

Gender Equity in Teaching Profession

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Abstract— There seem to be a negative perception on women education which resulted to short of women participation in all professions including teaching profession. Thus, the paper in an attempt to review issues on gender equity in teaching profession discusses the conceptual analysis, concept of gender equity, concept of teaching profession, gender related discrimination in teaching, gender equity in teaching profession, feminization of teaching profession by United Nation, gender issue and professions in Nigeria and concluded that; gender disparity in education and teaching profession is global issue that is bedeviling both the developed and the developing countries. And proportion of female teachers presented by United Nation where Europe, North America and South America has the proportion of 42.30%, 46.00% and 41.00% female teachers at the tertiary level respectively. It is also recommended that: teaching profession in Nigeria should be given self regulation to be extremely free and independent from government control; there is still the need for global enlightenment on issues regards to girl-child education and their acceptability to patronize the teaching profession globally; and reasonable amount should be paid as teachers' salary in order to encourage the recognition and active participation of all genders in to the teaching profession. The paper will be of great important to Teachers' Registration Council (TRC), National University Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCCE), National Teachers' Institute (NTI) by showing need for them to put more effort in producing women teachers to the Nigerian society.

Index Terms— Equity, Gender, Profession, Teaching.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender disparity in all human endeavours has become a global discussion including Nigeria as an independent nation where women are struggle for power as an individual and groups. This disparity exists among feminine and muscling gender due to the fact that parent and society have negative perception towards girl-child education which led to production of very few female professional teachers in the country and other part of the world. It is based on this scenario that this paper wish to discuss the issue of gender equity and teaching profession bearing in mind that the review will guide those concerned with the issue of gender disparity to normalize the system.

II. Theoretical Framework

The paper at this stage take a look in to the theory that extremely appropriate and relevant to the gender issue. Thus, the presenter was succeeded in identifying the theory of

Radical Feminism to form part of theoretical framework.

A. Theory of Radical Feminism

Radical feminism sees liberation of women as impossible in a social order shaped by men and founded upon patriarchy (Griffin 1978). Radical feminists insist on the universality of women's oppression irrespective of class and culture, and see the oppression of women as the root of all other oppressions - educational, social, economic and political. They focus in particular, on the interpersonal relations through which (individual) men dominate women, demonstrating this through an analysis of the private domain of patriarchal family. Radical feminism criticized the relegation of women to a socially and biologically grounded inferiority. Furthermore, by inverting these categories and the nature/culture dichotomy, radical feminists were able to claim that it is because of their very closeness to nature and nurturing that women should be seen as embodying all that is pure and humane and caring. Women's proximity to nature mediated through their bodily functions became the basis of a superior feminine essence. Characteristically, this form of feminist discourse underplayed specificities and hierarchies arising from biological and cultural determinism. The paper however, has partially agreed with the Radical feminism that sees liberation of women as impossible in a social order, this is as because women are naturally deficient, despite the fact that there is a proverb saying that 'what man can do woman can do even better'.

B. Concept of Gender Equity

Gender equity refers to a stage or strategy in the process of achieving gender equality. It is targeted measures are often needed to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise being equals. These measures, such as affirmative action, may require a different treatment of women and men in order to ensure an equal outcome (Idoko, 2010). Gender equality in education is a process of ensuring that female and male learners are treated equally, have equal access to learning opportunities and benefit from education equally. They become empowered and can full their potential so that they may contribute to and benefit from social, cultural, political and economic development equally. Special treatment/action can be taken to reverse the historical and social disadvantages that prevent female and male learners from accessing and benefiting from education on equal grounds (Bukar, 2004). This justified the need for women and men to enjoy the same status and have an equal opportunity to exercise their human rights and realize their full potential to contribute towards educational, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results. It is the equal value attributed by society to both the similarities and the differences between women and men, and the different roles they play. Therefore, gender equality can be promoted when resources, opportunities and

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support are availed to men and women without regard to biological sex.

C. Concept of Teaching Profession

Teaching profession is described by Crosswell and Elliot (2004) as a 'passion' (positive emotional attachment); as an investment of time outside of contact hours with students; as a focus on the individual needs of students; as a responsibility to impart knowledge, attitudes, values; as 'maintaining professional knowledge' and as engagement with the school community. Therefore all professions are products of the teaching profession. Teaching profession is root through which education is given to develop in our young people the attributes, skills and capacities that will enable them to prosper and succeed in the knowledge society and, at the same time, counteract and mitigate, to an extent, the problems emerging from an increasingly globalised economy (Malm, 2009). The presenter is with the view that the teaching profession is the beginning of all the professions in the educational spheres, where as teaching profession use to be under-rated globally most especially in Nigeria where teaching profession is considered as last alternative without considering the ability of teacher in producing professionals in all field of studies.

