

Gender, Globalization and Women's Poverty: Evidence from Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper attempts to examine the process of globalization, especially financial integration and investment, foreign capital transfers and the profound effects it has had on the lives of women in Africa with a case study of Nigeria. It also examines the globalization-engendered national policies of privatization and commercialization that have had adversely affected the living conditions of Nigerian women. Structural adjustment programmes, enforced by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other multilateral international financial institutions have resulted in massive privatization of previously state owned enterprises, the relaxation, of tariffs and quotas that have led to inundation of foreign mass-produced goods and consequent massive job losses; scaling back of social programmes, and overall trade liberalization that has led to the a new level of women impoverishment in Nigeria are studied. Women's positions as workers, producers of food, and homemakers are now impacted-not only by the local conditions of ethnicity, religion, and cultural rigidities but invariably also by the gender-blind rules of globalization. The paper further examines how the process of globalization has exacerbated the existing gender inequities, deepened asymmetrical power relations between men and women widened the hitherto unequal access to credit, education, economic resources, and health services thus resulting to further immiseration. Statistical data from the last decade and half, since the structural adjustment for globalization in the early 1990s, is used to illustrate these contentions. Finally the paper concludes with implications of the findings for better public policy for women in Nigeria.

Keywords: Gender, Globalization, Women's Poverty

Introduction

In 2001, Saleh Nsouli and Francois Le Gall wrote that Africa's position in the global economy is very grim; its share of world trade has dwindled, foreign direct investment in most countries has remained at very low levels, and the income gap relative to advanced countries has widened. Today, more than 300 million in sub Saharan Africa live on less than \$1 a day. Similarly writing about the global South in general, Anthony Giddens, (1999), the renowned British economist contented that the share of the poorest fifty per cent of the world's population has dropped from 2.3% to 1.4% over the past 10 years. The proportion taken by the richest one fifth on the other hand has risen from 70% to 85%. Specifically in sub Saharan Africa, he said that countries have lower incomes per capita in real terms than they did two decades ago. Also in 2001, Mohammed Dapuas, Governor of the Central Bank of Tunisia insisted that on the African continent in particular, a worsening of existing imbalances has impeded development and aggravated poverty while costly structural reforms have often negatively affected the most vulnerable segments of society. These pronouncements and analyses are in spite of the promises of globalization.

This study explores the relationship between the process of globalization and the gendering and subsequent feminization of poverty in Nigeria. This is done through an examination of how the implementation of Structural adjustment policies driven by globalization shapes policies of the Nigerian nation. These policies of economic change in turn, generate social, cultural and political change, which affect the asymmetrical economic, political, and social relations between men and women.

The study proceeds in three parts. First there is a general overview of the globalization literature and the processes that are involved, including capital transfers, foreign direct investment, international trade and the promises that come therefrom. In other words, it focuses on the relationship between globalization and neoliberal restructuring. Second, the study examines the social construction and conceptualization of gender, women and the relationship of each to globalization. The question is asked as to how the social construction of women, gender, and feminism affect the cultural norms and assumptions of the societies of Nigeria and therefore situate the implications of globalization on gender in Nigeria. Thirdly, the various indicators of the impact of globalization on the economic conditions of women in Nigeria are examined over a ten-year period (roughly 1990-2000) in order to demonstrate empirically, the various ways that women have been affected in the social, cultural and political and above all the economic dimensions. We begin then to examine the process of globalization operating through gendered institutions and how structures of the economy affect the lives and wellbeing of women (Beneria, et al 2000). Fourthly, by focusing on how the lives of women in Nigeria are profoundly affected by the forces of globalization this study contributes to a much richer understanding of globalization and its ramifications for women everywhere.

Literature Review

Globalization: Theoretical Parameters

Globalization can be defined as the new patterns of free trade, international trade and investment that has been ascribed with the resulting disruption in people's lives; pushing them outside, of the traditional means of livelihood, shifting economic activity from the local to the global, establishing new patterns of consumption, and setting up new methods of communication and interaction, Odozi (1998) defined globalization as the rapid integration of trade relations and productive and investment decisions across the globe by economic agents who employ and move investment capital and technology around to take advantage of environments where their competitive-edge can manifest in high returns. It is a process of increased integration of national economies with the rest of the world to create a more coherent global economy. Globalization has been marked by internationalization of trade and finance as well as the increasing power and presence of multinational corporations.

Globalization has also been responsible for a globalised international financial market comprising increasing investment flows, and international financial flows in the form of short term portfolio capital movements in foreign exchange, derivatives, securities and equities markets. Any worthwhile discussion of globalization must also look at the role of international financial institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Trade Organization (WTO), and other multilateral financial institutions that preach trade openness, financial liberalization and capital market de-regulation. International Monetary Fund (1997) explained globalization as the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through the increasing volume and variety of cross border transactions in goods and services and of international capital flow most analyses of globalization focus on the economic aspects that concentrate on such ' things as the emergent global economic system, such discussions explain such aspects as global financial markets, unhindered free trade in goods, services and

labour, transnational corporations, off-shore financial centers, foreign direct investments, and the role of international economic and financial institutions (Steger, 2003, Daouas 2001, Giddens 1999).

