



## GLOBALIZATION AND UNANSWERED GENDER QUESTIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC VALUE IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract:**

The social phenomenon of globalization which has become a buzz word has continued to occupy the centre stage of academic discourses since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although globalization has been on-going since the history of human civilization, its contemporary status exacerbated by technological advancement in the area of information and communication technology (ICT) has implications for the widening gender gap. The extent to which globalization has impacted on the gender questions of how and why men and women are different has not been given much attention by scholars. The quest for democratic values that is silent on the gender questions will not drive sustainable democracy. Indeed, sustainable development cannot be attained when a significant number of the world's population is marginalized based on gender differences. Here, we focus on the increasing gender inequality in Nigeria and argue that mainstreaming gender in every sphere of human endeavour is crucial to the attainment of sustainable democratic values in the country.

**Keywords:** globalization, unanswered gender questions, democratic value, Nigeria

### **1. Introduction**

Globalization encompasses the dynamics of international trade and finance that interconnect and increasingly integrate national economies. These global processes have clear impact on local labour markets (employment structures and relationships, wages and working conditions, opportunities for women and men and their labour force participation). Globalization has provided countries access to a bigger workforce world-wide and has gained increasing fame, being used with variable range and significance. Globalization is more than just the internationalization of the world economy. Internationalization refers simply to the increasing geographical spread of economic

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activities across national boundaries, but international trade and investment are not new. Globalization is a process through which finance, investment, production and marketing are increasingly dominated by firms (including banks) whose vision and actions are not confined by national borders or national interests.

Such firms periodically review their profit making options on a global basis. Their range of decision making is world-wide and they continually re-adjust and change their portfolios of currencies, customers, factories and offices, seeking to move their operations "offshore", outside the full scope of national jurisdictions whenever this will boost profits.

Globalization is making the world become more integrated. Global economic integration and interdependence of people and capital are accelerating and information is becoming accessible. Technological developments are rapidly changing the way people learn, work, and communicate. Globalization involves a combination of economic integration, technological diffusion, and greater access to information which is operated through markets, and formal and informal institutions to lift some of the constraints to greater gender equality.

## **2. Gender**

Gender refers to a range of characteristics relating to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. These characteristics may include biological sex (i.e. the state of being male, female or intersex), or social construction which is the formation of gender based on the society, culture or people through socialization, gender role and sex stereotype. Biologically determined characteristics of an individual that separate he or she from the opposite sex includes chromosome, breast, and sexual organs, etc. The social construct is that gender does not exist naturally, but is instead a concept that is created by culture and societal norms. Society imposes gender roles on children because they are greatly defined by their gender and this is done through naming, clothing, decorations, selection of toys and, treatment by parents, teachers friends and media. Society-imposed gender roles may also be in form of model behavior of same gender individuals (reward for stereotypical behavior, punishment for non-stereotypical behavior).

### **2.1 Difference between sex roles and gender roles**

Sex roles are those roles defined for man or woman by nature. For instance, a women gets pregnant, gives birth to babies and breastfeed babies, while it takes a man to get a woman pregnant. Gender roles on the other hand, are roles and responsibilities that society assigns to women and men and the values society assigns to these roles. That is, Gender roles are the social or cultural construct characteristics, behaviours and roles which society ascribes to females and males. These roles are assigned in accordance with the culture and tradition of that society. Masculine roles are usually associated with strength, aggression, and dominance. Men are assumed to be tough and

authoritarian. Boys exhibit more aggression and independence. They go for professions such as public security (Police), politics and business, while feminine roles are usually associated with passivity, nurturing, tolerance and subordination. Girls have strong tendency to be more verbal, compliant, and empathetic and are usually typically engaged as social workers, nurses and housewives. Men and women choose occupations or professions that are in accordance with societal expectations of their gender. Hence relatively few females venture into male dominated disciplines such as science, technology, engineering and other science-based professions. The great majority of women and girls chose occupations such as nursing, hair dressing cooking and selling of food, clerical jobs and other menial jobs in industries and other establishments.

