

## GENDER INEQUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** The study examined gender inequality and the development of women in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study specifically examined the level of women development and gender inequality as well as the consequences of gender inequality on the development of women in Ekiti State. The study further examined the relationship between gender education, domestic burden, family decision- making and development of women in Ekiti State. The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in the study. The population for the study consisted of all women both literate and illiterate from the sixteen Local Government Areas of Ekiti State. A systematic sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study which consisted of 381 females who have experienced one form of gender inequality or the other. An instrument designed by the researcher tagged ‘Questionnaire on Gender Inequality and Development of Women (QGIDW)’ was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity through the assistance of the researcher’s supervisor and some experts in the areas of Social Studies as well as Tests and Measurement, in the Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method and a 0.75 reliability co-efficient was obtained and considered high enough for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean, standard deviation and percentage were used to answer the research questions while inferential statistics of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Regression Analysis were used to test the hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that the level of women development and gender inequality in Ekiti State was moderate, there was no significant relationship between domestic burden and development of women in Ekiti State, there was a significant relationship between gender education, family decision making and development of women in Ekiti State, gender inequality variables significantly determined development of women in Ekiti State. It was recommended based on these findings that the government should design and implement culturally responsive education and campaign programmes that take into account ethnicity, culture and community social norms. Government and policymakers should also improve women’s access to education and healthcare.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

**Background to the Study:** The development of women in the family and society continues to generate debates and concerns. Women have in one way or another experienced gender opportunity restrictions in their homes, politics, employment, wages amongst others. Most of them are not able to take a stand in decision-making within their families and the society, not able to participate in politics as a result of lack of financial strength and gender discrimination. This appears to be problematic because the consistency and persistence of gender inequality in Nigeria seem to be increasing, even when change is constant and reverberating around the globe. Nigeria is still deep-rooted in the cultural practice which put women in the backseat of achieving development by ensuring that they do not acquire education which is supposed to be the major tool for getting information (Ekesionge & Okolo, 2012) Like race and ethnicity, gender is a social construct. It defines and differentiates the roles, rights, responsibilities and obligations of women and men. According to Harmonized Nigeria Living Standard Survey (2010), the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century typically favoured men and boys. They seem to have more access than women and girls to the capabilities, resources and opportunities that are important for the enjoyment of social, economic and political power as well as overall well-being.

There are cultures in Nigerian society that seem to be patriarchal. Society sees man as first in everything, and as the head always, for instance, in inheritance, marriage, education and official positions among others. Culture is a structure of a set of social relations with the material base that enables men to dominate women. Women, therefore, tend to be discriminated against in acquiring formal education, mistreated and perpetually kept on

menial jobs. The average Nigerian woman is seen as an available object for prostitution, due to inadequate empowerment and development. Hence, she seems to be poor and most of the time unable to support herself. She is forced into early marriage, street hawking, and may become a misfit in society. The purported irrelevance associated with the status of women in society has merely reduced the woman to an inferior commodity hence the underdevelopment of women (Ekpo, 2009). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are instances of gender discrimination in a lot of homes. The bias seems to be baseless and inhumane, yet it continues. Throughout history all over the world, women empowerment, according to Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient, CARPRO (2014) came only later as women were treated as secondary to men in the aspect of voting, citizenship, employment amongst others. Not a single nation can claim to have always been free of this discrimination. It is not that there had been no changes, coming from a time where women were mainly housewives and petty traders; however, the change is relatively slow in some societies and more rapid and evident in other societies.

According to the Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (2012), Nigeria's population is 166.52 million people and of this number, 49% are female; made up of 80.2 million girls and women. Based on this, any discussion about Nigeria's future and development should give priority to the social standing of girls and women, the role they play and the barriers they encounter in making the future because they make up almost half of the country's population. Nigeria's human development indicators are also worse than those of comparable lower-middle-income countries like Kenya and Rwanda. Forty-two per cent of Nigerian children are malnourished (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2010). Despite the increase in the number of women globally, employment rates for women seem to be declining.

The cultures of many societies encourage gender discrimination. Agbalajobi (2009) Consistently, men were trained not to partake in most domestic chores such as cooking, sweeping, fetching water and firewood which were exclusively left for women. In favour of this, Ihimodu cited in Abiola and Larne (2003) agreed that women were made to perform domestic duties without adequate financial reward, as household chores are looked at as minor responsibilities which do not require labour, intelligence or power. Obikeze (2006) posited that family responsibilities and childbearing for women make them not to feature in public affairs as they are likely to be away on maternity leave and other household matters. Furthermore, women were often restricted from having access to economic, political, financial and social power. Conversely, the women in Igbo land for example are forbidden from being where men are discussing issues concerning landed property. Moreover, in Nigerian society, the roles of men and women are socially constructed in a way that the women occupy an inferior position in the scheme of things. For instance, many obstacles and prejudices prevent women from owning properties as society regards women as a thing to be possessed. Therefore, cultural norms according to Abara (2012) are not favourable to the womenfolk.