Specifically, international free trade has proceeded in tandem with the liberalization of financial transactions and the movement of large scale capital around the world. Within nations this has resulted in corresponding de-regulation of interest rates, removal of credit controls, privatization and/or commercialization of state owned enterprises, banks and financial institutions, government budget cuts and devolution or decentralization of decision making and implementation. The argument is that the greater the liberalization of financial trading, the higher the mobility of capital among different segments of the financial industry. This de-regulation includes capital and securities markets from Europe, North America to Asia and Africa, for as McMiltan (2004) argued developing countries that have opened themselves to investment from overseas have benefited. In countries that have begun to allow foreigners to hold shares in domestic firms, investments rose. The emphasis here is on efficiency and the market based growth, undergirded by neoliberal economic analysis.

Two main elements remain dominant in the globalization literature. The first and perhaps earliest attempts have been the focus on the restructuring of production and labor by the multinational corporations. This involved the relocation off-shore of manufacturing processes to pools of cheap labour in developing countries. In this way, cheap, plentiful, and usually feminine labour are brought into the industrial sphere in garment and footwear production, agricultural and other jobs in export processing zones. The second element- focuses on the neoliberal-influenced programmes which are aimed at the restructuring of the economy of the state that ends up having far reaching consequences for the political, cultural and social dynamics of the people. The reduction or sometimes elimination of social programmes, privatization and commercialization, devaluation of the currency, and reduction in overall state powers have resulted in differential impacts on women than on men (Sassen 1996). In an integrated global economy it is easier for people from different countries to do business with each other and for people and goods to move between countries.

However, most of the discussions on globalization seem to employ the simple masculinist, economic approach that depends on the discipline of the market that makes globalization inexorable and inevitable and irreversible (Bergeron 2001) "irresistible" and "powerful and dominant force (Gibson-Graham 1996). It appears to impose unnecessary restrictions and strain on the development strategies of less developed nations in a highly competitive environment. This has resulted in a shallow rendering of the context of globalization that leaves out its political, social, technological, and cultural dimensions. However, AH Kamali (2001) argued that globalization is a phenomenon that transcends a simple idea of economic growth driven by the logic of the market and capital accumulation. In his view, it can be best conceptualized as a "multidimensional set of social processes permeating-various dimensions of contemporary national and international societies, For globalization to be fully understood, it must be moved away from the narrow economic specification that alienates it from gender, women and femininity, Marchand and Runyan (1999) have analyzed the ways in which the dominant neoliberal economic models of globalization operate under masculinist biases in terms of what Eschle (2001) described as a model of human nature which universalizes culturally specific and masculinist assumptions about economic rationality, and their focus on the productive or commodity-based economy at the expense of the informal, household, care-based economy.

Globalization is an ongoing process. As Held (1999) has stated, it may be thought of as a process which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity, and impact-generating transcontinental or inter-regional flows and networks of activity, interaction and exercise of power. It is evidently a process towards greater homogenization, hybridization, and hegemonisation. Steger (2003) recognizes four levels in the processes. The first is the creation of new and multiplication of existing activities that increasingly overcome and superseded traditional political, economic, cultural, and geographic boundaries. The second level is the expansion of social relations, activities and interdependencies, for example financial markets. The third involves intensification and acceleration of social exchanges and activities, for example through the Internet and satellite communication by which the immediacy of news and events affect local events spontaneously. Hence the seemingly opposing process of globalization and localization, fragmentation and re-articulation actually imply each other. In this way the local and the 'global' form the endpoints of a spatial continuum whose mid-point is formed by what is left of the 'national and the 'regional. The fourth is the creation, expansion, and intensification of social interconnection and interdependence. This reinforces Giddens (1999) argument that globalization has something to do with the thesis that we all now in one world, Steger also argues that globalization is a homogenization of global economic, social, and political order from which even the least developed nations cannot escape. In his opinion, globalization refers to the multidimensional set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch, and intensify world-wide social interdependence and exchange. The trend dubbed globalizing is a neoliberal market ideology that endows globalization with certain norms, values and meanings.

It must be admitted that globalization is a megatrend that is expressed in the rising inequality in the distribution of income both within and between countries. This has resulted in a lack of general improvement in the unequal distribution of income in the world, this has resulted in the so-called development gap which continues to widen. While there is substantial evidence that many global North economies have benefited substantially from globalization, the same cannot be said of South economies. The asymmetries in the economies of the two parts of the globe arising from level of development and power of competition in the market and what is traded has resulted in the decline of the South economies. This has exacerbated the development gap between the rich and the poor nations. In the global, the poorest nations are concentrated in Africa. This development is in spite of the promises of globalization. This agrees with the early observation by Giddens (1999) that globalization is developing in an even-handed way and is by no means wholly benign in its consequences.

Regardless of the ideological bent of the criticism, there is considerable agreement that globalization is profoundly damaging and exploitative, functioning to increase poverty, inequality, environmental degradation and conflict (Bschle 2004). States and interstate institutions are seen as bound up within and compromised by globalization processes. Nigerian economist, Ibi Ajayi (2001) concurs with these observations when he writes: "globalization is not a panacea. It will not solve all of Africa's economic problems. Integration with the global economy is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for growth." On the contrary, Beneria, et al (1990) argued that governments, unfortunately, have been largely unmindful of the dislocation, disruptions, and painful adjustments that have affected the-poor in general and women in particular, especially 'since they do not show in standard indicators. In the end, globalization remains today one of the most contested concepts in academia, in policy and activist circles and in feminist literature.

