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Gender Discrimination in Nigeria

One of the socio-economic problems of the current stage of development of the Republic of Nigeria is the problem of Discrimination. Gender gaps or gender inequality as discussed here refer to gender differences in dimensions such as education, mortality, labor force participation, pay, or access to productive inputs and resources. They also include differential treatment of men and women in laws and differentials in political representation.

The problems of gender inequality in Nigeria has been raising on for decades, as the modern society has redefined the role of a woman, which is vastly different from what it’s used to be in the middle ages. However, patriarchy and gender inequality is always a touchy topic when it comes to Africa because it is largely influenced by religious beliefs and the diverse cultures. Nigeria is not left out. In the Northern and Southern Part of Nigeria, Women are still largely considered to be lowly to men, as women are only seen fit to be home keepers and child bearers.

The Effects of Gender Discrimination on National Development

A complete picture of how discrimination against women is affecting national development may not be handy but some of them are stated below:

1. Due to lack of women in decision‐making positions, there is low investment in such sectors as health and education that are crucial to human development outcomes.
2. Limitation of women’s choices and options is hampering the achievement of economic growth and development.
3. Women’s reluctance to take responsibilities in politics due to lack of economic empowerment to actualize their ambitions.
4. The increasing incidence of insecurity, violence and crime such as armed banditry, kidnapping, prostitution, child trafficking, cultism, increasing culture of begging are due to poverty in the society which women empowerment can ameliorate.
5. Limited contributions to household cash income and limited influence on spending at the family level. Of serious constraints to economic growth are the facts that women are petty traders, subsistent farmers and house helps.
6. The violence now threatening the security and corporate existence of Nigeria is not a happenstance. When violence was perpetuated against women at the domestic front, it was condoned because it was women that were being battered. Now the society is worst for it.

**Effects on Education:** Although every child has the right to education in Nigeria, the ratio of male and female students shows a significant bias favouring boys, with the rate of disparity being lower in primary schools than in secondary schools. This suggests that Nigeria has a retention problem with regard to girls progressing from primary to secondary education. To examine why this may be so, this paper discusses gender inequality in Nigerian educational systems, the goals of Universal Basic Education (UBE), a scheme launched by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1999, and the gendered challenges that have arisen in UBE, before suggesting recommendations to close the gender gap in secondary school enrollment.

**Effects on Health:** Nigeria has one of the worst maternal mortality rates in the world with one woman dying every 10 minutes during delivering. That is 545 deaths per every 100,000 successful deliveries. Nearly 50% of Nigerian women are mothers before they turn 20. There in inability to access quality 6 health care services, poor access to safe childbirth services and lack of adequate and affordable emergency obstetric care. In some part of my country, religion does not allow women to deliver in the hospital. This is a taboo as the husbands will not be happy to see their wives opening up to a doctor for any form of virginal examinations. So from young age, the girl child is taught how to deliver her baby unassisted. This leads to infections and death.

**Property Rights:** Women are denied legal right to own property or inherit land. In North‐ East Nigeria, women own only 4% of land and just over 10% of land ownership in the South‐East and South‐South. When your parents leave all sorts of wealth for the children, most times, the female children have no right to partake in the sharing of their father’s wealth. Daughters’ inheritance rights under customary law vary considerably across the country, but in no region does customary law grant women equal inheritance rights with men. Nigerian women have very limited ownership rights. Civil law entitles women to have access to land, and a few states have enshrined equal inheritance rights into law, but certain customary laws stipulate that only men have the right to own land. For women without the means to purchase land on their own, in practice, their ability to obtain land flows solely through marriage or family. Data from the government indicates a significant gender gap in land ownership.

Causes of Gender Discrimination

1. Uneven access to education: Around the world, women still have less access to education than men. One-fourth of young women between 15-24 will not finish primary school. That group makes up 58% of the people not completing that basic education. Of all the illiterate people in the world, two-third are women. When girls are not educated on the same level as boys, it has a huge effect on their future and the kinds of opportunities they’ll get.
2. Lack of employment equality: Only 6 countries in the world give women the same legal work rights as men. In fact, most economies give women only three-of-four of the rights of men. Studies show that if employment became a more even playing field, it has a positive domino effect on other areas prone to gender inequality.
3. Lack of legal protections: According to research from the World Bank, over one billion women don’t have legal protection against domestic sexual violence or domestic economic violence. Both have a significant impact on women’s ability to thrive and live in freedom. In many countries, there’s also a lack of legal protections against harassment in the workplace, at school, and in public. These places become unsafe and without protection, women frequently have to make decisions that compromise and limit their goals.
4. Lack of bodily autonomy: Many women around the world do not have authority over their own bodies or when they become parents. Accessing birth control is frequently very difficult. According to the World Health Organization, over 200 million women who don’t want to get pregnant are not using contraception. There are various reasons for this such as a lack of options, limited access, and cultural/religious opposition.