African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

IMPACT OF GENDER INEQUITY AND INEQUALITY OF INCOME DISTRIBUTION ON AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT DRIVE

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Abstract

The study of gender contribution in development is becoming more important in the process of finding solution to the economic problems of 3rd world countries. Although Economic theory provides enough explanation for the differences in income distribution among individuals and countries, it does not differentiate between male and female gender as factors of production. However, production relations have shown that gender roles differ due to political, cultural and social factors existing in different countries. By reiterating economic assertions on income distribution, this paper analyses income determinants in Africa as mainly employment and resources ownership patterns. The distribution of these is skewed against women. Their employment in the formal sector is on the decline while their private and informal sector roles particularly in agriculture are often not commercialized. Thus, women's incomes are generally lower than men's. This paper identifies effects of this unequal income distribution on the economic development efforts of African countries as low productivity, unemployment, high population growth rates, and high infant mortality rates among others. There is hope for improvement even though the efforts being made to close the gap are not yet adequate. Government's efforts expended through policies have low coverage while private efforts are still in their infancy. There is need for more vigorous efforts if gender inequity is to be reduced. The paper recommends short term solution as enacting laws favoring more female employment in the formal sectors, taxing men highly and using the proceeds to raise female productivity.

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

Long term solution includes equal exposure of girls and boys to the same types of training and school curriculum to ensure homogeneity of labor, female control of productive resources especially credit through the establishments of Women's Banks.

Introduction

The consideration of gender roles in economic development is somehow recent. It can be traced to the implementation of policies designed to achieve fundamental transformation in the economies of Asia, Latin America and Africa. Such countries have experienced serious economic recessions and hence have had to implement a package of stabilization and adjustment strategies recommended by the World Bank (IBRD) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Such adjustment packages often referred to as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) aim at getting factor and product prices right to make them reflect their true economic costs in such countries.

In trying to achieve this objective, it became quite clear that gender roles in production need to be considered generally in national economies and particularly at the household levels. Thus, the usual assumption of homogeneity of factors particularly labor and equality of opportunities often reflected in development programs has to be reconsidered. It is becoming more realistic to augment macro development policies with meso policies, which focus on gender contributions to development. In that process, problems of poverty, inequity and the resulting inequality of income distribution are receiving greater focus than pre-SAP. Adjustment Strategies need to embrace measures to empower the poor to make an economically efficient contribution to development. Furthermore, there is the recognition of gender inequality as a significant subset of general inequality of income distribution and the realization that women who constitute a high proportion of population in such countries represent the bulk of the poor.

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

Although the implementation of SAP recommendations has drawn attention to differences in gender roles, it has not changed the relationship. For most countries, SAP has worsened female opportunities (Palmer, 1991), and hence there is need to look for more fundamental causes of gender inequity and propound appropriate solutions for them. This is because inequity and inequality of income distribution have been recognized as a major cause of low rates of economic development (Todaro, 1985). By drawing examples from Africa in general and Nigeria is particular, this paper highlights economic relationships which are responsible for gender inequality exhibited in access to income generating opportunities and the resultant inequality of income distribution patterns usually skewed against women in developing countries.

Specifically, this paper:

(a) Examines theoretical assertions on income distribution.

(b) Highlights patterns of income distribution by gender in Africa.

(c) Advances reasons for gender inequity and inequality of income distribution and relates this to the level and pace of economic development in African countries.

(d) Isolates efforts being made to close the gap and

(e) Assesses the adequacy or otherwise of such efforts and make suggestions for improvement.

Theoretical Assertions on Income Distribution

Basic economics recognizes a system as consisting of two groups of actors namely the business firms and the households. While the firms make commodities for households to purchase and consume, the households supply factors of production namely land, labor and capital and entrepreneurial resources to the firms for which they receive rent, wages, interests and profits. Thus households own incomes by selling factor services to firms and spend this income by selling factor services to firms and spend this income by buying goods and services from the firms. This process of income distribution is often known as the circular flow of incomes is shown in fig.1 below (Lipsey 1963, Leftwich 1973)