### **3. Gender inequality**

Women are considered more active as economic agents in the world. They perform the majority of agricultural activities, own a third of all firms and, in some countries, make up some 70% of employees. Over and above their income-earning activities, they are central to the household economy and the welfare of their families, and they play vital leadership roles in their communities and nations. Responsibilities for the maintenance of human resources fall largely on women's shoulders. Fetching fuel and water, processing food, caring for the children, nursing the sick and managing the household are heavy and time-consuming work. These are widely seen as a woman's role and are economically not recognized. In spite of their many responsibilities, women rarely have access to the resources that would make their work more productive and ease their heavy workload. Yet across nations women face an array of barriers to achieving their full potential, from restrictive cultural practices to discriminatory laws and highly segmented labour markets.

Despite the reaffirmation of the equal rights of men and women by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, women still experience significant disadvantage and discrimination in societies. Globally, women and girls are underrepresented in almost all sectors of life including education and employment opportunities. In most societies, women and girls are denied opportunity for education and are discriminated against in employment opportunities, job securities and other benefits available to their male counterparts. Notwithstanding the fact that women constitute more than half of the world's population, produce eighty percent of the world's food, and labour for two-thirds of the world's work hours, they are paid one-tenth of the world's income, own less than one percent of the world's property and are everywhere poorer in resources and poorly represented in positions of power (Eneji, 2016).

Domestic violence is the number one public health threat to women, responsible for more injuries than any other causes. About half of all women experience violence from men at some point in their lives. Sexual harassment, dating violence and rape are crimes primarily committed against girls and young women by men. Women are

oppressed, restrained, subordinated, controlled, molded, or abused by a male-dominated society. Men make decisions and women deliver services. Nigerians prefer a male child to female child and this encourages the culture that recognizes and treats men as superior to women. The male child in many Nigeria societies is the bearer of the "family name", the heir apparent. He is the one to carry forth the name of the family and so immortalize the lineage. The female child, on the other hand is conceived more or less as a temporary member of the family, who, soon becomes a member of her husband's family. Whatever resources expended on training her is seen as a waste. Thus, less attention is paid to the education of the female than the male child. The male children are often exempted from house chores; they enjoy unlimited right to education, while the girls are trafficked by some parents for economic gains in the home. Women are assigned more work in production and reproduction activities within household and small holder farming systems in agrarian societies and "petty trading" and other informal businesses, in the cities.

### **3.1 Effect of globalization on gender**

A look at the gender dimensions of globalization is essential for promoting a "fair globalization", which creates opportunities for all, does not exacerbate existing problems of inequality within and between nations, and enables men and women to meet their aspirations for democratic participation and material prosperity. The most obvious reason for addressing gender issues is that women workers make up the overwhelming majority of the workforces of labour-intensive, care services workers, and tend to be concentrated in the most vulnerable jobs of global production systems. Any valuation of the benefits and costs of globalization would be insufficient without differentiating the outcomes for female and male workers. Also, failure to consider gender based differences in economic behaviour and labour market outcomes could lead to the formulation of ineffective and inefficient strategies. Women and men are often unequally, differently, positioned in the economy, perform different socially determined responsibilities, and face different constraints. So, they are unlikely to respond in the same way to policies and market signals. Similarly, gender equality with respect to opportunity and treatment in the global economy is essential for achieving equity and social justice, which are integral to achieving decent work for all.

Since globalization encourages economic growth, which is facilitated by policies to liberalize investment, trade, and financial flows as well as to privatize industry and reduce public sector deficits, it will have a differentially beneficial effect on gender equality.

Despite significant increases in agency and in access to economic opportunities for many women in many countries, the rising tide has not lifted everybody. Those often left behind are women for whom the existing constraints are most binding. That is why public action aimed at closing existing gender gaps in endowments, agency, and access to economic opportunities is necessary for countries to fully capitalize on the potential of globalization as a force for development and greater gender equality.