Globalization and the Marginalization of Women

Eschie (2004) has undertaken a comprehensive review of the relationship between feminist and non-feminist scholars on globalization aimed at showing why feminist arguments and the significance of gender in globalization studies tend to be marginal. She has identified two broad approaches. The economic-poll (seal approaches to globalization are characteristic of the work in economics, development studies and international relations. They examine the integration of the international economic relations and the effect this has on the nation state and' its political institutions

The second, the Culfair & social approaches are employed in sociology, anthropology and cultural studies. The argument here is that globalization is a set of processes that involves economic, political, and social forces. Marchand and Runyan (2000), further, divide this (cultural-social approaches) into homogenizers emphasizing cultural universal and integration, and homogenizers, that emphasizes the interplay or mutual constitution of universal processes and localized cultural forms. There is an assumption in the literature that we have reached a point where there is a convergence that accepts the economic-homogenization as the dominant model. This model is economist, and neoliberal. The heterogenisers include such emphases as impact of the 'global village, post-coloniality, and hybridity on local communities. The most contentious approach and the one that has attracted the most criticism is the neo-liberal economic orthodoxy that globalization results in the high locates causality in economic processes and actors, Many feminist scholars reject the possibility of a global community just as they doubt the possibility, of a global capitalist economy. On the contrary, they contend that globalization results in the "harsh reality of inequality, division and fragmentation, modalities that African countries must adopt to effectuate women involvement in development.

The rather unfortunate sharp disagreement regarding women's conception of the global agenda relating to women did not dampen the noble objectives of the conferences. The so-called women's issues could not be perceived as common to all women independent of nationality. While women of the North dealt with issues of radical and liberal feminism, it was not so with women of the South whose main concern was with culturally pervasive oppressions of gender stemming from patriarchy and male control. In the present globalizing structures, it can be argued that the same 'capitalist hierarchies of the imperialist and colonial eras still affect the Nigerian woman. Consequently, African and Third World women insisted on a much higher profile during the final decade conference in Nairobi and ID years later in Beijing in 2000 and thus have been able to draw attention to the ways in which global economic processes played themselves out in national and local contexts and how they have led to the subordination of women (Eschle, 2004),

Sassen (1998) noted globalization has highlighted a concern to expose the narrative of eviction that has erased the gender-specific consequences (of globalization) on women's lives. Similarly, Schoite (2000) recalls that a number of Feminist analyses have highlighted the significance in globalization of gender Inequity, that is, injustice that results from particular social construction of femininity and masculinity. Contrary to the plethora of discussions that focus mainly on the economic formulations of globalization, the feminist discourse of globalization remains unsatisfied. Rather it focuses on the communal aspect of globality and globalization. Studies with this tendency try to contextualize the global circumstances that men deal with, not only in economic terms but also in terms of the social,, political and cultural dynamics that globalization generates. This perception thus takes into consideration the various forms of the gender argument that deals with biological sex, socialized or socially constructed gender traits, women identity, and feminist politics. Feminist .scholars argue that to redress

women's marginalization a new approach to gender issues which identifies clearly men's and women's interactions within the full social, political, and legal context must replace the old approach which treated women in isolation thereby aggravating existing disparities.

In the light .of the above, it is noteworthy to recall the reflections of Afshar and Dennis (1992) aver that globalization impacts on women differently, depending on their Regional location, class, position, and sexual orientation. They note that nevertheless, "women generally have been particularly affected. The impact of globalization when discussed has been material, gendered social relationships.

Hence as Sassen firmly argued, the dominant narrative concerns itself with the upper circuits of capital, not the tower ones; and particularly with the hyper-mobility of capital rather than place-bound capital. The pointed argument by Bergeron (2001) is quite forceful indeed. She notes that in the developing world national governments have abandoned their commitments to the poor and vulnerable and to maintaining national economic stability, and whatever actions they might take frequently place the needs of the transnational capital above all others. The disempowerment of the state makes, it unable to protect women from the negative consequences of globalization, social services reversals that affect health care, child care, education and affect women principally. The economist, Lourdes Beneria in her analysis argued that the development that globalization should inspire is one that' contributes to human development rather than mere economic growth.

On the contrary, in her view, neoliberal, market-led approaches have led to a crisis of development predicated on persistent poverty, economic insecurity, and growing social tensions fueled by inequality. More important is that economic restructuring proportionately burden women because it is the household that eventually absorbs the shock of the structural adjustment programmes. She recommends that the concept of economic utility should be replaced with the notion of dignity and that economics should develop models of social equity, self-esteem, and gender sensitivity as ways of maximizing this dignity.

The Nigerian political economist, Claude Ake (1995) writes that globalization is not only a process but also an ongoing structuration of power economically, politically, and culturally - and the crystallizing of domination. Restructuring affects men's wages and forces women into working longer hours outside the home to make up for decline in men's wages. Thus as transnational capitalism in the name of globalization' ravages African nations, nations are made impotent in intervening in the exploitation of women and the poor. According to Beneria, et al (2000), the forces of globalization thus shape the direction of national economies, policy formulation and resource allocation that inevitably fit into existing gender norms and perceptions.

While this is an important observation, it is critical to locate in empirical terms, the various ways that women have been affected by globalization. The following situations stand out quite distinctly: the search for cheap labour has led to the feminization of the work force in most African countries while the large cut-backs in social programs subventions in education and health care has reduced the financial returns of women as they form the large bulk of teachers and health-care professionals. Thirdly, the exacting rules of globalization have drastically curtailed the ability of the Nigerian state to make policy in the domestic domain that should have addressed the economic development' imperative concerning women. In recognition of this trend, the World has begun to review its policy and instead now emphasizes the need for even greater integration of the national economy as the only means through which women will

reap the benefits of the changes in the economy that had hitherto not accrued to them (1994). The relevant question remains whether the hypothesized relationship between equity and growth is demonstrable.