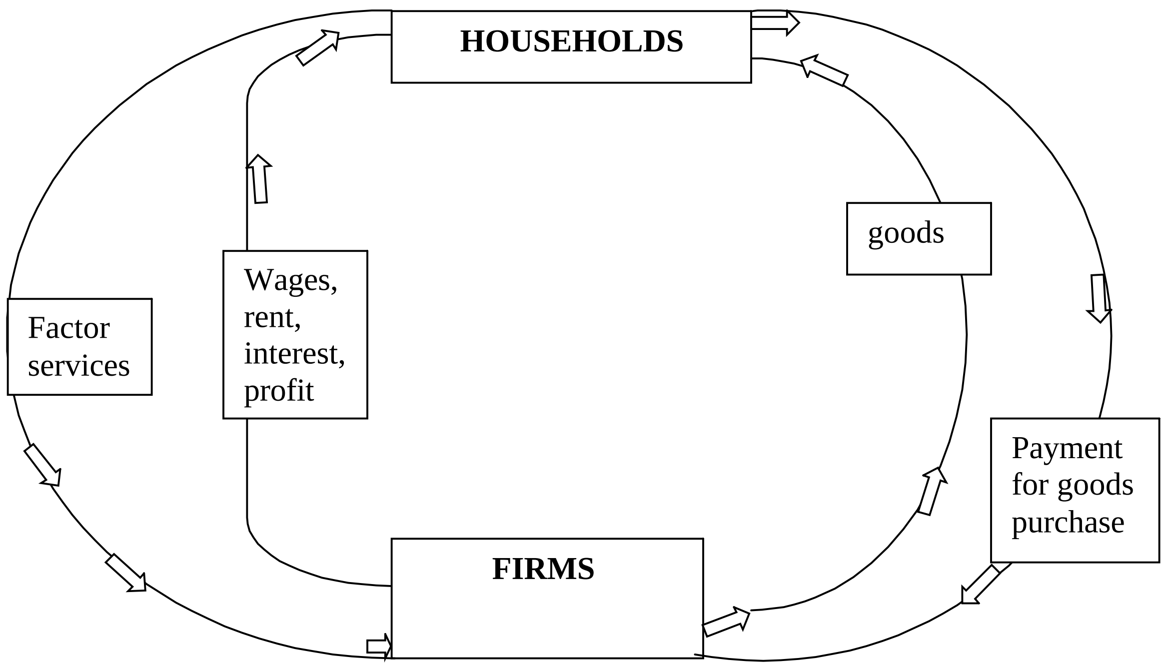

Fig. 1: Circular Flow of income between households and firms

The figure shows the flow of goods and income between households and firms. It should be noted however that goods and services also flow between households particularly in a subsistence economy. A farmer can sell his farm products directly to members of other households while he on the other hand can employ the services of laborers for which he pays wages or salaries.

On individual basis, the income earned depends on the quantities of different resources that he can put into the production process and the price he

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

receives from them. Thus an individual who owns just his labor power will have his total income determined by the wage rates and the total period of time he works for. On the other hand, an individual who owns land and has some capital resources will in addition to his wages earn rent and interest. It is also possible for individuals to earn income on inheritance or gifts. Thus income distribution is a function of patterns of resources ownership in an economy. High individual incomes result from large quantities of resources owned and properly placed in employments where they contribute much to consumer satisfaction. Income differences then arise from two sources namely; (i) improper channeling of resources to productive process and (ii) from differences in resources ownership among individuals. While the former tends to be self-correcting through mobility of factors to their different alternative uses, the latter that is resources ownership distortions are not self correcting. The self correcting mechanism of income differences may however be delayed by ignorance on the part of factors such as labor or factor owners or by institutional barriers that prevent factor mobility e.g. while there may be high demand for the services of a medical doctor in England, his inability to obtain a visa to England may prevent him from taking advantage of such an opportunity. Nurses are in high demand in England and the Middle East, they may not be able to obtain visa to get to such places and hence they may be forced to remain in Nigeria where remuneration is lower than in those places. The major sources of differences in resources ownership include differences in labor power owned (e.g. differences in physical and material resources, inheritance, opportunities, some types of training). Differences in capital owned in kind and quality arise from initial differences in labor resources owned and difference s in material inheritance, fortuitous circumstances such as chance, luck, fraud (stealing and embezzlement) and individual propensities to accumulate e.g. high-income earners can invest in valuable shares in big firms. Also by winning a lottery, a man can become rich instantly.

