all women from enjoying truly equal opportunities in the nation.

Gender equality is one of the bases recognized for development. The notion of development was based on democracy, transparency, accountability and the inclusion and empowerment of all people. Research from around the world has shown that gender inequality tends to slow economic growth and make poverty alleviation more difficult. Even the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that have set a powerful agenda for a global partnership recognize the importance of gender equality and women empowerment and has made it one of its cardinal goals to be achieved by 2015. The MDG 3 challenges discrimination against women and posits that without progress towards ensuring gender equality and women empowerment, none of the MDGs will be achieved.

Nigerian government has long acknowledged the importance and significance of women's contributions to national development. Women were recognized as able development partners but the gap between policy and practice remained a major cause of concern. Several researchers have highlighted the issue of under-representation of women in the political process (Oyekanmi, 2000, Aluko and Ajani, 2007), resulting in the tendency for corruption to be more widely practiced by the male-dominated structures (Oyekanmi, 2011).

Research Question Three: *Examine the reasons, if there is an increase of women in the decision-making levels in the Lagos State Civil Service, why there has not been a corresponding outcome of changes in policies as they relate to gender equality?*

There was an increase in the number of women in the decision-making positions in Lagos State Civil Service between 2009 and 2014. Some of them became Permanent Secretaries. They were however unable to influence policies to favour women because

they were not gender sensitive. They were not ready to upset the existing structures or status-quo. Even if the women at the management level wanted to introduce gender sensitive programmes, the people working with them had no idea of what it entailed.

The inadequate representation of women in decision-making bodies is one of the major factors that have contributed to their low status. Furthermore, gender approach to public policy must always be streamlined so that due attention is strategically focused on active participation and needs of women. The place and role of women in public management would not only be recognized but at the same time institutionalized. This prompted Meyerson (1999) and Ely and Meyerson (2000) to analyse the impacts of women's involvements in policy process and evaluate their lack of impact in bringing about the desired policy outcomes.

The analysis from in-depth interview portrays everybody in the ministry as being included in decision making, no differences as long as the staffs are on a higher grade level. According to them, sex does not determine who is involved at the management level, with 15 women as Permanent Secretaries in ministries compare to before, women are well represented in the civil service. One respondent stated that "inequality does not exist. I think what a man can do women can do better. We should just hold unto one's problem solving skill irrespective of gender." To another, "the State Governor, Babatunde Fashola encourages women. It does not matter if you are a female or a male, what matters is what you can give to him or achieve." There is no gender analysis unit because both men and women are well represented in the Ministries/Commission with performance being the key issue and not gender issue. They do not consider if you are a woman or man. We close from work together even if it's 10pm regardless of your gender. One of the respondents clearly stated that "we give everyone chance to perform. Gender issues it not a window dressing policy in the Commission." Everybody is given equal right.

The quest for gender balance in the decision-making levels of the Lagos State Civil Service points to the observation that the balance will bring about gender sensitive policies. The problem therefore, is not only how to get women into the service but also getting them at the number commensurate with the female population of the state and at the appropriate level where they can decide policies, influence policies and also implement policies.

Conclusion

The inequality between men and women are basically in the sharing of power, family responsibilities and decision making at all levels and these were the critical areas of concern adopted in the Platform for Action at Beijing. The power relations that prevent women from leading fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and this is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning. Equality in political decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is highly unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government policy-making is feasible. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality in development and peace cannot be achieved.

Women have demonstrated considerable leadership in community and informal organisations as well as in public office. However, socialization and negative stereotyping of women than men including stereotypes through the media reinforces the tendency for decision-making to remain the domain of men. Likewise, the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions in the areas of art, culture, sports, the media, education, religion and the law have prevented women from having a significant impact on many key institutions.

The study has shown that both the formal structure and the socio-political dynamics of the State mutually reinforce to determine the nature of gender imbalance in the Lagos State Civil Service. The findings in this study contribute to various areas of work seeking to understand gender phenomena. First, understanding the state of women's substantive position in the management level of the Lagos State Civil Service informs us on the quality of policies geared towards gender equality. This study also makes a contribution towards expanding our understanding of 'where' substantive policies are made and the obstacles encountered in the discourse on gender equality.

This study has also demonstrated that gender discrimination is found not only in policy making process but also in the entire political process in the State and the

country in general. In fact, while that of the policy process can be self-explanatory, that of the entire political process is very complex.