Poverty in Nigeria

Poverty is the economic condition in which people lack sufficient income to obtain certain minimal levels of health services, food, housing, clothing and education which are necessities for standard of living (World Bank, 2011). The various definitions and measures of poverty lead to two perspectives which are income poverty and lack of basic need poverty. Income poverty occurs when an individual does not have enough money to meet up with the a certain standard of living while lack of basic need poverty occurs when one is unable to meet some of the basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing as identified by united nations, children's fund (UNICEF). From the above definition of poverty, income definition is the most appropriate, therefore this study use the income definition of poverty (Ogbeide and Agu, 2015).

The major component in the computation of relative poverty measurement is the household expenditure. Expenditure refers to all goods and services for use of the household. It also includes all monetary transactions such as donations, savings, esusu contribution. Poverty line is a measure that divides the poor from non-poor. Using the mean per capita household expenditure one-third of it gives (separate) the extreme or core poor from the rest of the population while two-third of the mean per capita expenditure separate the moderate poor from the rest of the population. Lucky and Sam (2018) opines that the accumulation of the core poor and moderate poor gives the poor population, while the non-poor are the population greater than two-third of the population. In the course of computing the poverty profile for Nigeria using the harmonized Nigeria living standard survey, all the above approaches have been adopted. Though the use of country adult equivalent and household size seems to be the current method in the computation of absolute (abject) poverty measure, the adopted per capita expenditure (total expenditure/household size) just for consistency. Absolute poverty measure used the per capita expenditure approach. However, the measurement of poverty is about individuals in poverty, hence the choice of per capita expenditure which will estimate the population as against adult-equivalent which under-estimate the population. For clarity, it is necessary to state the different measures and what they translate in monetary. The poverty lines for each of the measures are as follows:

- 1) Food poverty line: This food poverty is an aspect of absolute poverty measure which considers only food expenditure for the affected households.
- 2) Absolute poverty line: This is the second step in absolute (objective) poverty measure. Here, this method considers both food expenditure and non- food expenditure using the per capita expenditure approach
- 3) The relative poverty line: This line separates the poor from the non-poor. All persons whose per capita expenditure is less than the above are considered to be poor while those above the stated amount are considered to be non-poor.
- 4) The dollar per day poverty line: This measures, consider all individuals whose expenditure per day is less than a dollar per day using the exchange rate of naira to dollar.
- 5) The subjective poverty measure is the perception of the citizenry. It is neither related to per capita expenditure of household nor the country adult equivalent scale.
- 6) Another critical measure of poverty is the gini coefficient (inequality measurement). This measure can explain the spread of income or expenditure yet cannot explain increase or decrease of individuals or persons in poverty.

According to NBS report 2018, inequality in Nigeria worsened between 2004 and 2013 but improved in 2016 using either the gini coefficient or theil. Inequality as measured by the gini worsened from 0.356 in 2004 to 0.41 in 2013 but improves to 0.391 in 2016. Using theil, inequality worsened from 0.217 in 2003 to 0.395 in 2013 but improved to 0.31 in 2016. With respect to consumption shares (and using consumption as a proxy for income), in 2004, the bottom 10% (poorest of the poor) of the population consumed 2.56% of goods and services, while the top 10% (super rich) consumed 26.59% of all goods and services. The richest 10% were responsible for 26.59% of national expenditure or income in 2004. This increased to 33.72% in 2013 but decreased to 31.09% in 2016. The top 20% were responsible for 42.40% of national income/expenditure in 2004. This increased to 48.28% in 2013 but declined to 46.63% in 2016. While no agreed standard definition of the Nigerian middle class exists, for the purpose of this report we have classified decile 01-03 as the lower class, decile 04-07 as the middle class and decile 08-10 as the upper class.

Accordingly, the upper class was responsible for 58.39% of national income/expenditure down from 59.42% in 2013. The share of the upper class in national income had been rising between 2004 and 2013 before reducing in 2016. The middle class on the other hand accounted for 30.26% of national income/expenditure in 2016, higher than 29.14% in 2013. The share of the middle class had been declining between 2004 and 2013 in favor of the higher class but that reversed in 2016. Finally, the lower class accounted for 11.35% of national income/expenditure in 2016 lower than 11.43% in 2013. The biggest gainers of income/expenditure shares between 2013 and 2016 has therefore been the middle class, while the lower-class share remained constant while the high-class shares reduced. This widening gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria is contrary to Kuznets' hypothesis.