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

The analysis of causes and sources of differences in income distribution presented above will go along with differences in natural resources endowment and technological know-how to explain differences in income among countries of the world e.g. the advanced countries of Europe and African countries. The degree of inequality of income distribution varies from one country to another but they are most pronounced in the countries of Africa where it has been proved that the poorest 20 percent of population receive less than 5 percent of total national incomes while the highest 10 percent receive about 40 percent of income (Todaro 1985). By contrast, developed countries have exhibited more equal distribution of income because they have been able to develop over the years, the necessary effective mechanisms to transfer some incomes from the rich to the poor.

Such methods include the alteration of fundamental distribution of income through policies designed to change relative factor price and modifying the personal or size distribution of income through progressive taxation and asset ownership redistribution. Sometimes, companies give bonus shares to their low-income workers who otherwise would not own shares.

The foregoing considerations of income inequality by traditional economics have not discussed gender differences. Even though they constantly refer to households and the business firms, there is the underlying assumption that households consist of homogenous units who share incomes equally. Although traditional economics recognizes the existence of poverty arising from inequity and inequality of income distribution, it fails to uphold the emerging facts that the female gender faces considerable discrimination in this distribution. A more realistic approach to the study of the causes and sources of poverty in African countries will of necessity use the foregoing economic analyses to expose the disadvantaged position of the female gender in income distribution and this is done in the next section.

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

Table 1: Employment Status of Female Labour Force (1990-1992) Females Share of Labour Force (Percent)

COUNTRY	**1990**	**1992**
Mozambique	50	47
Sierra Leone	36	32
Malawi	45	41
Kenya	42	39
Nigeria	37	34
Togo	39	36
Ghana	42	40
Zimbabwe	38	34
Cote D'Ivore	38	34
Cameroon	37	33
Morocco	14	21
South Africa	33	36
Botswana	44	35
Ireland	26	29
United Kingdom	36	39
Canada	32	40
United States	37	41
Switzerland	33	36

Sources: (i)The World Bank Human Development Reports, 1990: Oxford University Press. (ii)The World Bank: World Development Report,1994: Oxford University Press.

Gender Analysis of Income Determinants in Africa

The major determinants of income as analyzed above are employment status and resources ownership patterns among individuals. A gender analysis of these

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

in African Countries vis-à-vis the developed countries of the world give a clearer view of the economic problems of the continent. A breakdown of female employment status in the continent vis-à-vis some developed countries as presented on table 1 which confirms that African women's employment has a downward trend

Table 2:

Education and Illiteracy Status of Females in Selected African Countries

COUNTRY	**FEMALE PER 100 MALES**				**ADULT LITERACY %**	
	Primary		Secondary			
	1990	1991	1990	1991	Female	Total
Sierra Leone	67	70	40	56	89	79
Malawi	59	82	36	53	*	*
Nigeria	59	76	49	74	61	49
Ghana	75	82	35	63	49	40
Cote D'Ivoire	57	71	27	47	60	46
Cameroon	74	85	36	71	57	46
Mali	55	58	99	50	76	68
Togo	45	65	86	34	69	57
Kenya	71	95	42	78	42	31
Zimbabwe	79	99	63	88	40	33
Uganda	65	*	31	*	65	53

* figures not available..

Source: World Bank World Development Report, 1994, Oxford University Press.

1109-5609

This data typically represents workers in the public and private formal sector services but often exclude women in the informal sectors. The falling share of women labor force in Africa and the increasing share of men's suggests that more men earn wages than women. Since wages constitute a major subset of total individual income, this to a large extent explains gender inequality of income distribution.

In sub-Saharan Africa, women's share of employment in the formal economy between 1970 and 1985 rose from 6 percent to 25 percent in Botswana, from 1.5% to 6% in Malawi, from 9% to 20% in Swaziland and 0.6% to 2% in Tanzania. In Zambia only 7% of formal wage employment was female. In Guinea Bissau, women accounted for 3.6 percent of formal sector employment (Naila Kebeer 2003).

Lower employment of females in the public and private formal sectors in Africa may be due to lower formal education and higher illiteracy status of women in the continent (see table 2).

The figures show that for most countries, the number of female per cent males declines as levels of education increase from primary through secondary education. This implies lower skill and hence lowers employment level and ultimate income accruing to women in such countries. The case of Nigeria gives credence to this point while 47.51 percent females as against 45.92 percent males were in primary school (1991 census), only 0.92 percent females were in the University compared with 1.63 percent of males.