A lot of women in Nigeria are illiterates even though they constitute almost half of the country's population (Afolabi, 2005). Regardless of the vital roles, they perform in society as producers, home managers, community organizers, socio-cultural and political participants, most families prefer to send only their male children to school and choose not to educate the girl child. The education of the girl child is not pertinent as they are expected to marry, bear children and stay at home to nurture their children. Also, the young girls are to nurture their siblings and to be married off at a tender age (Salman 2002). Observations revealed that illiteracy deprives women of the ability to take control of their lives, participate and compete with the man in society. Education gives the woman a sense of belonging in the society, as it could encourage them to make a positive impact in their chosen career.

Poverty occasioned by lack of economic incentives is one of the many factors preventing the woman from participating in social activities. Historically, women experience discrimination that put them at a disadvantage in all spheres. For instance, Agbalajobi (2009) is of the view that the lack of economic power hinders effective female participation in Nigerian politics. This is coupled with the fact that a large portion of the Nigerian female population is not as financially strong as their male counterparts. Political campaigns are expensive and require huge financial backing for success. Only a few affluent women appear to have the financial capacity to undertake political campaigns. Consequently, a political financier or sponsor prefer male candidates to female ones. Life for the women is on average, not only hard and poorly compensated but also dangerous due to the sexual division of labour and job opportunities offered on a gender basis. This seems to place the men in a position that enables them to possess more purchasing power over their female counterparts.

Married women do more housework than their husbands. Analysis by the Institute for Public Policy Research, (the guardian.com) shows that 8 out of 10 married women do more household chores, while just one in 10 married men does an equal amount of cleaning and washing as his wife. Just over one in 10 women, (13%) say their husbands do more housework than them while only 3% of married women do less than three hours of household chores a week, with almost half doing 13 hours or more. The awareness of gender roles is unfinished business as women still shoulder the overwhelming burden of household tasks, particularly after they have had children and even if they earn more. As a result of the burden of domestic chores, a lot of women find it difficult to take up higher positions at work and get more education. This acts as a hindrance to the development of women. In short, gender inequality seems to be alive and thriving in the household (Bianchi, Miliki, Sayer, Robinson, 2000).

Educational inequality can be seen in the different enrolment rates, dropout rates and survival rates among male and female students. Nigeria has the largest number of out-of-school children in the world and most of them are girls (UNICEF 2017). There are a lot of reasons why the dropout rate for girls is high and they include early marriage, early childbearing, poor sanitation, cost and others. While denied access to formal education, girls may grow up illiterates and without the tools needed to gain the economic resources needed to invest in the education and development of the next generation of women (Coontz & Stephance, 2013). The family decision-making process is the outcome of the conscious choice of each spouse and the decision-making power of each spouse is determined by a lot of factors. Gender status is a vital aspect that influences the decision of men and women in any family. The factors that determine the level of influence that either the husband or wife wield in a family determines the decision making process of the unit. In most homes, the men dominate the decision-making process because the society is patriarchal, a society that perceives the man as the head. The men dominate in decision making that has to do with a major purchase such as land, cars, livestock and others. It is considered disappointing and of concern to observe that there is still such inequality globally between men and women of all ages when it comes to making decisions. Women, as the major caregivers in the home, are excluded from the household decision making process. Women's well-being and that of their children may be at risk as failure to get involved in the process can also leave women exposed to financial hardship later in life (Kritz & Makinwa, 2009).

According to Cordier (2012), gender is a social construct; it is not something that is biologically given. It is sex that is biologically given and it is based on the male or female gender. Society, being the bedrock of every individual, has succeeded in ascribing roles to different-sex and had given the roles they feel are more important to the man thereby making the world a patriarchal society. A society that sees the man as the head from time immemorial and from generation to generation. Parents have ascribed duties such as cleaning, cooking, taking care of the younger ones to the girls. The boys are to cut grasses, move heavy items, repair broken items and others. There is also a difference in the toys meant for each child. The girls get the dolls and the boys get the balls. All those have been passed down from one generation to another (Oluyemo, 2014). This perhaps has made the man chauvinistic whereby he has attached more importance to himself just because he is a man and therefore socially better than a woman. This is where gender development and inequality creeps in. Because of this concept of gender, the woman is always at the receiving end of the social ladder including those that are paramount for her survival and development.

**Statement of the Problem:** Women in Nigerian society seem to be relegated to the background in many aspects of human development for a long time that she tends to see herself as a second class citizen. Women appear to have accepted and adapted to the saying that 'women are supposed to be seen and not heard. She has also come to accept the saying that a woman's education ends in the kitchen, hence, the development of the women is inconsequential. It was observed that women are not given equal opportunities in the aspects of education, employment, pay, major decision making. This treatment against women appears to affect their development both physically and psychologically. The importance of women in society cannot be overemphasized as they serve as home managers, life-givers and others. If women are given the opportunity, they will do exploits in production, birthing and nurturing healthy children, excelling in education amongst others. The problem of gender inequality in terms of education, domestic burden and family decision making dated back to antiquity as many believe that the rights of women are trampled upon psychologically and socially, while men are highly valued in society.

