

Gender Justice and Community Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study is focused on the impact of gender justice on community development in Nigeria. The objective of the study is to examine the impact of gender justice on community development. The survey method was deployed in the Warri community, Delta State. A quantitative sequential statistical technique was deployed using descriptive statistics and regression to test the hypothesis. The finding revealed that gender justice had a positive strong statistically significant impact on community development. The study recommended balanced gender justice policies directed toward increasing quality representations of women in politics, organizations, and businesses to enhance meaningful contributions towards community development for sustainable development.

Keywords: *Gender Justice, Community Development, Nigeria, Warri Community*

Introduction

The global pursuit of sustainable development goals recognizes the need for gender equity as a means to enhance capacities for meeting the diverse needs of the human community. In organizational, political, and community life, the female gender has been culturally discriminated against and socially deprived. This has consequently disempowered women relative to men in taking part in community development (Cin, 2017; Gheaus, 2017; Nussbaum, 2002).

There is also the discretionary practice that tends to propagate many responsibilities to women without corresponding empowerment opportunities. This has nurtured disparity and limited access to opportunities for women. The discriminatory practice extends beyond household or family enclaves. It has manifested into a societal structure that is reflected in the educational, religious, and political institutions and job opportunities which favour the male over the female. The trend was implicated in the colonial era and persists in the post-colonial democratic era (Arum, 2010; Cin, 2017; Hill, 2012; Ifaka *et al.*, 2022; Mukhopadhyay, 2007)

The quest to balance this disparity and expose the impairment in the international scene was traced to the 1970s international women's movement organizations across the globe setting up credit and saving schemes to avail women the opportunity to access funds to generate incomes and gain recognition to cooperate positions where issues concerning gender are placed on the agenda (Domingo, Holmes, O'Neil, 2015).

The needs of gender have moved beyond empowerment and gender equality, it has generated concern about expanding the scope of whether women matter and that they deserve fair and equal treatment as men. The concern of gender justice is presently on the offering to address the plight of women on the issues relating to women's relative deprivation (de la Sablonnière *et al.*, 2015; Elson, 2005; Hu, 2013; Jia, 2022).

Transiting from the quest for women's empowerment to gender justice, the issues are expanding from mere recognition, economic support, and equal access to opportunities; to mattering and increasing the quality of life, offering preferences of independent choices to outcomes determined by women, increasing capabilities to function, rationalizing equal and

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fair divisional of labour between sex in both formal and informal sectors in correspondence to fair compensation for responsibilities (Gheaus, 2017)

Statement of the Problem.

Previous studies on gender studies have majorly focused on gender equality in areas affecting women's political, social, and economic status. This limited researchers to seek empirical evidence for the impact of women's empowerment on community development. The problem of women in gender studies and development is largely unresolved since the broad base issue of gender justice is rarely considered for investigation in Nigeria. To attend to this gap, the researcher directed the focus of this study to gender justice and community development in Nigeria. Gender justice is utilized as an independent variable and community development as the dependent variable. Both variables' indicators were utilized as constructs in framing the research objective, question, and hypothesis.

The Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to investigate the impact of gender justice on community development in Warri.

Research Questions

The research question for the study is to what extent does gender justice have an impact on community development in Warri?

Research Hypotheses

The research hypothesis state that:

H₀ Gender justice has no impact on community development in Warri

H₁ Gender justice has an impact on community development in Warri

Significance of the Study

The state of development in any society requires justice found in the original position to frame access to opportunities across gender and age in social relations (Cin, 2017; Lovett, 2011; Mandle, 2009; Smyth, 2016). The research on gender equity and community development is designed towards providing empirical evidence on the relationship and impact of the subject matter. This will guide policymakers, administrators, decision-makers, policy analysts, and students in crafting and implementing sustainable development projects and programmes.

The significance of gender justice across the globe has heightened the pursuit to deal with the foundation of problems affecting gender and sustainable development from the standpoint of justice and human right.