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

Table 3

Percentage Distribution of population by highest level of education attained by gender

Level of Education	Both Sexes		Male		Female	
	Population	% Distr.	Population	% Distr.	Population	% Distr.
Primary	821,710	45.72	451,082	44.35	370,628	47.51
JSS/Modern	238,382	13.26	130,488	12.83	107,894	13.83
SSS/Tech.	281,032	15.64	162,757	16.0	118,275	15.16
Poly./College	57,842	3.22	37,388	3.68	20,454	2.62
University	29,277	1.63	22,099	2.17	7,178	0.92
Others*	352,689	19.62	202,677	19.93	150,012	19.23
Not Stated	16,399	0.91	10,703	1.05	5,696	0.73
Total	1,791,331	100.0	1,017,194	100.0	750,137	100.0

Source: National Population Commission (1998:149). *Others: This comprised mostly of Koranic and other religious education

Lower employment of women may however be due to institutional factors like religious and cultural barriers, which may prevent them from taking up appointments in the formal sectors. There also exist problems of inequity such as discrimination against women in granting them access to relevant training for some posts in the public and formal business sectors. For instance, Ijere (1991) recorded that school curriculum in Nigeria for a long time was geared to reflect the role assigned to women, which is mainly home management and rearing children. Hence most women ended up in the teaching and nursing profession in the early stages of western education in Nigeria. On the other hand men were

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

exposed to courses in science to prepare them for more vigorous professions like engineering and medicine. According to Kabeer (2003) "the challenge of achieving universal education at even the primary level remains formidable, however, and has a strong gender component. According to UNICEF, over 130 million children of school age in the developing world are growing up without access to basic education. Nearly two of every three children in the developing world who do not receive a primary education are girls. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest rates of net primary enrollment at 57 percent followed by South Asia with 68 percent, the Middle East and North Africa with 81 percent and Latin America and the Caribbean with 92 percent.

Sometimes, discrimination against female labor arises because of employers' unwillingness to pay wages during maternity leaves or confinement and their belief that labor is not homogenous and females are less efficient than their male counterparts even when exposed to the same type of training. Also, labor immobility affects female workers than males and hence well-qualified female workers may be reluctant to take up appointments outside their environment since they have to take care of their homes.

It is pertinent to mention that it is in the agricultural sector which is the mainstay of most African economies that the greatest gender biases occur (Palmer, 1991). Many writers (Boserup, 1970; Due, 1986; Witchterich, 1985; Ijere, 1991; Galdwin, 1991; Olusi, 1995) have confirmed that women perform more than 60 percent of agricultural work yet monetary rewards and the relations of production in the sector are skewed against them in Africa. (The result is low income for women) The main explanation for this is the non-monetization of their economic activities in agriculture as food produced is mainly for subsistence while cash incomes from their husbands' farms where they (the women) also render services accrue to the men who are often reluctant to make such available for their families' needs. Thus, intra-household distribution of budget control does

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

not favor women. This trend in income has become more pronounced since Structural Adjustment Policy because of the commercialization of hitherto non-commercial food crops often referred to as "women crops". Male farmers have switched their resources to the production of women crops as soon as they become commercialized (Mkandawire, 1989) thereby further marginalizing women from their traditional productive earnings. This leads to the consideration of the second major determinant of income, which is:

Table 4: Total maize farm size by gender

Range of farm size in acres	Percent male	Percent female	Total
1-10	26.6	44.0	70.6
11-20	13.0	6.0	19.6
21-30	4.0	2.6	6.6
31-40	2.6	-	2.6
41-50	0.7	-	0.7
51-60	0.3	-	0.3
61-72	0.4	-	0.4
Total			100.0

Source: Field Survey.

Resources Ownership Patterns

The pattern of resources ownership in Africa favors the male gender. This is because inheritance practices are mainly patriarchal which absolves women from inheriting key resources like land needed for farming, commercial buildings and other capital assets. The lands they farm are usually temporarily given to them by their fathers, husbands or are mainly leaseholds hence they have no rights of ownership (Adekanye, 1993). Moreover, such lands are often close to their homes and productivity is minimal (See Table 4). In a study of maize farmers in two Nigerian states (Osun and Ondo), the following gender ownership patterns were found (Olusi, 1998). Table 4 confirms that low range farms belonged to women. No women's farmland exceeds 21-30 acres in size whereas men had up to 61-70 acres of land.