**Purpose of the Study:** This study examined gender inequality and the development of women in society. Specifically, the study examined:

- i. the level of women development in Ekiti State;

- ii. the level of gender inequality in Ekiti State;
- iii. the consequences of gender inequality on the development of women in Ekiti State;
- iv. the relationship between gender education and development of women in Ekiti State;
- v. the relationship between domestic burden and development of women in Ekiti State;
- vi. the relationship between family decision making and development of women in Ekiti State;
- vii. if gender inequality variables determine the development of women in Ekiti State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of women development in Ekiti state?
2. What is the level of gender inequality in Ekiti state?
3. What are the consequences of gender inequality on the development of women in Ekiti State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between gender inequality and the development of women in Ekiti State.
2. There is no significant relationship between gender education and the development of women in Ekiti State.
3. There is no significant relationship between domestic burden and development of women in Ekiti State.
4. There is no significant relationship between family decision making and the development of women in Ekiti State.
5. Gender inequality variables will not significantly determine the development of women in Ekiti State.

**Significance of the Study:** The findings of this study could be beneficial to the family, women, government and the society at large. The study could be an eye-opener to help families understand and see why their daughters and sons should not be treated differently as every child is important. The findings of this study could also sensitize society on the role(s) of women in society as well as on the essence of maximizing their potentials and stop the assertion that being a woman is an obstacle. The study could also enlighten the woman on the importance of acquiring formal education in society. The findings of this study could also help the government to make useful contributions to policy formulation and other related programmes or intervention projects designed to reduce gender inequality. It is also expected that the presentation of this study could eventually serve as a basis for better work on similar subject(s) in the nearest future.

**Delimitation of the Study:** The study was delimited to investigate gender inequality and the development of women in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study was also delimited to indicators of gender inequality such as gender education, domestic burden, and family decision making. The study was as well delimited to areas of women development such as education, politics and others

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined as used in this study:

- Gender:** Socially constructed characteristics of both men and women
- Gender Inequality:** a situation whereby men and women are not treated equally, with one having access to social benefits more than the other.
- Women:** Adult human beings who are biologically female from the age of 18
- Consequences of Gender Inequality:** effects of gender inequality in society such as domestic violence, maternal death amongst others.
- Development of Women:** required process directed at improving the well-being of the woman such as empowerment programmes by Millennium Development Goals.
- Gender Education:** Education given to sensitize individuals on gender equality.
- Domestic Burden:** Workload relating to the home. Such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, all these burdens fall on the woman.
- Family Decision:** A choice or judgment that directly or indirectly involves two or more groups of people related by blood, marriage, law and custom. For instance, the man who is tagged the 'head' makes virtually all the decisions in the home.

- Gender Development:** is viewed as a set of complex processes which is directed towards economic independence and cultural transformation over time. Also, it is aimed at improving the capabilities, freedom and living standards of individuals, men, women and societies.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter presents a review of related literature. The review was presented under the following sub-headings:

### **Conceptual Review**

- Concept of Social Studies
- Concept and Explanation on Development of Women
- Concept of Gender and Gender Inequality
- Indicators of Gender Inequality in Nigeria
- Women in Academics
- Causes of Gender Inequality
- Consequences of Gender Inequality
- Importance of Educating Women
- Women in Politics

### **Empirical Studies**

- Gender Inequality and Development of Women in Ekiti State
- Domestic Burden and Development of Women in Ekiti State
- Gender Education and Development of Women in Ekiti State
- Family Decision Making and Development of Women in Ekiti State

### **Conceptual Review**

**Concept of Social Studies:** According to Crocco, Watras and Woysheiner(2004), Social Studies is the study of people and their world. It is an issue-focused and inquiry-based interdisciplinary subject that draws upon history, geography, ecology, economics, law, philosophy, political science and other social science disciplines. Social Studies foster students' understanding of and involvement in practical and ethical issues that face their communities and mankind. Social Studies is integral to the process of enabling students to develop an understanding of who they are, what they want to become and the society in which they want to live.

According to Tyson (2006), Social Studies provides opportunities for students to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge that will enable them to become engaged, active, informed and responsible citizens. Recognition and respect for individual and collective identity are essential in a pluralistic and democratic society. Social Studies helps students develop their sense of self and community, encouraging them to affirm their place as citizens in an inclusive, democratic society. A pluralistic view recognizes that citizenship and identity are shaped by multiple factors such as culture, language, environment, gender, ideology, religion, spirituality and philosophy. Social Studies develops the key values and attitudes, knowledge and understanding, skills and processes necessary for students to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the democratic process and aware of their capacity to effect change in their communities, society and world (Segall, 2004).

Pang (2004) states that Social Studies provides learning opportunities for students to value diversity, respect the dignity and support the equality of all human beings, demonstrate social compassion, fairness and justice, understand their rights and responsibilities to make informed decisions and participate fully in society, engage in active inquiry and critical and creative thinking, engage in problem-solving and conflict resolution with an awareness of the ethical consequences of decision making. According to Thornton (2002), Social Studies educate people by providing them with the skills and attitudes that may help them to become responsible and competent citizens. As a result, people become thoughtful and it is easier for them to participate in the life of their city and even country. It also gives a better understanding of the rules of being an informed citizen and how you can use them. Gender inequality is noticed in society today. Women are placed in the background which is against Social Studies that teaches fairness, justice and equality among all people within the same society, however, Wade (2015) opined that today women are not given equal opportunities.