Assessing Nigeria within the international poverty context, it is possible to determine the intensity and severity of poverty in Nigeria within the general context of the promises of globalization. In order to do this, we use the Human Development Index (HDI), the Human Poverty Index (HPI), and the Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) as measures in the World Bank's Human Development Report, in shifting the focus of the attention of the world from such mechanical indicators of economic progress as GNP to indicators that come closer to reflecting the wellbeing and opportunities actually enjoyed by populations (World Development Report, 2016). Since 2007, the HDI has been used by the United Nations as a summary measure of human development. It measures the average achievement in a country in three basic dimensions of human development; a long and healthy life as measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge as measured by the adult literacy rate (two thirds weight) and gross school enrolment (primary, secondary and tertiary) ratio (with one third weight); and standard of living as measured by GDP per capita (PPP.US\$). A country's performance on these dimension indices are expressed as a value between 0 and 1 using the following general formula:

Actual value - minimum value Poverty Dimension Index = Maximum value - minimum value

Performances from .800 and above are regarded as high human development, .799-.500 qualify for medium human development and from .499 and below is regarded as low human development. The HDI may not be a perfect measure since it attempts to capture complex reality in a summary measure with mostly imperfect data. Yet, it is able to present some aspects of human development that the GNP tends to miss. The World Bank notes that there is a strong case for a more comprehensive investigation of gender inequality in economic and social arrangements in the contemporary world (World Bank, 2016).

Table I: Nigeria Human Development Index, 2007-2017

YEAR	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
(HDI) value	0.48	0.49	0.49	0.50	0.51	0.51	0.52	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53
Rank	159	158	152	157	156	155	155	162	158	188	152	157

Sources: United Nations, Human Development Reports

Table II: Nigeria Human Development Index, 2007-2017

YEAR	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
change HDI value	0.48	0.49	0.49	0.50	0.51	0.51	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53
Rank %	0.84	1.25	1.03	1.57	1.63	1.40	1.36	0.77	0.38	152	157

Sources: United Nations, Human Development Reports

The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. A long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy. Knowledge level is measured by mean years of education among the adult population, which is the average number of years of education received in a life-time by people aged 25 years and older; and access to learning and knowledge by expected years of schooling for children of school-entry age, which is the total number of years of schooling a child of school-entry age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates stay the same throughout the child's life. Standard of living is measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita expressed in constant 2011 international dollars converted using purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion rates.

To ensure as much cross-country comparability as possible, the HDI is based primarily on international data from the United Nations Population Division (the life expectancy data), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (the mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling data) and the World Bank (the GNI per capita data). As stated in the introduction, the HDI values and ranks in this Statistical Update are not comparable to those in past reports because of a number of revisions to the component indicators.

According to Table 1 and III above, the level of human development in Nigeria has been quite flat or at best has grown in fits and starts. From a meager .48 in 2007 the year of third transition to democratic regime, it improved minimally over the periods covered in this study. Nigeria's HDI value for 2017 is 0.532 which put the country in the low human development category positioning it at 157 out of 189 countries and territories. Between 2005 and 2017, Nigeria's HDI value increased from 0.465 to 0.532, an increase of 14.4 percent, reviews Nigeria's progress in each of the HDI indicators. Between 1990 and 2017, Nigeria's life expectancy at birth increased by 8.0 years, mean years of schooling increased by 1 year and expected years of schooling increased by 3.3 years, Nigeria's GNI per capita increased by about 87.4 percent between 1990 and 2017. The human development progress, as measured by the HDI, can usefully be compared to other countries. For instance, during the period between 2005 and 2017 Nigeria, Mauritania and Cameroon experienced different degrees of progress toward increasing their HDIs. Nigeria's 2017 HDI of 0.532 is above the average of 0.504 for countries in the low human development group and below the average of 0.537 for countries in Sub-

Saharan Africa. From Sub-Saharan Africa, countries which are close to Nigeria in 2017 HDI rank and to some extent in population size are Congo (Democratic Republic of the) and Ethiopia, which have HDIs ranked 176 and 173 respectively. Nigeria's HDI for 2017 is 0.532. However, when the value is discounted for inequality, the HDI falls to 0.347, a loss of 34.7 percent due to inequality in the distribution of the HDI dimension indices, Congo (Democratic Republic of the) and Ethiopia show losses due to inequality of 30.3 percent and 28.4 percent respectively. The average loss due to inequality for low HDI countries is 31.1 percent and for Sub-Saharan Africa it is 30.8 percent. The Human inequality coefficient for Nigeria is equal to 34.6 percent.

Table III: Nigeria Human Poverty Index 2007-2017

YEAR	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Human Poverty Index (HPI) – value	49.3	52.55	46.0	60.9	71.0	61.0	33.1	27.23	21.35	67.1	42.4

Sources: United Nations, Human Development Reports

Over the years, abject and protracted poverty is a common feature of the Nigerian society. 65% of Nigerians live below the poverty line without any access to basic goods, services and commodities (NBS, 2012). Since women constitute almost half of the population going by the latest population census in the country, it is convenient to say that most women are the victims of poverty in Nigeria today. As a result of the deepening poverty profile of the country, most households in Nigeria are more concerned with the survival needs of their families' members (Ogwumike, 2012). Poverty is not only a reality in Nigeria, but most Nigerian women who should put a helping hand to their families are also poor. With their low educational status, lack of basic skills and general unemployment condition, the poverty status of rural women in the country is even worse.

However, Nigeria as a nation is not poor as this unfortunate Poverty situation exist in the midst of abundant resources which is enough to cater for the general needs of the entire citizens. For example, Nigeria is the sixth richest oil producing country in the world. In terms of agriculture, the country has great potentials owing to its highly fertile soil and it has abundant land mass adequate enough for any socioeconomic and technological activity. With over 180 million people, there is enough potential for adequate manpower which may be required for any kind of developmental activity. Again, the country boast of over 50 universities and that is beside other higher institutions that should be involved in manpower development. Yet, poverty, especially among women, thrives in the country. Nevertheless, the reason for this paradox is not farfetched.