Table 5: Distribution of Male and Female Workers by Economic Sector and Region, 1980 (Percentage of Total Male and Female) Labour force employed in each sector

REGION	Male			Female		
	Agric	Industry	Service	Agric	Industry	Service
Sub-Saharan Africa South Africa	58.2	19.5	22.2	69.2	6.3	24.5
Middle East	42.4	22.5	35.2	59.8	13.6	26.6
South Asia	65.1	13.9	21.0	77.1	11.3	11.6
Southeast, East Asia	44.9	23.6	31.4	51.4	18.8	29.9
China	71.0	15.5	13.5	78.5	12.0	9.5
Caribbean	40.4	24.4	35.3	25.5	14.2	60.3
Central, South America	34.3	30.0	35.6	11.4	21.0	67.7

Source: ILO Economically Active Population, Estimates and projections, 1950-2025, 1968.

Extension services such as the use of capital inputs often provided by government, focus attention on men because change agents are men. Hence, the distribution of traditional farming development resources is also skewed against women (Adekanye et al, 1995). It is a fact however that a higher proportion of women than men are engaged in agriculture (See table 5). This factor widens the gap in income between males and females. The table shows that more females than males are engaged in agricultural production in Africa and other developing countries than in America.

With regards to off-farm incomes, women engage mainly in petty trading and are rarely known to be large-scale producers or foremost entrepreneurs. This is largely due to their limited investible funds and their little consideration is the advancement of loanable funds by financial houses. This is as a result of the usual reason of women's inability to supply the relevant collaterals in forms of land and other necessary assets.

Another set of determinants of income as recognized in Economics literature are fortuitous circumstances like luck, chance, fraud. Experience has shown that such circumstances are common among public office holders and since women are poorly represented in the decision making echelon in African countries (see Table 6), only a small proportion can make incomes from such sources.

Table 6: political position by Gender in Nigeria (1999)

Position	No. of available seats	No. of Women contestants (% of total)	No. of women winners (% of total)
Presidency	2	Nil	Nil
Senate	109	5 (4.58)	3 (2.75)
House of representatives	360	29 (0.05)	13 (0.36)
Governorship	72	2 (5.55)	1 (2.77)
State House of Assembly	990	39 (3.93)	12 (1.21)
Local Government Chairmanship	774	46 (5.94)	9 (0.11)
Councillorship	8,800	510 (5.79)	143 (1.62)
Total	11,107	631 (5.79)	181 (1.62)

Source: Independent Electoral Commission Abuja, Nigeria.

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

The table confirms that in Nigeria, the highest rate of participation of females was less than 3 percent at any level of governance. The belief is that higher female participation in governance assures higher opportunities to income earnings.

Moreover, women have lower propensity to accumulate wealth than men since studies have shown that they spend their extra incomes on providing basic necessities for their families (Kennedy, 1989; Bouis and Haddad, 1990; Braun and Kennedy, 1986).

The foregoing discussion highlights major causes of gender inequity and inequality of income distribution in developing countries typified by the African situation. This obviously slows down the rate of development in such countries hence it is necessary to see the effects of this gender inequality and uneven distribution of income in such countries as done in the next section.

Effects of Gender inequality and Inequality of Income Distribution on African Countries

According to Adam Smith (1976), “No society can surely be flourishing and happy of which by far the greater part of the numbers are poor and miserable”. Although gender inequity and its resultant inequality of income distribution is a small part of the broader problems of inequality in developing countries (others being inequality of prestige, status, recognition, job satisfaction and freedom of choice), its effects cannot be overlooked. In most cases, income inequality and poverty are more apparent than other forms of inequality. Also, given the high proportion of females in the population of African countries, there is a way in which the effects of gender income inequality represent all forms of poverty in such countries.

The first effect of inequality is seen in the production and consumption patterns in the countries. Such patterns are dictated by the preferences of the few rich who are most likely to be men given the conditions for earning higher incomes discussed earlier in this paper. This is probably the reason why basic needs like food are scarce. Nigeria for instance, imports most of her cereals when in reality most of her women population (about 80%) live in the rural areas and produce food (Ijere, 1991) but their methods are crude and do not encourage large scale productions. Gender inequity and income inequality therefore worsen the problems of low productivity and food production in African countries.