Social Studies as a discipline has been linked with diverse definitions irrespective of race, religion or country. One idea that is however unique to all the definitions is that Social Studies study human beings and their environments. It can be deduced that the subject is one of the core subjects designed to inculcate societal values in the young members of society.

**Concept and Explanation on Development of Women:** Female development in Nigeria is an economic process that involves empowering [Nigerian](#) women as a poverty reduction measure (Okemakinde, 2014). Development is the empowerment of women in terms of politics, social and economic strength in nation development. It is also a way of reducing women's vulnerability and dependency in all spheres of life. It can be noted that the aggregate of educational, political, health and legal empowerment are key to women empowerment in Nigeria (Chinekezi, 2014). Like many African women, Nigerian women play a subordinate role to their male counterparts. There are twice as many women below the poverty line than men, and up to 19 times as many men in executive positions than women.

Women are nearly non-existent on the Nigerian political scene, more so at the federal and state levels. Male domination of decision-making and violence has led to women not feeling free and comfortable enough to engage in political matters. Additionally, successful political advisors are not likely to support female candidates so it could be difficult for them to pave a path in politics. There are major differentiations when it comes to starting businesses and getting credit loans for men vs. women in Nigeria. When women in business have fewer employees and shorter longevity than men, this gender gap becomes even wider (Zahrah, 2017). There have been experimental techniques to expand women-led businesses in Nigeria such as advocating start-ups and productivity through grants, mentoring and business technical training. A program by the name of Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWIN) gave insight to young men and women on how to carry out their business ideas and conquer certain challenges that come with starting a business. According to Akudo (2013), the effect of women empowerment and development in Nigeria can be measured using indices such as education, literacy rate, employment and leadership roles. Also, [Lynne \(n.d\)](#) submitted that the high rates of [maternal mortality](#) and violence against women make Nigeria one of the toughest places in the world to be born as a girl. In looking to achieve the Millennium goal on women's development, the Nigerian government initiated the Women's Fund for Economic Empowerment and Business Development for women entrepreneurs, while "second chance" was meant to re-introduce women who dropped out of school due to pregnancy back to school.

At the Sixty-fourth General Assembly, it was reported that the number of senior female civil servants was observed to be 22.5 per cent, while judicial appointment across the 36 States constituted about 30 percent. A national action plan on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Nigeria was deposited with the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva in July 2009 and a chapter was devoted to the rights of women and children. A National Policy on Sexual Harassment in Educational Institutions had also been put in place. Free medical treatment was provided for victims of domestic and sexual violence at temporary shelters that were being established nationwide. Nigeria is also working to improve the education of women by recruiting more female teachers, creating skill acquisition programmes for women, and providing textbooks at subsidized rates, among other measures. Judges and magistrates were continuously being trained on gender and women's rights, health system facilities were being scaled up.

Educational statistics have been used as an indicator of [gender inequalities](#) versus women's development in Nigeria. The [population census](#) conducted in 1991 by the [Federal Government of Nigeria](#) found that 61% (41 million) of Nigerian women suffer from intellectual poverty. In Africa, there are different forms of education, such as [agricultural extension](#) programmes, in-service training, out of school education, audio visual education, [mass media](#) education, [vocational education](#), in-service personnel training, [community development](#), [cooperative education](#), evening classes, library services, extra-moral education and [trade union](#) education. Report shows that Nigerian women are not favoured in the evolution of educational system in the country. In 1965, 37.75% of population in primary schools are girls while only 9% of undergraduates were female. By 1974, the percentage of female undergraduates increased to 25.5%. The major enrolment for girls were only in teaching and social science courses. In absolute terms, there were 138,334 male and 50,652 female students in Nigerian universities during this period. The challenges faced by women were due to the perception of the society on gender qualities (James, 2008). Women today, have come to be accepted as the pillars of the smallest unit which is the family, and from them, all great people (both male and female) have been birthed. This indicates that women are forces to be reckoned with in terms of nation building and economic development. However, it appears that the special qualities possessed by women have been trivialised. This perhaps could be due to ignorance on the part of most as well as lack of concern or appreciation by others.

**Concept of Gender and Gender Inequality :** Gender is a concept referring to the culturally accepted behaviours and ways of relating to each other between two sexes (NewDeck, cited in Mohammad, 2016). Sex refers to the biological differences between women and men while gender relates to the normative

expectation attached to each sex. Gender is viewed therefore, not as a trait inherent in an individual but something that is socially constructed. Again from this derived meaning, it can be observed that gender is learned, whereas sex is biologically given. Hence, it is within the normal expectation that male and female gender roles, from one society to another, vary significantly. When we talk about gender inequality, two things would come to our minds i.e. sex and gender. Sex is what was ascribed by biology; hormones, anatomy and physiology while gender is said to be an achieved status; that is constructed through psychological, cultural and social means (West & Zimmermann, 1987)