Literature Review

Justice is the basis for determining the nature of human interaction found in social relations (Lovett, 2011; Mandle, 2009). People will naturally interact according to the way or view that guards their perception. Perception is the measurement of status about the being that is in context. Perception provides the lens for measurement, comparison, acceptance or rejection, and treatment of a being. The global traditional perception has tended to historically measure women as inferior in status to men, based on this comparison, women are scaled lesser to certain claims or rejections to aspire beyond a particular realm.

This is inadequate to address the issue of inclusiveness in development when accosted with the problem of gender. The male-dominated worldview has created inequality in framing the development agenda when gender justice is off the discourse. In dealing with fairness and wellness in dimensional forms, (Elliott et al., 2016; Prilleltensky, 2014, 2019), the

significance of gender as an object of value and value addition was demonstrated with empirical evidence to positively influence development. Gender justice assumes the status of a fundamental human right in setting and framing agenda for social allocation and distribution. The conferment of ascertaining the basic fundamental human right is to create the condition for equity and fairness in the treatment of gender as justice to offer similar opportunities across the gender types on a nominal value.

Gender justice is framed as the right of everyone irrespective of sex preference or type, to be treated under the principle of equality and individual freedom with concern to protect vulnerability by granting fairness (Chandra, 2022; Cin, 2017; Gheaus, 2017). The basic unit of social institution is the family and from this instance, the issue of gender equality is unable to eliminate male dominance and obliterate inequality connected to background conditions. The craving to remedy the trajectory of the combined pains of inequality and injustice established against women produced gender justice to act as a process and outcome to redress gender-targeted bias and relative deprivation.

In this direction, gender justice constitutes both the process and outcome that readily promote equity in access to resources, increase the freedom of choice of the individual, and constrain social institutions (family, religion, community, state) to limit potentials based on sex (Mukhopadhyay, 2007). Issue related to the relative deprivation of women and inequality produces cost that harper the development path. As women are deprived, it generates burthen for development as cost.

The term gender justice tends to connote the combined expression of women's liberation from social, economic, and political institutions relating to securing outcomes that promote gender equity, equality, empowerment, and women's rights. The essence of gender justice is to cause freedom for the individual to increase wellness and happiness or allow for opportunities to increase capability and functioning (Di Martino & Prilleltensky, 2020; Lovett, 2011; Mandle, 2009; Prilleltensky, 2012; Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2021; Sen, 2000). Gender justice as a process draws on the accountability of institutions to be held liable in defiance of discrimination that subordinates the rights of women when the relationship with males produces power relations. The state and other law-abiding institutions, including family and working organizations, should be constrained by legal contracts that bind agreements to protect and promote equity and equality of gender.

Gender justice as well as social justice runs on two principles. Justice is the fulcrum of every society. It obliterates inequality and main fairness. The two principles are that justice is to restart society, and community or allow social relations to readjust to a condition of original position where equity of individual is initiated. A level of inequality is allowed if it manifests from natural capabilities that are not naturally distributed and is beneficial to the whole of society (Lovett, 2011; Mandle, 2009).

The notion of gender justice is to promote equity, equality, empowerment, and women's rights. This creates gender balance and increases the quest for a community to develop. Since development is essentially about people and their welfare (Sen, 2000). People are social animals and desire to create some fundamental conditions that facilitate their well-being. People live in groups where they share values, beliefs, and socioeconomic aspirations affecting their collective interest. This is the sense of living in a community.

Community is conceptualized as a network or structure of stimulated relationship that is created from informal interaction and outside the formal government or official design to attend to the needs or interests of a group in either a fixed environment or on a proposed project. Social interaction creates bonds across relationships that manifest into an identity for an ethnic group, place or location, interest or ideology, and culture. Where failing or government neglect and jurisdictions are not covered, solidarity evolves to meet the needs of the people who shared a collective interest. A community is a locally based entity that seeks

the promotion or protection of values having to magnify the collective preference of relationship of a group of persons (Goel, 2014).

Also, a community is the atmosphere or realm of social interaction, interdependence, collaboration, cooperation, and support that is driven by the zeal to be more democratic and inclusive to sustain society from disruption or falling apart (DeFilippis & Saegert, 2012; Di Martino & Prilleltensky, 2020; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Prilleltensky, 2012).