On the macro level, gender inequity and inequality of income worsens the problem of poverty of African countries vis-à-vis the developed ones. Low productivity, female labor unemployment and under developments which are rampant in such countries have an overall multiplier effect of lowering the growth rate of national and per capital products which are standard economic measures of poverty. A study of 99 countries for 1960 and 1990 (Kabeer, 2004) confirmed that gender inequalities had a significant negative impact on economic growth. This was particularly so in Asia and sub-Saharan African countries, the two poorest regions of the world. The 1998 status of poverty in Africa concluded that the region could have added several percentage points to its annual per-capital growth rate, if it had increase female education relative to males (0.5%) and increase women's employment in the formal sector (0.3%) to the levels prevailing in East – Asia

High population growth rates have been recorded in African countries. A major cause often advanced for this is early female marriages resulting from gender inequity and therefore causing gender inequality of income distribution and the poverty of African nations.

Perhaps the most serious implications of gender inequality of income distribution is manifested in the management of households and the low levels of living of rural sectors who constitute the highest proportion of third world countries. Because women's incomes are relatively low, they cannot perform

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

their roles of providing basic needs of food and good nutrition for their household hence the prevalence of high infant mortality rates vis-à-vis those of developed countries (See table 7).

The table shows very high infant mortality rates in developing countries and low rates in developed ones thereby supporting the view that health standards are very poor in African countries. This is obviously the negative impact of gender inequity in the continent.

Table 7: Health and Nutrition in Selected Developing and Developed Countries

Lountries	**Low birth weight babies(%) 1990**	**Infant mortality rate (per 100) live births**		**Prevalence of malnutrition under 5 (1987 – 1992)**
		1970	1992	
Mozambique	20	156	162	*
Tanzania	14	132	92	25.2
Sierra Leone	17	197	143	*
Malawi	20	193	134	*
Nigeria	15	139	84	35.7
Ghana	17	111	81	27.1
Cote D'Ivore	14	135	91	12.4
Morocco	9	128	57	11.8
Botswana	8	101	35	15.0
United Kingdom	7	19	7	*
United States	7	20	9	-
Switzerland	5	15	6	-

Source: *World Bank, World Development Report 1994, Oxford University Press.*

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

The pertinent question of hope for improvement in these countries can be considered within the framework of what they are doing to bridge the gap in gender equity and the adequacy of such efforts. This is done in the next section.

Efforts to Close the Gap in Gender Inequity and Inequality of Income Distribution and their Adequacy for the Situations of African Countries

Gender poverty arises from gender inequity and income inequality that is so obvious in African countries. Attempts at closing the gap can be considered from two points of view namely (i) government policies and (ii) activities of non-governmental organizations.

In Nigeria, government policies have been directed at introducing new production technologies to women and making available to them the financial and land resources necessary for adopting such technologies. Some examples of such policies are the Better Life for rural women program initiated by the former first Lady, Mrs. Mariam Babangida and operated from 1987 to 1992. Also, the "Family Support Program" initiated by Mariam Abacha, another first lady, followed this. The program claimed to be gender neutral and focused attention on family welfare. This was succeeded by WRAPA, still a foremost NGO in Nigeria, initiated by Justice (Mrs.) Mohammed. Wives of current rulers also have NGOs. While Mrs. Atiku focused attention on women and child trafficking, Mrs. Obasanjo concentrates on caring burden by providing child daycare facilities. Popular as these programs are, their effects are seriously limited by two factors. In the first place, the ability of women to enjoy these facilities depends on their membership of cooperative societies, which are duly registered with the programs. Most cooperative societies could not get registered with the Better Life program hence their members could not enjoy the production facilities provided under the program. This factor of non-involvement of most women also implies low coverage for such programs and hence minimal impact on gender equity.

Efforts made by local non-governmental organizations that have permeated most countries in form of cooperative societies are also directed at alleviating women's poverty. In Nigeria, local NGO's like the Country Women's Association (COWAN) and Community Women and Development (COWAD) are well known. By sourcing funds from International organizations to augment personal efforts, these associations make credit and relevant resources including training available to their members to enable them undertake economic activities. However, the achievements of such organizations are often limited by scarcity of funds.

A third group of associations that have become interested in gender in-equity and are committed to minimizing it are the International Non-governmental organizations like UNICEF and UNDP, UNICEF in Nigeria got involved in agricultural production by providing improved cassava cuttings, soybeans, maize, groundnut, rice and bean seed to women for planting in some parts of the country (The Guardian, Feb. 5, 1992). Obviously, such activities will enhance women's productivity and their ultimate incomes. The UNDP is much more interested in the control of the environment and this means a lot of help to women since they interact more with the environment than men (Adekanye, 1993; Awe 1993). However direct help rendered by International organizations to alleviate the poverty of women specifically are still in their infancy and so their impacts cannot be assessed objectively yet.