When social scientists refer to sex, they are referring to the genetic and physical characteristics of persons that identify them as either male or female. Gender refers to the array of socially constructed roles, traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, responsibilities, relative power, status and influence ascribed to male and female humans on a differential basis. Gender ascriptions (masculinity/femininity) are not biological, but learned. They are changeable over time, contested and vary widely within and across cultures. Gender refers not simply to women and/or men, but to relationships between and among them, and to the social structures and mechanisms which affect our everyday lives. Gender identifies the way human beings are perceived, and how they are expected to think and act. Women and men are made, not born (Abdullahi, Adekeye & Shehu, 2011). It is vital to distinguish between sex and gender. Sex refers to the biological characteristics (anatomical and genetic) which distinguish the human species as male or female. These relate to the system of reproduction, but do not themselves determine the differences in non-reproductive roles, behaviours, status or qualities which are attributed in any given social context to men and women. If sex is a biological concept, then gender is a social concept. It refers to the social and cultural differences a society assigns to people based on their (biological) sex. A related concept, gender roles, refer to a society's expectations of people's behaviour and attitudes based on whether they are male or female. How we think and behave as males or females is not etched in stone by our biology rather, it is a result of how society expects us to think and behave based on what sex we are. As we grow, we learn those expectations as we develop our identity or beliefs about ourselves as females or males (MacCulloch, 2011).

The conceptual distinction between sex and gender developed by Oakley (1972) is a useful analytic tool to clarify ideas and almost universally taken up. According to this distinction, sex is connected with biology, whereas the gender identity of men and women in any given society is socially and psychologically (and that means also historically and culturally) determined. The term 'gender' is therefore used to describe a set of qualities and behaviours expected from men and women by their societies. A person's social identity is formed by these expectations. These expectations stem from the idea that certain qualities, behaviour, characteristics, needs and roles are 'natural' for men, while certain other qualities and roles are 'natural' for women. Gender is not biological – girls and boys are not born with a pre-eminent idea of how they should look, dress, speak, behave, think or react. Their "gendered" masculine and feminine identities are constructed through the process of socialisation, which prepares them for the social roles they are expected to play. These social roles and expectations differ from culture to culture and at different periods in history, and can change. Gender roles and identities are learned in the family, school, religious institutions and through the media. They are historically and socially specific. In other words, what is expected of our grandparents as women and men may not be the same for our grandchildren. Similarly, the appropriate roles and identities for women and men in one cultural setting may be different from those in another cultural setting. Gender and sex are different in the sense that sex is natural, universal and unchanging while gender is learned and varied over time and space. In other words, we are born as female and male, but as we grow up as girls and boys, we are taught to be men and women with appropriate behaviour, attitudes, roles and activities pertaining to each sex. Moreover, since gender roles, responsibilities and identities are learned, they can also be changed (Mahdi & Asubiaro. Forthcoming).

There are innate biological differences between female and male from the basis of social norms that determine the differential social, economic and political power between the sexes. Although the specific nature and degree of these differing norms varies across societies and time. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they still typically favour men and boys, giving them more access than women and girls to the capabilities, resources and opportunities that are important or the enjoyment of social, economic and political power. Male and female are usually the only categories our world relate to when it comes to gender. We often relate each gender category to the way we dress, talk, eat, walk etc. Women are usually seen as submissive while men are believed to be dominant. These gender normalities are often constructed by our co-existing features and needs. The social construct of each gender is usually not given a choice to decide their own identity in this category, our need to label a person becomes a priority when getting to know one another. These are categories based on looks and how we portray (Clark-Ibanez, 2016).

Gender socialisation theorists have pointed to the role of parents both in providing information and in serving as powerful effectors of gender appropriate behaviour and beliefs (Parke & Burrell, 1998). From birth, males and females are raised differently and made to experience different environments throughout their lives. In the eyes of the society, gender has a huge role to play in many major milestones in life, like personality. Males and females are placed on different paths before they are able to choose their own. The colour blue is most commonly associated with boys and they get toys like monsters, trucks, sport related things to play with from the time. Girls are more commonly introduced to the colour pink, dolls, dresses, and playing house where they are taking care of the baby dolls as if they were children. The norm of blue is for boys and pink is for girls are cultural and has not always historically been around. These paths set by parents or other adult figures in the child's life set them on certain paths (Cordrer, 2012). This leads to a difference in personality, career paths or relationships. Throughout life, males and females are seen as two very different species that have very different personalities and should stay on separate paths.

Cultural stereotypes are ingrained in both men and women and these stereotypes are possible explanations for gender inequality and the resulting gender wage disparity. Women have traditionally been viewed as being caring and nurturing and are designed for occupations like nursing, teaching, hairdressing etc. which require such skills. While these skills are culturally valued, they are typically associated with domesticity. So occupations requiring these skills are not economically valuable. Men have traditionally been viewed as the breadwinner of the home. In essence, jobs held by men have been historically described as being economically valuable and as occupations predominated by men continue to attract higher wages (Kira, 2003). Gender inequality often stem from social structures that have institutionalized conceptions of gender differences. Discrimination takes place in this manner as men and women are subjected to prejudicial treatment on this basis on gender alone. Sexism occurs when men and women are framed within two dimensions of social cognition. Benevolent sexism takes place when women are viewed as possessing low degree of competence and a high degree of warmth. Although this is the result of a more positive stereotype of women. This still contribute to gender inequality as this stereotype is only applied to women who conform to the caring or nurturing stereotype, with the remaining women still being discriminated against as they are not viewed in this positive light. This form of sexism also has a negative effect because it includes the idea that women are weak and in the need of protection from men (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2011). In essence, an individual at birth is gender neutral, but through learning and socialisation, one becomes affiliated with the gender notion of femininity and masculinity which shows that gender identities and women's confinement to certain spheres is not ascribed but rather an achieved status.