The alignment of environment, resources, structure, social network, capital, awareness, education, skills, and institution are the requirement for a community to function effectively to promote community development (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2019, 2012; Goel, 2014). Community development seeks to use social intervention measures as means to attend to add value and improve the conditions and quality of lives of people and deal with social economic, political, and ecological challenges. It requires the deployment of social action and citizen mobilization in intervention or assisting in the provision of needs of a community, deprived or oppressed persons targeted at class, ethnicity, gender, or age of a population (DeFilippis & Saegert, 2012).

The goal of community development is to fill in the gap where the political and economic institutions have been unable to matter by attending sufficiently through state or market appropriation or redistribution. The inherent lack of social justice directed at deprived demographics status (age, gender, class, religion, region, ethnicity, or ideological preferences) can persuade concern for intervention from civil society or social agents which is the realm of social intervention, inclusion, theater of discourse and site of voluntary action and mobilization for intervention, support and mattering. This has manifested in causing positive changes to stimulate an increase individual happiness, fairness, and well-being (Di Martino & Prilleltensky, 2020; Duff et al., 2016; Elliott et al., 2016; Ertman, 2005; Huang, 2019; Augustine Ikelegbe, 2013; Augustine Ikelegbe, 2016, 2022; Israel & Frenkel, 2017; Lovett, 2011; Mandle, 2009; Prilleltensky, 2012, 2014, 2019).

In development literature, the gender divide has shown the vulnerability of women to suffer deprivation and injustice which violate women's rights as an important equation in the promotion or improvement of the community. Women and the community will both suffer when a part of the community is held from its right to progress, add value, and make meaning in life. Gender justice is an approach to trigger the discourse on women's rights and position in contributing to the structural and institutional development of their community. Women's participation, rights, capability, and functioning in the development of society and community have been extensively advocated and supported with empirical evidence to show that where gender justice is prominent, development tends to thrive and flourish. Development is a right for both genders to reciprocate in terms of choice, capability, and functioning (Arum, 2010; Caisl et al., 2020; Chandra, 2022; Cin, 2017; Daminger, 2020; Donahoe, 2012; Elson, 2005; Gheaus, 2017; Haughton & Khandker, 2009; Huang, 2019; Augustine Ikelegbe, 2013; Lippa, 2005; Mueller, 2015; Nurcombe, 2007; Prilleltensky, 2012, 2019; Sen, 2000; Smyth, 2016; Wendorf et al., 2002).

Theoretical Framework

The study deployed gender justice as the theoretical framework in the framing of the discourse and debate that the role of gender in referring to gender balance between males and females implies the size, intensity, and scale of development in proportion to their relative opportunity inequality and equity defined by the society they are functioning from.

(Caisl et al., 2020; Cin, 2017; Elson, 2005; Gheaus, 2017; Nurcombe 2007 and Smyth, 2016) have noted that the role of gender in the allocation of rights and opportunities between males and females (gender balance or justice) is fundamental in driving community development. It places a premium on defining the role of equality and equity (fairness) to access resources and opportunities to increase capabilities to function in improving

individual and collective actions which are reciprocated in community development. The gender equality index 2020 justified that development tends to occur more in countries that have gender balance or gender justice compared to counties where disparities in gender access to resources and opportunities exist (Caisl et al., 2020; Chandra, 2022). Fundamentally, gender justice is required to increase the propensity and capability for both males and females as equal partners to contribute towards community development.

Methodology

The survey method was employed to enable the collection of data directly from the respondents concerning their estimations of variables under investigation. The population of the Warri metropolis in Delta State is 899,000. The researchers deployed a combination of cluster and purposive sampling techniques. Okumagba layout in the Warri Metropolis was adopted for its diversity to accommodate accessibility for the study. The area has a population of 58,000 and the parameter for the study are: Confidence level of 95%, Confidence interval of 8%, and percentage of 50%; Sample Size needed: 150. Thus, the sample size calculator utilized is 150 (<https://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>). Creative Research Systems (2021).