Even though the achievements of government policies on gender equity are minimal, the awareness of the adverse effects of this phenomena and the need to reduce it creates hope for the future. Reporting on ILO's activities, Christian Oppong (1992) reported that more women in Africa than before now participate in informal sector works, which suggests that they are now wage earners as

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

against their former un-commoditized functions within their households. In trying to balance access to educational facilities and training there are rays of hope for many African countries. Apart from the fact that female enrolment in primary schools are sometimes higher than that of their male counterparts, there are significant improvements in female enrolment in higher institutions. The Nigerian University enrolment as showed in table 8 supports this fact. This suggests higher skills for women and greater efficiency in the process of production.

Table8: Total Enrolment in Nigerian Universities by Sex 1985 – 1990

YEAR	TOTAL M & F	FEMALE	FEMALE % OF TOTAL
1995/86	107,204	25,067	31.0
1986/87	120,753	29,397	32.0
1987/88	130,548	33,229	34.0
1988/89	141,219	37,456	36.0
1989/90	147,145	39,218	36.0

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Statistics of Education in Nigeria, 1985 – 1989 (1990 edition)

The table shows a consistent increase in female percentage of total enrollments in the Nigerian Universities. However, the authenticity of this is questionable because there are reasons to believe that male enrollments are reducing because of their drift to the business sector.

Even in the agricultural sector, women are gradually protesting their non-monetized roles. For instance Palmer (1991) quoted Joeke et al (1988), that Mali women refused to grind the increase in men's maize output because they saw no monetary return even when they had to give up some self provisioning work to do

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

it. Pockets of this type of protests are becoming very rampant all over the continent. It is a pointer to the fact that women are becoming aware of their rights and are claiming them.

The foregoing discussion of what are being done to close the gap in gender inequity and inequality in income distribution can be seen as mainly having long term effects on gender relationships. Developing countries of Africa need to apply strategies that will work both in the short, the medium and the long terms if gender inequity is to be reduced. The considerations of such strategies are hence analyzed in the next section.

Policy Suggestions

Public policies are more effective in removing gender biases in the short term because innovations designed to improve women's access to public resources such as working capital and technical information can be achieved through legal reforms. Feasible solutions to inequity can be achieved by directing financial institutions to give women a better chance in granting credit. The Nigerian people's banks have this as one of their objectives but the practicability of this factor is yet to be ascertained. Perhaps the inauguration of a women's bank is imperative.

In line with the suggestions of theoretical economics, a redistribution of income by gender can be achieved by taxing sales of men's produce and using the proceeds to finance investments in women's higher labor productivity. In order to ensure that more women receive formal education, quotas could be used to favor female entrants while there could be discrimination against males in payments for education and health facilities. Governments can also legislate in support of employment of more women in the informal sector.

For long-term solution, education and training facilities should be designed to prepare boys and girls equally for production practices. This will remove the fear of employers as regards the homogeneity of labor. This will also ensure adequate preparation of women for self-employment thus making them entrepreneurs like men.

The removal of inequity in agriculture requires more fundamental changes than human resources development. It requires the assurance of higher productivity for women in that sector through their assured control of the resources they manage. This point, which has already been discussed as a constraint, may be difficult to achieve in African countries because such resources control by women will be seen as impinging on men's authority over them (women). Land reforms may not succeed. Nigeria's land use Decree of1978 has failed to secure land for end users who are not original owners, it might be more difficult then to use decrees to secure land resources for women. Efforts can however be directed at making women's tenancy of certain assets they manage more permanent for instance, land given to a woman to farm by her husband should be left for her to continue to manage even if she becomes a widow.

Lastly, women's domestic unremunerated labor services constitute a constraint on their achievement of gender equity. The provision of social goods such as pipe-borne water and electricity will relieve women of their reproductive duties and enable them take up employment for wages. Also, the provision of official child minding centers during working hours will give more time to women to work in the public and informal sectors. It might be argued economically that this will imply higher government expenditure, such can in fact be financed by taxing men more highly to finance the programs that benefit all. A combination of these measures will reduce gender inequity and narrow down the gap in income distribution while the quality of life that is so much dependent on women's economic activities will improve considerably in Africa.

African Economic and Business Review Vol. 4 No. 1, Spring 2006.
1109-5609

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