

## Review Article

## Gender Empowerment Different: The 21st Century Experience

Ikhioya, Grace Olohiomeru<sup>1\*</sup> and Akerele, Stephen Seegun<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, (AAU), Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria

\*Corresponding Author

Ikhioya, Grace Olohiomeru (Ph.D)

**Abstract:** The emergence of empowerment and organization of capacity building initiatives among female and male recipients in individual in sub-Saharan African in world has been clearly differentiated. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has radically and substantially redefined and brought about great changes in gender imbalance and equity. These developments have subsequently repositioned and challenge the relevant stakeholders responsible for the promotion of skill acquisition programs for both male and female citizens in the society. This paper therefore, is brought to critically examine the gap created among males and females with regards to the provision of empowerment opportunities. Also discussed in the paper is the need to strive hard to ensure the growth and sustainability of the would be beneficiary that can contribute maximally in strengthening the economy to a greater height. The paper further highlighted the relationship between education and gender differences. The need to further reposition technical education for women in sub-Saharan Africa as well as gender empowerment for moral development were emphasized in the paper. In the final analysis, the paper came up with the conclusion that permission of empowerment especially for women if properly articulated to include pragmatic approach in concert with theoretical presentation will create an enabling atmosphere for checks and balances among the recipient. It is against this backdrop that the paper recommended among others that if the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to experience steady growth and development, other relevant stakeholders directly responsible for a sustainable National Development across boundaries should endeavor to develop a culture of integrating gender equity and an even distribution of human and material resources in contemporary society.

**Keywords:** Acquisition, Differential, Equity, Empowerment, Gender.

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, in most countries particularly among the countries in sub-Saharan Africa region of the world, the provision of empowerment programs for male and female was clearly differentiated Raymond (2017), described gender issues and empowerment as a consistent controversy that needs attention. The difference in treatment through the provision of a capacity building initiatives and particularly skills acquisition and other empowerment programs in contemporary society has severally created and sustained gender gap. This development also become visible in the science and technology aspect of sustainable national development. Harding (2014) in Hallen (2017) have indicated that in most developed and developing countries data exist that the level of participation of females in science and other practical based activities is not comparable to the male counterparts. This difference tends to be very glaring especially in academic circle where we find more of

males in sciences oriented discipline like Engineering, medicine and all other vocational areas that demands practical and physical involvement. A similar scenario was noticeable from the findings and data collected in vocational and technical section in academic that over the years there is a marked sharp differences in gender in achievement, participation, attitudes towards skills acquisition programs and above all, interest in science and technology. Females in sub-Saharan African which include: Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra lone, Niger-Republic and all the likes are usually scared of competing with their male counterparts; females in all other sectors of the economy in these developing nations of the world are regarded as second fiddle with reference to vocational and political demands.

In academic environment, there are differences in both male and female students, the later finds it difficult to cope with the rudiments of practical based activities, they basically lack the interest to pursue

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career in some vocation. These problems persist throughout the sectors of the economy in most countries. In Nigeria and in deed in other parts of the developing nations of the world, gender discrimination and disparities in empowerment opportunities. For instance, Thomas (2014), pointed out that before the colonial era, traditional education was meant for the boys to prepare them for adulthood while the girls stayed and have to prepare their food, wash clothes, take care of the house etc. It is however quite interesting that the 21<sup>st</sup> century has made a change in recognizing the fundamental role of females in all sectors of the economy such as in: banking, Agriculture, Education etc. The digital age has encouraged the girls to take adventurous and exploratory activities. Butler (2014), argued that the early socialization of young citizens in African countries into gender related roles were reinforced. Similarly, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has developed the psychological and social inclination of the females to play and make significant contributions in national and international issues as elsewhere in the world.

#### **GENDER INBALANCE AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMES**

In African countries of the world, there is a clear indication that gender imbalance has severally received little or no attention particularly in distribution and allotment of human and material resources (Adams, 2016). The difference in achievement capacity is considered higher among the males quite unlike the female counter parts, where relegation and all forms of disparities were usually the order of the day. The situation is quite different in developed countries like U.S.A, Canada, Germany etc. where recognitions are accorded to citizens of both gender on merit. In other words, awards are provided to an outstanding individual for meritorious performance. Though in sub-Saharan Africa, female and male performance is similar to some level of acceptance, parents, teaches, government, and other political representatives seem to under estimate female's potentials to show case their intellectual ability. As such females are less likely to be encouraged to participate in any skill acquisition programs. In another development, Morgan (2013), found out that women were formally excluded from access to education and politics though a large part of history, globalization has made a turnaround of event where recognition has been given to the voices of the females in contemporary society. In other words, women entail recognition of their right to education, political offices, etc. Similarly, the digital age has provided the women the recognition in functionalist lines to reinforce their roles as virtues in the society. This development eventually affords the women folk to constitute a social benefit in national development. It is increasingly apparent that the productive individuals in most African countries are males, however, despite the repeated expression of concern for gender discrimination and disparities, not much is being done

to ensure equity in the provision of empowerment and capacity to building programs for bath gender. Consequence, development policies in African countries paid greater attention to male involvement in governance with lip service to the development of women vocation and national values (James 2013). Worthy of note too, is the fact that the government of most of African countries shy away from the fact that women empowerment if given the right place to contribute to national development will go a long way in providing access to equal opportunity.

#### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND GENDER DIFFERENCES**

The fundamental importance of education as a means of development and as part development need not be over emphasized. Aluede (2018), posited that education in the life of an individual helps in the expansion of man's own consciousness, and therefore his power over himself, his environment and over his society.

According to him, the primary objective of education is the liberations of many from certain restraints with particular emphasis to individual's limitations of ignorance and dependency in the society. There is however a corresponding relationship between education and gender differences because in most cases, most culture in sub-Saharan Africa is tenaciously believes that education given to a male individual has more value than their female counterparts.

This quite unlike in the western world where there is equal recognition and opportunity given to male female citizen. Thus, the first test of education in the global world was to create a conducive environment for mutual understanding that through education given to man and woman, change possible and the knowledge of alternative leads to a desire for change. This observation made by Kelly (2013) postulate the idea of ensuring equality and justice in provision of education for African men and women. This is because there exists a relationship between illiteracy and under-development of mankind. The relationship between man and woman in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be summarized below:

- That women cannot participate fully and meaningfully in the social, civic and political and cultural activities of her community.
- Women are mostly forced to live a marginal dehumanized existence
- Women are highly vulnerable to exploitation and oppression.
- Women cannot achieve her individual liberation and realize self-actualization

Therefore, education of women wipes out illiteracy that hinders her liberation as analyzed above. It follows therefore, that education given to women has

positive correlation with the development of a women horizon to participate fully in any national and international programs that is capable of making a desire change for sustainable national development. For instance, in China and Japan about 60-70% of national technological development were achieved through education (Willy 2016). Similarly, Aluede (2018), argued that the vision of future development which should be given adequate recognition is such that is approximately equal numbers of people living in both developed and developing nations of the world.

### **REPOSITIONING TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN: THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHALLENGES.**

A country's level of gender equality is the ability to plan and manage gender advancement in balance with a view to ensuring equality in technological advancement for mutual development. Fafunwa (1974) in Dare (2006), clearly emphasized that technical and vocational programs if clearly organized contribute significantly and productively to the development of individual mind set towards self-reliant and productivity. Similarly, any country aspiring for a holistic technical and vocational program for her sustainable national development, will not toy with its technical and vocational empowerment programs for both young men and women. Technical and vocational empowerment programs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge (National Policy on Education, 2006). With the recognition of the fact that Technical and Vocational Empowerment programs (TVED), is the spring board for technological advancement, countries of the world such as America, Japan, Germany, China and a host of other countries utilized technical and vocational empowerment opportunity for citizens as a catalyst for technological take off (Lewis, 2014).

However, the countries in developing nations like Nigerians, Ghana etc, are challenged to advance their potentials in technical and vocational activities particularly in this era of computer age. Providing an ample opportunity for women to join the race of science and technology to help revamp and sustain her country socio-economic and political development. To achieve this goal, a lot of concerted efforts should be mustered by the federal, state and local government, non-governmental organizations and all other relevant stake holders.

Repositioning technical and vocational empowerment programme for women should be a conscious effort as to enable individual particular women to become self-employed individuals and thereby reduce the incidence of unemployment. Quite unfortunate, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has practically saddled with lot of challenges in ensuring the successful

implementation of technical and vocational policies (Damels, 2017). Nigeria and in other countries in sub-Saharan African, there is poor policy formulation and implementation, this development has hindered the interest of young women to aspire to use empowerment training performance an off shoot for self-development. It is on the basis of these problems that technical and vocational education should be properly repositioned and in other countries in sub-Saharan African to meet the arduous challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (James, 2016).

### **GENDER EMPOWERMENT FOR MORAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG SUB-SAHARAN NATIONS OF THE WORLD**

The role of gender empowerment in the promotion of moral development particularly among women in African countries cannot be over emphasized. Abel (2017), has critically examined the process through which vocational and technical programme cater for the moral needs of the individuals and in the entire society. It should be noted that the Nigerian government and government in other countries in sub-Saharan African appear to be failing in this direction.

Closely connected in with the moral laxity in our contemporary society today is the loss of values and self-esteem particularly among women (Aluede, 2018). According to him, the rate at which people in sub-Saharan Africa commit crimes, indulge in drugs consumption, embezzle public funds through electronic devices, is an indication of the fact that Nigeria and other African nations are under developed and luxuriating in under-development therefore, a dismal failure to provide her citizens especially this women technical and vocational program that can develop their moral laxity. It should be noted that lack of this opportunity for African women to be self-employed through empowerment programs is capable of affecting the standard of the living negatively.

### **CONCLUSION**

Empowerment of both gender particularly by the women in African countries if properly articulated to include pragmatic approach in concert with the articulated presentation will create an enabling atmosphere for checks and balances among the recipient. Generally speaking, all wealth is created by man's labor and scientific skills, therefore if promotion of empowerment program for women will contribute meaningful to the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria and other African countries of the world, establishing of empowerment programs must be pursued with vigor.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**On the promise of the above, following recommendations are preferred:**

- Relevant stakeholders in technical and vocational training program should take into consideration the contribution of women in the overall development

of a nations socio-economic, political and technical activities.

- Women should be encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in any empower programs this will be achieved through the organization of comparison programs. If the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to experience steady growth and development, other relevant stake holders responsible for nation building in African countries should strive hard to develop a culture of integrating gender equity in her sustainable National Development Programs.

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