The study adopted the use of structured questionnaires to derive the responses from the respondents in Warri. The respondents were women who resided in the Warri. The justification for focusing on women is to measure the impact of gender balance in accessing resources and opportunities for promoting community development. The data collected were analyzed using quantitative analysis (descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression).

Result

The results derived from the questionnaire showed one hundred and thirty-two (132) questionnaires representing 88% were returned for the study. The response rate of 88% is robust to effect generalization for the study. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were deployed to analyze the variables under investigation

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Age	132	2.14	.059	.674
Educational level	132	2.83	.036	.419
Marital Status	132	2.04	.097	1.115
Religion	132	1.96	.076	.877
Valid N (listwise)	132			

Source: Authors' Compilation from SPSS (2022).

The descriptive statistics of the demographic status of the respondents exhibited a mean value for age, educational level, marital status, and religion were 2.14, 2.83, 2.04, and 1.96 respectively; this revealed a convergence fluctuation among the mean value of age, education, and marital status with a range means of 2 with exception of religion below the average mean value of 2. The implication is that age, educational status and marital status have positive relatedness but religion has a lesser effect on a value slightly below 2.

Table 2 Regression for gender justice and community development

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Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	-5.490	1.444		-3.803	.000	-8.347	-2.634
Gender Justice	1.292	.056	.896	22.986	.000	1.181	1.404

a. Dependent Variable: Community development

Source: Authors' Compilation from SPSS (2022).

The regression statistics for table 2 showed the impact of gender justice on community development. The result exposed that the Beta standardized coefficient of gender justice has a value of (.089) 0.90 is positive and significant at 0.000 with a t value of 22.986, where $t < .05$. This implies that a unit increase in gender justice will increase community development by 0.90. Thus, the impact is positive, very strong and statistically significant.

Discussion

The researchers examined the impact of gender justice on community development and tested the stated hypothesis.

The stated hypothesis was:

H_0 Gender justice has no impact on community development in Warri

H_1 Gender justice has impact on community development in Warri

Based on the regression analysis result, gender justice indicated positive impact on community development at .90 and is statistically significant. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. The result derived from the study is in tandem with (Cin, 2017;; Daminger, 2020; Donahoe, 2012; Duff et al., 2016; Gheaus, 2017; Goel, 2014; Lovett, 2011; Mandle, 2009; Mukhopadhyay, 2007; Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2021) which noted that gender justice and community development are strongly correlated and thus have similar impact.

Conclusion

The study was able to establish that gender justice has very strong positive impact community development and it is critical for increasing human resources capacity that will provide sustainable development for thriving and flourishing society.

Recommendations

The empirical nature of the study showed that the following recommendation was desirable.

1. The study showed the significant impact of gender justice is sufficient and necessary

- condition for sustainable development. It is therefore cogent that gender balance policies and advocacy, cultural values, and government should further encourage this trend to sustain its impact on community development.
2. The study established that women have strong advocacy and support groups that mobilize to protect their rights and seek opportunities to access financial resources. Average access to health facilities, paid employment, engagement in decision-making in family and organizations as well as active participation in politics was low but moderately vote at elections. From this established position, the society and government should encourage active women's participation in politics to catalyze framing policies for promoting women's access to health, adequate funding, and engagement in paid employment as well as give equal opportunity to engage in decision-making that will enhance and attract more opportunities; since empirical evidence has shown that women empowerment have a very strong relationship and impact with community development.
 3. The study was able to indicate that government support for women in allocating resources to support the women in funding their business was very low. The low participation in paid employment reinforces the evidence of relative deprivation in Nigeria. There is therefore the need to empower the ministry of women affairs to engage women's interaction in the state support programmes for female education, health access and offer government welfare packages. Government policy on gender should focus on supporting women's businesses and training to sustain new business.
 4. Women should be given opportunities in participate in government and governance. The government should establish, monitor, and enforce equal opportunities in organizations' positions. Women should be given a sense of belonging to make them feel valued and add value to the development of our society and state.

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