Sociologist like Onoge (2003) argued that structural forces within the class divided society shape the way in which socio-economic resources are distributed. The ruling class in Nigeria control instruments of distributions of resources and instead of ensuring equitable distribution; they only serve their own class and personal interest to the disadvantage of the masses that constitute the majority. Incidentally, most women in the country fall within this structurally disadvantage group and this explains why there is wide spread poverty among women in Nigeria. In this process women end up with little or no income. The system unjustly treat the women, especially in the rural areas and lower rank of their working places, without recourse to their basic survival needs and as such leaving them in helpless and hopeless conditions of

poverty (Egware, 1997). In fact, while most the women wallow in perpetual impoverishment the ruling class members continue to enjoy their loot in their comfort zones.

Women like other Nigerian masses groups hoped for a better deal with the coming of democracy in the country in 1999. But this hope was dashed as the Obasanjo administration pursued and implemented anti-people economic and fiscal policies (Adelakun, 2008). Although women were include in the top echelon of government, policies and programmes, however, resources supposedly meant for the provision of meaningful education, employment opportunities, and infrastructure that will better the living standards of the people, especially the women were diverted, siphoned, corruptly embezzled or mismanaged by the ruling class occupying powerful positions of influence in the society (Ribadu, 2006). Several billions of naira from the public treasury meant for overcoming poverty has been looted by political leaders. New York Times (2005) reported that Nigeria is the epitome of wasted potentials and squandered opportunity in Africa. This has negatively impacted on many generations of Nigeria women who with no good school to attend, no employment opportunities, and no sufficient basic infrastructures have to contend with poverty. The present administration of President Goodluck Jonathan has not done any better as incessant cases of corruption at all levels of governance is the order of the day (Opeyemi, 2012). Although the issue of poverty in Nigeria is heartbreaking, official sources show that it is a northern phenomenon (Soludo, 2008). Further, the Nigerian economy, under the Obasanjo's democratic regime, was hurriedly pushed into the global neo-liberal capitalist economic system through programmes like privatization and commercialization of the public sector. Ake (2003), observed that the various liberalization programmes have succeeded in selling the Nigerian economy into the hands of a very few bourgeoisies to the disadvantage of the masses. It was to be followed by retrenchment of workers and sell of public properties. These actions of the government forced poverty on the people, especially women who will have to grapple with both personal and domestic challenges.

However, various governments made different responses to the problem of the poverty in Nigeria. For instance, some of the structures put in place include, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), etc. These projects were expected to initiate and execute policies and programs towards poverty eradication through self-employment for self-reliance among the unemployed Nigerians. Several billions of naira was budgeted yearly to make the program very effective. Yet the problem of unemployment especially among women appears to be larger than life in Nigeria (Egware, 1997). This is because Nigeria is one country in the world where government agencies and parastatals constitute nothing more than a conduit pipe whereby public funds are grossly siphoned into the private pockets of the bourgeoisie (Adelakun, 2008). As a result of this unpatriotic and infamous act, women and other underprivileged groups have continued to live in the condition of ravaging poverty.

For the period covered in this study, it is clear that the rate of poverty increased according to Table 3 above. Compared to other nations, Nigeria's HPI ranks for the period did not show that any appreciable progress is being made with regard to the eradication or even mitigation of poverty. On the values of the estimates, there is a steady decline in the scores and the fact that these scores are positive, though not large, is a weak indication that Nigerian authorities are not making any meaningful commitments at reducing poverty in Nigeria. Given the promise of globalization and liberalization, and considering that poverty rate is heightening rather than lowering, the position of Ajayi (2001) is confirmed that globalization may not be the panacea to Nigeria's human development and other economic, social and cultural problems.

The third is the Gender-Related Development Index (GDI). As a generalization/ "the less developed a nation is the greater the likelihood that women will be disadvantaged" (Stoesz, Guzzetta, and Lusk 1999). In order to highlight the disparate status of women, the indicators of HOI are adjusted for gender to construct a Gender-Related "Development Index (GDI). The adjustment takes into consideration the average achievement of each country in life expectancy, educational attainment and income in accordance with the disparity in achievement between men and women. In nations where HDI minus GDI is negative, it indicates a lower achievement for women compared to men. Nations that carry negative scores show a reflection of patriarchal domination.

Table IV: National Positions Held By Women in the Present Administration

	Female (comparatively)	Male	Sum total
Senator	7(6.5%)	100	107
Representative	15 (4.2%)	330	357
Minister	5(11%)	40	45

Source: Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (2008b) *Nigeria Gender Statistics Book*

The percentage of female in political positions is significantly lower than males. The table above indicates the spread; however Human Development Report 2016 indicates the percentage of females at the ministerial level is higher than Japan (23% in Nigeria and 12% in Japan). In this regard, Nigerian women participation in political area might be more advanced than the Japanese situation.