III. Criteria of Professionalism

For one to be considered as professional needs to fulfill the following criteria (teaching profession inclusive) as stated by (Smith, 2006). They include:

1. theoretical knowledge and concomitant skills: professionals are assumed to have extensive theoretical knowledge and, deriving from that, skills that are exercised in practice;
2. high quality pre-service academic and professional preparation: professions usually require at least three years' academic accreditation plus professional induction, together with a requirement to demonstrate professional competence in the workplace;
3. legal recognition and professional closure: professions tend to exclude those who have not met their requirements nor joined the appropriate professional body;
4. induction: a period of induction and a trainee role is a prerequisite to being recognized as a full member of a professional body together with continuous upgrading of skills through continuing professional development.
5. Professional association: Professions usually have professional bodies organized by their members, intended to enhance their status together with carefully controlled entrance requirements and membership;
5. work autonomy: professionals retain control over their work and also have control over their own theoretical knowledge;
6. code of professional conduct or ethics: professional bodies usually have codes of conduct or ethics for their members and disciplinary procedures for those who infringe the rules;
7. self-regulation: professional bodies are self-regulating and independent from government;
8. public service and altruism: services provided are for the

public good and altruistic in nature;

9. authority and legitimacy: professions have clear legal authority over some activities but also add legitimacy to a wide range of related activities;
10. inaccessible and indeterminacy body of knowledge: the body of professional skills are relatively inaccessible to the uninitiated; and
11. mobility: skills, knowledge and authority belong to professionals as individuals, not the organisations for which they work and, as they move, they take their talents with them. Standardisation of professional training and procedures enhances such mobility.

Meeting the criteria to be a teacher goes beyond these formal categories. For example, in a policy paper on the quality of teachers by the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (Smith, 2006), teaching is described as 'a profession that entails reflective thinking, continuing professional development, autonomy, responsibility, creativity, research and personal judgments'. It should be noted however that, professionals in teaching rely heavily on government most especially primary school teachers in the Nigerian context.

IV. Gender-Related Discrimination

The discrimination of women occurs according to a report by a British trade union (NASUWT 2008), women teachers are less likely to be on a leadership pay scale and take longer to get there in comparison to their male colleagues. A similar pattern can be identified in secondary education. Moreover promotion practices appear to be biased: In the UK, only 75 percent of head teachers are women at primary level, while in secondary education female head teachers account for just 40 percent. Furthermore only 9 percent of universities are led by a female head (EC 2009). The higher the hierarchical level and the associated power of decision making and prestige the less women are employed. An examination of gender pay differences at the secondary level in U.S schools identified another bias against women teachers, namely that they received a lower placement on the salary scale during the hiring process. This is quite important because further salary rises depend on the initial salary placement (Smith 2006).

V. Gender Equity and Teaching Profession

Here the paper looked at the feminization of the teaching profession by United Nation and gender issue and professions in Nigeria. This is done to clearly highlight what is on ground in the world and Nigeria in general as far as the gender related issue and teaching profession.

A. The Feminization of the Teaching Profession by United Nation

According to the Statistics Division of the United Nations women dominate the teaching profession at primary level except in several regions in Africa. As the following table shows, the proportion of female teacher's declines as the education level they work in rises.

Table 1: Proportion of Female Teachers

World Region	Female Teachers	Female Teachers Secondary	Female Teachers Tertiary
	Primary Education	Education	Education
Africa	44.80%	28.00%	20.00%
Asia	70.50%	54.90%	38.50%
Europe	85.80%	65.70%	42.30%
North America	79.70%	60.40%	46.00%
Oceania	63.40%	51.10%	38.80%
South America	79.30%	61.70%	41.00%

Source: United Nations Statistics Division based on data published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in table 4: Teaching Staff by ISCED LEVEL (December 2009)