With the advance of technology, low-skilled women in manufacturing companies were often displaced by men. Low-skilled female workers in manufacturing company lost their jobs as various aspects of production became automated. New ICT-enabled jobs in services, particularly information processing in banking, insurance, printing, and publishing that were mainly done by women, are now replaced by men, because the new jobs required a different set of skills, including keyboarding, English, etc.

In Nigeria, women are both economically active and highly entrepreneurial, but they are predominantly in low-value-added occupations that generate little economic return. There is gap between men and women in terms of their participation in labour, their wages and incomes, their business ownership and their access to financial services. Across Nigeria, women and men experience different opportunities, conditions and privileges; they earn different wages, do not have the same access to education and are not always equal before the law. Women do not have equal opportunities in business and employment as men. They face array of barriers that prevent them from moving into more productive pursuits.

### **3.2 Formal employment**

The women are usually assigned the most debased and less profitable jobs. In spite of the fact that they are found in virtually all professions in Nigeria, they remain underrepresented at the top management level. It is the disadvantageous position of women in the workplace that shapes and defines the behaviour and positions of women. These disadvantages include low numbers, little power and limited access to resources (Madsen, 2012; Maürtin-Cairncross, 2014; Eneji et al., 2012). The key argument here is that men and women are equally capable of and committed to assuming positions of senior management. Among the identified structural issues with adverse effects on women are discriminatory appointment and promotion practices, male resistance to women in management positions, absence of policies and legislations to ensure participation of women, and limited opportunities for management training (Madsen, 2012; Maürtin-Cairncross, 2014). Rice (2012) argued that elements associated with masculinity are valued over those associated with femininity; men are placed in “advantageous” jobs that favour them in access to resources and authority. This is because, formal education has become the major determinant of one’s placement in the employment ladder; women, being the least educated (though not the least intelligent) are found at the lowest step of occupational ladder (Mbanefoh, 1995). When there is any need for retrenchment, the first targeted groups are usually the junior level workers, where women are concentrated in most establishments.

### **3.3 Gender income disparity in Nigeria**

There is income gap between men and women in Nigeria. A majority of those in formal employment are men. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data (2010) confirm that in 2007, only 32.5% of women were employed in the (non-agricultural) private sector.

The public sector, which is often perceived to be more progressive does not fare any better. Nigerian men received on average the equivalent of N2,300 per month more than Nigerian women (Oyelere, 2007; Eneji and Ering, 2018). When the incomes of men and women with the same education levels are compared, women at every educational level earn less than their male counterparts and men with less education in some cases earn more than more educated female peers. For example, women with tertiary education earn the same as men having secondary education qualifications, while women with secondary education have similar incomes to men with no education at all.

Several barriers, including reproductive roles, lack of access to productive assets, and issues related to education, combined to account for the observed gender disparities in income (World Bank, 2009). Other income disparities can be traced to workplace gender discrimination in both the private and public sectors. For example, the pay gap between male and female bank Managers is significant (Okpara, 2004:77). With respect to top positions in the public sector, a similar lack of gender parity is evident. There are nearly five times as many male judges and permanent secretaries as there are female ones. One of the pathways to women's empowerment is through education and employment. Quite clearly, it is not straightforward in Nigeria to improve income by means of educational qualifications; structural barriers will need to shift before education can improve the lot of women.

### **3.4 Access to finance**

Credit markets are not gender-neutral as they often lack the assets that financial institutions demand as collateral. Nigerian Women may be kept from access to financial services by cultural assumptions, by formal legal barriers to entering into contracts in their own name or by a lack of financial literacy. While many microcredit institutions and informal savings associations lend to women, microfinance does not address the needs of women who wish to expand beyond the microenterprise level. The importance of micro-enterprises for women makes access to business finance a key determinant of their ability to make a living; yet about 65% of Nigerian women have no bank account (Bamsile, 2006) and rely on informal and other formal microfinance institutions for access to capital. For rural women, opportunities for non-farm, non-agricultural opportunities are constrained by their lack of access to capital (Izugbara, 2008). Women venturing into manufacturing are more likely to rely on family and friends for finance, partly because they lack collateral security (Madichie and Nkamnebe, 2010), but also because they are more likely than men to be deterred from applying for formal loans by the complexity of the application process.