Table V: The Gender-related laws and regulations in Nigeria

Law and Regulation	Year	Content
Domestic		
Chapter 2 of the constitution	1999	To ensure the gender equality directly and indirectly
Section 42 (1), chapter 4 of the constitution	1999	To prohibit discrimination based on gender and class
The child rights' Act of 2003	2003	To protect children's' rights. 22 out of 36 states ratify it
International law and a treaty (ratification year)		
The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW)	1985	To achieve the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the gender equality
Children's Rights Convention	1991	To protect children's rights that is defined in international covenants on Human Rights
Convention Against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment	2001	To protect women from all forms of tortures and inhuman treatments

Source: Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (2008b) *Nigeria Gender Statistics Book*

Table VI: The gender related index by state of Nigeria

State	Life expectancy (year)		Adult literacy (%)		Primary and secondary education enrolment rate (%)		Income per person. (U.S. dollar)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Average	52	48	55.1	73.2	76.0	94.4	715	1,596
Abia	55	50	73.3	85.7	96.1			
Adamawa	48	45	43.8	65.1	71.0	105.8	78	339
Akwabom	50	47	75.0	85.0	92.8	111.1	3,879	3,713
	49	44	73.6	81.0	101.0	120.5	154	172
Bauchi	52	47	28.0	49.2	37.5	59.4	54	77
Bayelsa	53	46	46.0	82.6	85.8	114.6	4,750	5,972
Benue	49	46	47.3	81.4	89.9	129.1	715	2,158
Borno	54	51	18.0	35.1	34.0	51.7	129	910
Cross River	56	52	66.4	83.3	107.6	114.4	447.2	761.2
Delta	51	49	54.6	92.2	100.9	117.7	101	556
Kbonvi	51	45	46.1	67.9	90.7	137.8	182	216
Edo	50	44	67.2	84.9	103.5	119.2	261	394
Ekiti	56	54	67.3	82.5	111.8	125.7	232	402
	53	52	68.4	81.5				
Gombe	51	47	69.1	82.1	31.1	51.4	38	661
Imo	51	50	19.6	57.8	96.8	127.2	340	494.1
Jigawa	50	45	50.5	73.9	23.6	41.6	150	1,816
Kaduna	51	43	48.0	67.0	73.5	106.3	266	1,114
Kano	53	49	26.7	46.5	46.5	75.4	157	1,188
Katsina	54	51	19.5	57.6	34.5	64.7	442	1,553
Kebbi	53	49	54.3	72.9	26.9	51.1	515	502
Kogj	50	46	43.7	67.3				
Kwara	53	49	84.4	94.1	74.8	117.5	265	375
Lagos	50	45	34.1	66.6	100.0	110.9	1,781	3,249
Nassarawa	55	47	28.7	54.2	87.0	113.8		1,813
Niger	58	50	60.2	77.3	47.0	84.8		2,628
Ogun	54	52	68.0	84.0	79.2	123.2	194	302
Ondo	51	50	64.7	83.9	104.2	124.5	1,640	1,736
Osun	55	53	65.7	79.7	94.6	123.7	167	200
Oyo	53	51	52.2	67.9	97.2	109.9	176	

Plateau	47	43	72.2	88.3	81.7	134.3	122	
Rivers	46	44	59.9	73.9	110.8	122.1	3,003	7,242
Sokoto	53	48	39.7	62.6	28.8	51.5	299	2,685
Taraba	51	46	14.9	32.9	67.7	108.8	28	253
Yobe	52	47	38.9	59.6	33.5	53.7	72	442
Zamfara	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
FCT Abuja	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (2008b) *Nigeria Gender Statistics Book*

Though the gender focal points were set up in other related ministries and government offices. Coordination among ministries and offices are not sufficient and there needs to be a coordinated framework for the coherent measures. As Nigeria is a federal republic, each state has the authority to draft its own legislation. As a result, each state has different laws on gender issues (see the gender related laws at the state level in the section of 2-2). Each state's diversities are shown in Table VI above. It allows us to understand why measures and laws are needed by state. For example, both NCWD for national institute and WDC for state institute are the focal points on gender issues, and same applies to the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) and State Action Committee on Control of AIDS (SACA) for HIV/AIDS. Both NACA and SACA developed the HIV/AIDS assistance framework which pays attention to gender.

Table VII: The number percentage of the primary school enrolment classified by gender and state (2006)

State	The number of girls enrollees (1,000 people)	Girls (%)	The number of boy enrollees (1,000 people)	Boys (%)	Total (1,000 people)
Abia	120	50.2	119	49.8	239
Adamawa	204	45.0	249	55.0	453
Akwa Ibom	781	51.7	731	48.3	1,512
Anambra	267	49.6	271	50.4	538
Bauchi	393	40.1	586	59.9	979
Bayelsa	238	49.8	240	50.2	478
Benue	405	46.9	458	53.1	863
Borno	277	41.9	384	58.1	661
Cross River	217	49.5	221	50.5	438
Delta	235	50.3	232	49.7	467
Ebonyi	198	50.8	192	49.2	390
Edo	188	49.9	189	50.1	377
Ekiti	297	52.7	267	47.3	564
Enugu	145	49.3	149	50.7	294
Gombe	185	40.9	267	59.1	452
Imo	331	46.8	376	53.2	707
Jigawa	220	37.0	375	63.0	595

Kaduna	434	44.4	543	55.6	077
Kano	774	44.5	965	55.5	1.739
Katsina	415	35.7	746	64.3	1.161
Kebbi	127	34.2	244	65.8	371
Kogi	431	49.9	433	.50.1	864
Kwara	269	46.5	310	53.5	579
Lagos	206	51.2	196	48.8	402
Nassarawa	217	42.1	299	57.9	516
Niger	200	37.4	335	62.6	535
Ogun	195	49.2	201	50.8	396
Ondo	419	49.5	428	50.5	847
Osun	240	50.7	233	49.3	473
Oyo	468	50.5	458	49.5	926
Plateau	281	48.2	302	51.8	583
Rivers	262	51.0	252	49.0	514

Source: Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (2008b) *Nigeria Gender Statistics Book*

There is no significant difference of attendance and drop-out rate between boys and girls. However, the percentage of girls attending primary school is slightly low compared to boys. Although the drop-out rate increases as age becomes higher, the total percentage of drop-out is only 0.5% or less. The reasons why girls drop out school is due to shortages in the labour force, the distance to a school, the low quality of school curriculum, and dangers on the way to school. Table VI shows the number and percentage of the primary school enrollment rate by gender and state. It shows that the enrolment rate of girls in the states of Sokoto and Zamfara is very low (at the level of 20%). As it turns out, the states of Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger and Yobe also at the level of 30 percent. These states are all in the North or North Western region.