**Indicators of Gender Inequality in Nigeria :** The problems of gender inequality in Nigeria has been raging for decades, as the modern society has redefined the role of a woman, which is vastly different from what it is used to be in the middle ages. However, patriarchy and inequality is always a sensitive topic when it comes to Africa because it is largely influenced by religious beliefs and diverse culture. Nigeria is not left out. In the Northern 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 (Anonymous, 2009). Moreover, some would argue that the idea that women are inferior to men is not limited to the northern part of Nigeria alone, but rather it's all over the country. This notion was in some ways re-enacted when the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buharisaid in a press conference that took place in Germany on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, 2016 (Bukola Adebayo reporting for CNN) that women's role doesn't go beyond the kitchen and the other room" Though, this statement was made regarding his wife the whole world conceded that it's probably the way Nigeria as a country sees her women. The following submissions shows that there is gender inequality:

**Gender Inequality in Education :** In 1948, the universal declaration on Human Rights "right to education was adopted". Between 1970 and 1994 there were 30% and 80% of girls and boys in primary education respectively. Also the percentage of girls that participated in mathematics technology, science and engineering (STEM) related subjects was very low likewise the drop-out rate was higher among girls than boys. Around 2002, the cumulative statistics of students in tertiary, secondary and primary schools showed girls to be 57% and boys to be 71%. Furthermore, a study among the disabled students in 1990 revealed a difference of 39% of female students to 57% of male. Today's female adult literacy rate is at 51% while the male is at 74.4%. (UNESCO, 2018). According to Alex-Oni, (2014) the founder of Role of Women in Emerging African Democracies (ROWEAD) in an interview revealed that the reason for the incongruity between the educations received by male and female was due to the ideals imposed on women during colonialism about gender. The female inferiority mindset limited women's role to just satisfying the sexual needs of men, preparing food for the



family, taking care of kids, field labour and domestic labour. In other words, the colonial principle was built around women being housewives and traces of it still lingers till date.

Furthermore, many women in Nigeria do not have access to adequate formal education. Some are even limited by their parents simply because they won't carry the family's name as it is in many Nigerian customs. Due to this lack of support from parents, many girls perform poorly in school, are unwillingly to take science courses and ultimately drop out of school. The huge line of consistent disparity in education between men and women translates into a lesser number of women in certain sectors. The percentage of women in some professional work in Nigeria include: media practitioners – 18.3%. Architects – 2.4%. Lawyers/Jurists 25.4%. Lecturers – 18.8%. Obstetricians and Gynecologists – 8.4%. Pediatricians 33.3% (National Competitive Council of Nigeria (NCCN), 2017).

**Gender Development :** According to Costa (2002), inequality between men and women has been clearly identified as one of the causes blocking development over the last two decades. The contributions of women to the national economy are increasingly being recognized, but more opportunities are needed to fully develop their roles. Women lack the training and means to bloom and this is needed for advancing the position of women; strengthening their capacities and skills and expanding the opportunities for women to fully develop their roles. (Fapohunda, 2012). Women live and work under deteriorating material conditions due to economic and social decline and conflicts. There are developmental costs of ignoring women and denying them access to key resources and the severe economic constraints tend to undercut it (United Nations Development Program UNDP, 2011). The continuing poverty and deprivation in the country, declining terms of trade and the burden of external debt, create an unfavourable environment for development. From the limited resources available, little or nothing is directly allocated to women. Structural adjustment policies pursued by government have had important gender consequences. Macroeconomic policies do not incorporate gender perspectives in their design and ignore the social relations that influence women's roles in production (Odebode, 2006).

Women's inequitable gender relations, their poverty and powerlessness in society are interconnected. Nigeria must commit to eradicating gender inequalities; mainstream gender; create a standing committee for gender affairs. Policy-makers must work with women to improve their positions and accelerate national development. A comprehensive approach must be taken to remove the social, economic and legal constraints on women. New administrative arrangements must be made to support their education and make it more consistent with their needs. Gender biases must be taken into account to improve women's ability to take advantage of incentives (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 2008).

**Domestic Burden :** Ogbomo, (2005) asserts that women head about 31 percent of households in urban and rural areas. They contribute unpaid labour to the household's agricultural production and spend up to 50 hours a week on domestic labour and subsistence food production, with little sharing of tasks by spouses or sons in the households. Studies have documented that women work 12-13 hours a week more than men. This is because the prevalent economic and environmental crises have increased the working hours of the poorest women (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2010). In some areas, women may have separate access to land and work independently in farming or in some other income-generating activity.