Before the reasons for this obvious imbalance of women's employment in the teaching hierarchy be examined, a few comments on the data are necessary; on the one hand the current data on teaching staff is far less complete than the statistics presented. Although the calculation was made in 2009, the data includes the results of surveys from 1999 to 2008. Furthermore in several countries only estimates are available on the proportion of women teaching staff and, particularly for tertiary education, some states can't provide any information. This lack of data complicates the analysis of the current working conditions of the teaching profession as well as the prediction of future trends. Another factor is that education systems differ from country to country. The definitions of primary, secondary and tertiary education level elaborated in the 1997 International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO 1997) represent the lowest common denominator. The differences in length and specific structure of each level, varied training and diploma requirements and country-specific financing systems exacerbate international comparisons. Nevertheless the low proportion of women teachers in higher education worldwide is an undeniable fact. One reason for this phenomenon is that taking care of younger children in nursery and primary school is traditionally seen as an "extension of motherhood" and therefore a "natural" job for women. In contrast, women remain a minority among academic staff in universities. In the member states of the European Union (EU), for instance, the proportion of women with full professorships ranges between 27 per cent in humanities and 7 per cent in engineering and technology (EC 2009). This disparity of representation can be ascribed to two main factors; on the one hand the structural conditions of employment are still orientated towards the male bread-winner model. This implies that the husband spends extensive hours at his job while his wife supports him at home. On the other hand, people tend to advance those persons whose working style is most similar to their own. As a consequence the dominance of male professors leads to a preference for their younger male colleagues.

The secondary level was also dominated by male teachers until the second half of the 19th century, when separate

secondary schools for girls were introduced. "Women's opportunities in teaching have been sharply affected, if not conditioned, by socio-economic factors. In periods of rapid economic development, men have been attracted away from teaching into better paid jobs elsewhere." (OECD 1998) Therefore the "natural" disposition of women to look after younger children occurs rather as a strategy to fit economic needs than a phenomenon that can be confirmed by practical evidence. The proportion of women workers in a professional guild plays an important role in the amount of salary earned (Drudy 2008): several studies indicate that the more feminised an occupation is, the more likely its employees are to be poorly paid. Country-specific surveys in Korea, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands, where the majority of teachers in upper secondary education are male, show that the average salaries in relation to GDP per capita were higher than in most of the other OECD countries. This clearly indicated that, number of female increases in teaching profession only in a country where teachers' salary is under-paid upon which male run way and start another job with higher payment.

B. Gender Issue and Profession in Nigeria

The problem of gender equity in Nigeria was originated right from the girl-child enrollment to school, where the gross enrollment for primary, secondary and tertiary schools for female was 57% compared to 71% for males in 2002. This translates into fewer women in certain economic fields as well. The percentages of female workers in some selected professions were as follow: architects, 2.4%, quantity surveyors, 3.5%, lawyers/jurists, 25.4%, lecturers, 11.8%, obstetricians and gynecologists, 8.4%, pediatricians, 33.3%, media practitioners 18.3%. (Oniye, 2010). A lot of questions were being raised by number of individuals, group of individuals, governmental and non-governmental organizations due to the fact that so many efforts were made to balance the equation through the introduction of different programmes and policies, yet the problem remained. Below show some of the key policy initiatives embarked on by the Nigerian government to show policy commitment on education equality.

Table 2: Key Policy Initiatives with a Gender Focus in Nigeria

S/No.	Policy Initiatives	Year
1	Blueprint on Women's Education	1986
2	Nomadic Education Program	1986
3	National Commission for Mass Literacy and Non-formal Education	1991
4	Family Support Basic Education Programme	1994
5	Universal Basic Education	1999
6	National Policy on Women	2001
7	Education For All-Fast track Initiative	2002
8	Strategy for Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria	2003
9	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)	2004
10	Universal Basic Education Act	2004

Source: Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012

The paper here doubts why still the disparity remained in educating the girl-child and teaching profession despite all the programmes and policies initiated in favour of this.

VI. Conclusion

The paper concludes that the gender disparity in education and teaching profession is global issue that is bedeviling both the developed and the developing countries. And proportion of female teachers presented by United Nation where Europe, North America and South America has the proportion of 42.30%, 46.00% and 41.00% female teachers at the tertiary level respectively.

VII. Recommendations

Based on what has been reviewed and discussed in the text of this paper, the paper recommended as follows:

1. teaching profession in Nigeria should be given self regulation to be extremely free and independent from government control;
2. there is still the need for global enlightenment on issues regards to girl-child education and their acceptability to patronize the teaching profession globally; and
3. reasonable amount should be paid as teachers' salary in order to encourage the recognition and active participation of all genders in to the teaching profession.

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