Data from the NBS (2009) showed that men are twice as likely to secure finance than women. In 2007, for example, some 20,098 men accessed loans compared to only 8,550 women. The investment climate in Nigeria is such that capital rather than productivity limits the range of activities in which women engage. The majority of women relies mostly on internal funds and retained earnings, and that only about 1%

obtain capital from the formal financial sector. The banks have not supported women entrepreneurs as much as they could have (Halkias et al., 2011).

### **3.5 Access to taxation**

Women tax payers with dependents do not qualify for some tax exemptions that benefit their male peers. Taxation is an issue for women in micro-enterprises, and affects women's ability to make use of the opportunities that are available to them (MacCulloch, 2011). Although tax payers may currently be a minority, the difference of treatment reveals a gender bias in government policy and penalizes women tax payers who support dependents. Males in paid employment are permitted to deduct expenses incurred on behalf of dependents; but women, because they are perceived to be dependents themselves, are not permitted the same deductions, even when they are the sole bread winner.

### **3.6 Women in enterprise**

Women play an active role in market associations (Porter et al., 2010; Eneji, & Li, 2019), but in Nigerian they run only 20% of enterprises in the formal sector (World Bank, 2009: 92). About 43% of economically inactive women make their living through micro-enterprises. Owning a business has become the main source of income for 19.5 million adult Nigerians. The importance of micro-enterprises as the main source of income makes it a strategic area for the empowerment of women. The World Bank (2009: 92) reported that women in the micro-enterprise sector tend to be better educated than men. Women engagement in The involvement of women in these economic activities has promoted self-reliance and reduce female crime in Nigeria (Okpa & Ekong, 2017).

### **3.7 Women lack access and entitlement to land**

In Nigeria, women's rights of access to land are still considered secondary to those of men and many customs suggest that women's access to land is still mediated by patrilineal systems (Aluko and Amidu, 2006), in spite of the intentions of the 1978 Land Use Act. Traditional authority structures tend to give men decision-making control over all spheres of life. For women, user rights often follow marriage, inheritance or borrowing. In rural Nigeria, land ownership is one of the key limiting factors of production (Peterman et al., 2010). Land access is severely curtailed by the way land is inherited, owned and passed on by men to their male descendants in most patrilineal ethnic groups, especially in Southern Nigeria. For Muslim women, it can be curtailed by traditional male decision making power over female access to assets. As urbanization increases, land tenure for women will become an increasingly important issue.

Although women represent between 60% and 79% of Nigeria's rural labour force, men are five times more likely to own land than women. In general, land ownership is very low among women, a factor that limits their ability to exploit a land-based livelihood strategy. It affects their ability to access finance, for example, and often delays investment decisions or reduces the earning potential of agriculture. Lack of land

ownership in urban areas has implications not only for shelter, security and access to services but also for wealth creation, because many urban micro-enterprises use homes as a staging post.

#### **4. Gender disparities in education**

There is significant gender parity in enrolment in both primary and secondary education in Nigeria (Daudia, 2007). Nigeria still has more children of primary school age out of school than many other countries in the world (Theobald et al., 2007). This is worrying given that the current net attendance ratio of 61% is still below the Education for All (EFA) target, which is to put all children of school going age in school. According to Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2012), Nigeria was home to 10.5 million out-of-school children or 42% of its primary school age population. The 2009 Nigeria Education Data Survey clearly showed that some 1.5 million children (8.1% of children aged 6-14) who were enrolled were not in school at the time of the survey. Nearly 53% of those not in schools were girls, so more girls were out of school. Olaogun (2015) attributed this gender equity gap in the Nigerian education system to a natural gender role distinction across traditional cultural groups that limit women's ability to go up the ladder.