In the 2014 HDR, HDRO introduced a new measure, the GDI, based on the sex-disaggregated Human Development Index, defined as a ratio of the female to the male HDI. The GDI measures gender inequalities in achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: health (measured by female and male life expectancy at birth), education (measured by female and male expected years of schooling for children and mean years for adults aged 25 years and older); and command over economic resources (measured by female and male estimated GNI per capita). For details on how the index is constructed refer to *Technical Note 3*. Country groups are based on absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI. This means that the grouping takes into consideration inequality in favour of men or women equally.

The 2010 HDR introduced the GII, which reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent birth rates; empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by women and attainment in secondary and higher education by each gender; and economic activity is measured by the labour market participation rate for women and men. The GII can be interpreted as the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in the three GII dimensions. For more details on GII please see Technical Note 4. Due to a lack of relevant data, the GII has not been calculated for this country. The GDI is calculated for 164 countries. The 2017 female HDI value for Nigeria is 0.494 in contrast with 0.569 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.868, placing it into

Group 5. In comparison, GDI values for Congo (Democratic Republic of the) and Ethiopia are 0.852 and 0.846 respectively.

The GDI measures achievement in the same basic principles as the HDI does, but is concerned basically with identifying inequality in achievement between men and women. A country's human development level is usually correlated with the level of women's participation in administrative, managerial, professional, technical, clerical and sales occupations. The World Bank reports that in developing countries, there has been an increase in women's participation since 1970 (World Bank 1995:49). Nigeria and most African countries with low human development have only experienced low levels of participation by women. However in countries with a GDI value below .05, it shows HI that "women suffer the double deprivation of gender disparity and low achievement. This is true of Nigeria from 1992 to 2000 as seen from Table 4 above. Though there has been a relative increase since 1970, but the data indicates that substantial progress on gender equality still needs to be addressed.

It must be recognized that economic and political openness in a country through globalization will benefit women and thus make them able to organize as has-been the case in Eastern Europe. However, the so-called gendered inequalities arising out of globalization might be mere replication as gender inequality does not depend on the level of income in a society. Nigeria with resources from oil and gas sales would have had higher values for both its HDI and GDI for the period under review. It is apparent that what is required to correct gender inequalities is a firm political commitment rather than enormous financial wealth. When we compare the HDI and GDI values it is possible to gauge the gender inequality in a country. This is done by calculating the percentage reduction of the GDI from the HDI or: $(\text{HDI} - \text{GDI})/\text{HDI}$ multiplied by 100

For Nigeria in 2000, this will be $(0.462 - 0.449)/0.462$. The variation of 0.028 from this calculation is a drop in Nigeria's GDI relative to the HDI for the 1990-1995 year. This is an indication that gender inequality in basic capabilities is still a significant, problem in Nigeria. This is a variation or difference of 2.8% agreeing with the observation that though the basic capabilities is much lower for both men and women in Nigeria, gender inequality is less severe than it is always made to seem. For the longer period of 1985-1990, this difference was 0.024. Invariably however^ as women's share of income drops, so does the GDI above all. The recognition that gender inequality attains must come from a "gender inequality aversion" by policy makers in the Nigerian government. Nigeria government have tried in various ways and through a combination of different policies and programs by Nigerian leaders to mitigate poverty in the country. These programs have included Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Green Revolution and Directorate of F6od, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRJRI). In addition, the following institutions and agencies were created for the similar purpose of poverty alleviation: Community banks, and Peoples' Bank of Nigeria, were created to increase the availability of credit to the rural poor who are mainly women. Others are the Better Life Programme, Family Support Programme, and the Family Economic Advancement Programme.

Poverty in Nigeria has also drawn the attention of international donor agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NCOS), United Nations agencies such as UNDP, World Bank; Ford Foundation and Economic Commission for Africa (EGA). As Ogbuagu (2004) succinctly puts it the feminization of poverty has become a major global concern. Poverty is not only more prevalent among women than men in Nigeria but is felt more by the former. The poverty level in Nigeria has been worsening in the last twenty years. Anya (2000) attribute this to factors like dwindling fortunes of manufacturing companies in the country and the

progressive decline of the real GDP per capita, which was \$1,160.00 in 1977, dropping to \$1,030.00 in 1990, yet plummeting to \$896.00 in 2000. Nigerians are much worse today than they were twenty years ago when they compared with the average South Korean or Malaysian. This is no longer the case because each of these countries now has a GDP per capita of between \$11,123.00 and \$4,251.00 (1998 figures). Women have an enormous favourable impact on the wellbeing of their families but these potentials are not realized because of discriminatory social norms, lack of incentives, and legal and religious barriers.

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