But in general, they have fewer opportunities to earn income. They combine their unpaid labour with independent production to meet the needs of their families and attain some measure of autonomy and self-reliance. Their income is indispensable for family survival regardless of the presence of men, since the system of allocation and distribution within many Nigerian households usually imposes individual responsibilities on men and women to meet their personal needs. Women are expected to actively generate the means to meet the daily expenses for themselves and their children, but may receive loans or advances from their husbands to set up petty trading operations (Nwadinobi, 2008). According to Okojie (2002), with the decline of national and local economies, many men have been unable or have refused to contribute their share of household expenses. This has increased household pressures on women, raising the numbers of women living in poverty and the numbers of households in the poorest categories headed by women. For women's welfare and production to be improved, planners and funding agencies need to take into account intra-household differences in resource use and control. While men may control more resources and earn higher incomes, this does not translate into improved family or household welfare. Rather, women's income and spending patterns are better indicators of the welfare of household members, since women spend more of their increased earnings on food, medicine and education for their children and other dependents. Improving women's incomes is both a matter of equity and a prerequisite for child survival and welfare (Mordi, et al. 2010).

**Family Decision Making :** Women play a crucial role in the economic welfare of the family. Women perform different tasks depending on their socio-economic structure, number of members in the family, the nature of professions they are involved in and many other factors (Reddy,2007). The authoritarian character of the traditional extended family entails decision making powers concentrated in the position of the eldest male members (Rao, 2002). Women are traditionally less involved in decision making at all levels. Their important roles are not recognized and therefore, are hardly not accepted in decision-making. The share of women in community decision-making structures is very low as seen in their participation in politics and professional associations. For example, only 3 percent women are members of political parties. (Slovenia, 2008). Gender equality in democratic governance is very uneven; in most countries of the world women are under-represented in positions of power (Anonymous, 2011).

While men make the decisions, implement laws and are responsible for distributing power and resources, the exclusion of women leads to their marginalization. There are various family matters on which men generally take decisions. Women are quite often even not consulted. This is because of the feeling among men that women are incapable of expressing their decisions due to illiteracy among them (Mumtaz & Aysta 2002). With the changing outlook of the society towards women and her role in various activities both inside and outside the family system, the traditional, male chauvinistic role of the father as one who possess the best decision making ability in the family has also undergone drastic transformation. Women, in most parts of the world today are no longer compelled to be under the garb of veils and are coming out in the open, shouldering responsibilities in various kinds of decision making with men at every tread (Anonymous, 2011). Without active participation of women and incorporation of women perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equal development and peace cannot be achieved (Karl, 2005).

**Employment and Wages :** The labour market in Nigeria have some gender characteristics that are similar to those in practically all other world regions. For example, fewer women work when compared with the number of men who work. Many work in different jobs than men and when they work in broadly similar jobs as men, they tend to be in lower positions and are often paid less. On the other hand, while most women have on the average, less education than men, women workers tend to have more education than male workers and, if they are employed predominantly in the public sector, the gender wage gap tends to be narrower(Tzannatos, 2010).Where Nigeria stands out is in the area of certain characteristics. For example, women labour force participation is very low. The women force participation rate is only 27 percent in Nigeria compared to the global average of 51 percent (ILO, 2012). When women are employed, they tend to be predominantly employed in “feminized” industries and occupations in relative isolation from men (Tzannatos, 2010).

The problem of gender inequality is an issue that bothers most countries especially the developing countries. Despite the eagerness to resolve it, this problem still persists. Women constitute about half of the population of Nigeria and are known to play vital roles as mothers, producers, managers, community developers/organizers etc. Their contributions to the social and economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres (Makama, 2013). Despite some progress over the last few decades, gender equality in employment remains an elusive goal in all societies. Women continue to face disadvantages and discriminations in all areas of economic life. Nevertheless, while one should not assume that all women want to work, it is safe to say that women want to be given the same freedom as men to choose to work if they want to; and if they do choose to work, they should have the same chance of finding decent jobs as men.The governments of many developing countries in the last decade have focused on gender disparity problem and this disparity is found in employment in virtually all sectors of economy. In Nigeria today, when we look at various positions of responsibilities, women are still not well represented. In fact, the country ranks 118 of 134 countries in the Gender Equality Index. Even when they are represented, they are most times discriminated against (European Economic Journal 2011). This explains why the government has enacted a law that in every sector of work/ employment, women should take at least 30%. Even with this, there is rarely any organization that women have such percentage of representation; except in some professions that are considered feminine; like Nursing, primary teaching etc. According to World Development Report (2012),men’s and women’s jobs differ greatly, whether across sectors, industries, occupations, types of jobs, or types of firms.Perrons (2014) says that Gender equality is considered a critical element in achieving decent work for all women and men, in order to effect social and institutional change that leads to sustainable development with equity and growth. Gender equality refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities that all persons should enjoy, regardless of whether one is born male or female. According to

ILO (2007) in the context of the world of work, equality between women and men includes the following elements:

- (a) Equality of opportunity and treatment in employment
- (b) Equal remuneration for work of equal value
- (c) Equal access to safe and healthy working environments and to social security
- (d) Equality in association and collective bargaining
- (e) Equality in obtaining meaningful career development
- (f) A balance between work and home life that is fair to both women and men
- (g) Equal participation in decision-making at all levels

Given that women are usually in a disadvantaged position in the workplace compared to men, promotion of gender equality implies explicit attention to women's needs and perspectives. The ILO has been working to enhance equal employment opportunities through measures that also aim to improve women's access to education, skill, training and healthcare through conventions and recommendations e.g maternity protection convention 2000, homework convention 1996 and part-time work convention 1994. Despite these efforts by ILO and other stakeholders, women's participation in decent work structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant. According to Godiya (2013), the patriarchal nature which is a major feature of a traditional society in Nigeria has made women to be at a disadvantage in the world of work. Also, a lot of women all over the world appear to be concentrated in low-productivity jobs. They work in small farms and run small firms. They are overrepresented among unpaid family workers and in the informal sector. They are seen in jobs that include farming, self-employment, working in trade, small enterprises providing goods and services and wage labour in agriculture. Some of these works involve long hours and is not sufficiently remunerated.