##### **4.1 Women's participation in politics and democratic governance in Nigeria**

Nigeria ratified the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985, although efforts to operationalize its thirty articles locally have weakened. The country also adopted the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action and signed up to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and, crucially, the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (The Maputo Protocol). However, local implementation of these has remained weak, although the essence of these important global and regional declarations was captured in the NGP, launched in 2007. Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society, where men dominate all spheres of women's lives (Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, 2006: 6). One area where this is reflected very appropriately is in women's representation. It is in fact a key area in which women's empowerment has weakened since democratization. The April 2011 elections saw women lose some of the grounds gained after 1999. Nigeria has failed to achieve gender parity in political representation at national, state and local government levels. For example, the 2011 election results showed that only 9% of the candidates for the National Assembly elections were women. Only 13 of the 340 candidates who contested from various political parties for the office of governor were women. Again, only 25 women were elected to the 360-member House of Representatives. Nigeria ranks a lowly 118 out of 192 countries in terms of gender parity. The low (9%) representation of women in Nigeria's House of Representatives is significantly below

the global average. Nigeria's registered political parties have failed to deliver gender parity in political representation. This is because the history of development policies in Nigeria has a lackadaisical attitude towards the gender variable. For instance, the first two decades of development planning in Nigeria from 1963 when it became a republic, was largely characterized by gender-blind and gender-insensitive development policies (Ejumudo, 2013). Scholars such as (Ejumudo, 2013; Irabor, 2011; Mahdi, 2011; Eneji & Li, 2019) have documented that women's participation in politics and democratic governance in Nigeria in the fourth republic has brought about unprecedented socio-economic development and bridge the inequality gap hitherto suffered by women in Nigeria.

#### **4.2 Reasons for lack of gender parity in political representation**

Internal party selection processes and outcomes during the 2011 elections suggest that across political parties, few women were elected to contest seats (Irabor, 2011); and that those selected were given seats that were hard to win. Only one in every 14 female candidates was elected, compared to one in every seven males. Male candidates clearly had a better conversion rate. Some of the smaller political parties in Nigeria are said to have a better record than the larger parties with regard to gender equity. The constitutions of most parties commit them to gender affirmative action, but few have met the 35% target (Mahdi, 2011).

Much of the factors influencing women's participation in sustainable socio-economic development and promoting insecurity of forms during the Fourth Republic have been reported previously (Oladeye, 2011; Salihu, 2011; Irabor, 2011; WRAPA, 2004; Ityavyar and Ityavyar, 2002). A complex mix of personal and shared issues combines to undermine the broader representation of women. Although there is a definite need to understand the specific experiences of women who participated in the April 2011 election, general factors that affect the individual – like education, health, finance and reproductive roles – are issues that could be dealt with if the political will existed to use public policy to support women candidates (Salihu, 2011). Banning political meetings at night and legislating against political violence, for example, might assist women candidates to emerge, if these measures were effectively enforced. Issues relating to the nature of political space could also be dealt with by gender-balanced electoral reform. Oladoye (2011) argues that setting an agreed quota system within and between the parties could be a useful starting point. Evidence from countries like South Africa and Rwanda that have managed to increase women's participation in politics suggests that, until women candidates are nominated at party level to contest winnable seats, talks of equity in gender representation will be slow and may not be achievable in the short-term

Women are underrepresented at all levels. National data on the representation in women in other elected positions, such as school management committees, are not easily available, but some studies suggest that women are relatively under-represented even at this level (Action Aid, 2011). Unless women start to be 'visible and electable' at

local level, where it is relatively easier to build support, their representation in higher political offices will be hard to achieve, even if political parties adopt and implement a quota system. Enabling more women to stand for and win elections will make a difference. But making all politicians more responsive to all their constituents would also improve accountability. Currently just over half of all registered Nigerian voters are women and politicians are said to be “wary about the numerical strength of women” voters (Mahdi, 2011). Despite this, in a recent survey in Northern Nigeria, though all respondents felt it was their duty to vote, many believed voting made no difference. They reported little contact with their elected representatives after elections, and when they did approach them “it was to seek a personal favour, not to realize their rights as citizens” (Ladbury, 2011). This suggests that much civil society work is needed to help women realize their potential power as constituents. Recently, the Millennium declaration overtly recognised the equal rights and opportunities for men and women (Adebayo & Akanle, 2014).

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