The study has raised several controversial issues that could generate more ideas in the area of gender studies with respect to human resources planning in the public service. The demand for social justice requires that there should be greater equality of opportunity for women. Our study showed that gender is not put into consideration in the formulation or implementation of policies in Lagos State. Empowering women is the only means by which they can be elevated from subordination and perception as inferior being. This will in the aggregate enhance women's productive and reproductive roles in society. Also for any meaningful sustainable development in Nigeria, the crucial role of women must be acknowledged and appreciated. This can only become a reality if gender issues are given appropriate recognition and attention in human resource management in the public service.

Recommendation

In applying a gender perspective, a series of steps can be identified. The first step is to define issues where gender differences can be observed. Second, is to observe and diagnose the differences between men and women. The third step is to confirm that these differences are in fact based on differences in sex. The final step in applying a gender perspective is to examine gender roles during processes of change and to identify obstacles. This should provide guidance in the formulation of a research agenda on gender mainstreaming. Mainstreaming involves complex issues affecting every stage of the organization of human society. Solutions should not be devised only on the basis of the formulation of new standards, enacting new resolutions and creating new institutions. To be realistic, solutions should be holistic in nature ensuring sustainability diversity and respect for the heterogeneous characteristics of human societies, as well as strengthening the participation of women.

The platform for Action adopted at the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 was designed to serve as a mainstreaming document. When we ask what the research priorities should be beyond Beijing. It is important that we shift away from looking at women as a dependent variable. The Beijing Platform has contributed to the essential understanding that women should be viewed as fundamental factors in any attempt to understanding society, economics and politics within the context of moving gender

issues from the margins of development policy to the centre. In the post-Beijing era, there has been a national gender policy enacted in Nigeria in 2006. There is a Ministry of Women Affairs at both Federal and State levels but this has not made much difference. Women issues have not been mainstreamed into the scheme of governance and this has resulted in the policy of "tokenism" where women are used as appendages and to complete numbers in positions of decision-making.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. This includes gender-specific activities and affirmative action, whenever women or men are in particularly disadvantageous position. Under normal circumstances, a gender policy should entail the following:

- 1) Ensure that all appointments conform to the National Policy on women which stipulates that at least 30percent of all positions should be reserved for women.
- 2) Ensure that Affirmative Action is entrenched in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- 3) Gender-specific interventions should narrow the gap between men and women in order to enable them to participate and benefit equally from development efforts in which accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress are established.
- 4) Government should not assume that issues or problems are neutral from a gender-equality perspective.
- 5) Government must have a clear political will and must make available adequate resources for gender mainstreaming including additional financial and human resources if necessary to translate the concept into practice. At present, less than 30percent of women are in decision making positions in Lagos State.

Being 'gender transformative' means that gender is central to promoting gender equality and achieving positive developmental outcomes. It takes on the task of transforming unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control of resources, decision-making, and support for women's empowerment. The term empowerment is widely used in the context of development, particularly women's development. Empowerment, as widely accepted is a process of awareness and building of capacity

leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making power and control to transformative action (Karl, 1995). It is a way of defining, challenging and overcoming barriers in one's life through which the individual increases his/her ability to shape his/her life and environment (Devadas, 1999). Empowerment is the process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power. Although women are partner in developmental process but women are not established in the deserving places of the society. The level of acquired education is an important pre-condition for individuals to enjoy power and achieve satisfaction in his/her life. Opportunities to access education are not uniform to different sections of the population and gender bias is a major concern for unequal opportunities for acquiring education. One of the stated aims of the education system is to provide a learning environment in which all students can strive to achieve their potential. Because those without a seat at the table have little voice in decisions affecting their lives, participation in the systems and structures of society is an essential prerequisite for social transformation. To be anything more than window-dressing though, participation must be substantive and creative. It is not enough for women, for example, to be mere beneficiaries of projects, even if they have a voice in certain decisions. They must be far more involved in decision-making processes like identifying problems, devising solutions and approaches, enjoying benefits, and determining criteria for evaluation. Participation cannot be equated with empowerment—taking part in flawed systems merely perpetuates existing patterns of injustice. In order to advance the common good, individuals must possess both the capacity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing social structures and the freedom to choose between participating in those structures, working to reform them, or endeavouring to build new ones.

Nigeria still falls short of the desired result of giving males and females equal opportunities and equal access to opportunities to advance socially, economically and politically. Moreover, the situation in Lagos State Civil Service falls short of even the Beijing Strategy of Action. Furthermore, the ability to identify the root causes of inequality will be crucial to the empowerment of populations to become agents of social transformation. Regardless of the advantages which a population might enjoy, if it is unable to discern the drivers of social injustice and inequity, it will remain unable to rectify them. If empowerment is to lead to social transformation, it must involve the ability to recognize the forces shaping one's social reality, to identify the possibilities and

challenges presented by that reality, and to devise initiatives for the betterment of society.

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