Women in particular, constitute a significant proportion of unpaid family workers (UNIFEM, 2005). They rarely rise to positions of power in the labour market. In promoting women's livelihood, the 2012 DFID Gender Report in Nigeria, recommends that "Government policy should prioritise agriculture and rural development, because 54 million of Nigeria's 80.2 million women live and work in rural areas where they constitute 60-70% of the rural work force". It also advocates the formulation and implementation of laws that will assist the female gender in actualising her mandate. The elimination of discrimination is at the heart of the ILO's mandate for decent work as a matter of social justice and human rights. It can be deduced that most women in Nigeria are predominantly engaged in subsistence agriculture and less likely than men to be engaged in professional, technical and managerial fields and even governance. Women lag behind in employment status and wages. These factors tend to mitigate against women involvement in the socio-political development of Nigeria.

**Women in Academics :** In a review of studies by Stiver, Barnes, Harding and Akinsanya (2012), it was observed that across the globe, there is a gender gap in the academia. Women are under-represented at the highest level across the world. World statistics indicated that women make up more than half of the population, do 64 percent of the working hours, receive 10 percent of the income and own only one percent of the properties. According to Akinpelu and Jekayinfa (2000) 20.3% of Nigerian University Lecturers are females. As at the end of 1997/98 session at the University of Ilorin, there were 53 female Lecturers as compared with 481 male Lecturers. In the same year, there were 2 females out of a total number of 116 Lecturers in the professorial rank. Comparatively, this is rather small. Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that few women have come out as pace-setters, Nigerian Universities have produced at least two female Vice-Chancellors. What seems to be responsible for this low participation of women in top rank Lectureship position however, cannot be unconnected with the struggle to keep the home and function maximally on their jobs at the same time. Six schools were sampled and data on the male and female academic staff of their Universities were collected. In the University of Benin (Uniben), there were 232 academic staff. Forty-Eight are female while 184 are males. Thus, the percentage of total female is 21%. For University of Ilorin (Unilorin), there were 100 Lecturers in Faculty of Business and Social Sciences. Only 10 which are 10% of the total are females while the remaining 90% are males. In Fountain University, there are 32 academic staff, only 5 are females. In Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (Lautech), there are 177 academic staff, only 22 (12.4%) are females. University of Lagos has 107 females and 444 males. The female represents only 19.5% of the total academic staff in the University. **Source:** Various University Websites

**Causes of Gender Inequality :** Various factors have been identified to be the cause of gender inequality in the Nigeria society, these factors are explained below:

**Culture :** In the words of Gandhi in 1925 "It is good to swim in the water of tradition but to sink in them is suicide"(Bhikhu, 1999). However, from the cultural school of thought, culture is responsible for the differences that exist between male and female. Culture is an entire way of life that exists in a particular society. It is learned and shared by members of a society. It is a learned socially transmitted behaviour; it is all about norms, values and customs that people share with one another. Hence, culture is a way of life. It is the collection of ideas and habits which members learn, share and transmit from generation to generation. Culture is everything that people create—values, norms and goals. Culture develops as people interact with one another over time. Culture is external to individuals in the sense that they learn about it.

According to Ashfer, (2001) culture promotes gender inequality in the society as it is transmitted from one generation to the other. By making sense of the causes of gender inequality, one cannot but seek explanations in the culture of the human society. Culture models a people and determines to some extent, its behavioural orientation. Hence, it is imperative to understand gender inequality from the cultural perspective and subsequently, its effect on women development. Gender inequality is affecting every institution in the society, be it education, economic, social, health or family system to mention a few. Culture is thus a behaviour that is learned and transmitted from one generation to the other deliberately and instinctively over a period of time (Aina, 2005). Gender inequality is thus culturally transmitted from generation to generation because the ideology of gender inequality is culturally constructed. Baker and Hesmond (2015) is of the view that the belief about men and women in our society differs, while men are culturally believed to be the go-getter, women are recognized as home managers who give the men emotional support and care for children in the home thus becoming the breadwinner of the family. The creation of some rules, norms and traditions do not favour women as culture is the rules of the society. Who determines and controls these rules? It is believed that men who are the ones in power determine these rules (Escriche, Eliolcina & Sanchez, 2007)

Culture dictates many of the societal arrangements and the same is applicable to gender roles ideologies. Society makes a distinction between roles performed by men and women, and ranks the roles hierarchically. Most of the contending issues in Nigeria revolve around the influence of culture on its developmental effort. For instance, customary laws support the denial of women's right and empowerment that have continued to weaken the country's economic productivity. It becomes consequential to ask how would there be women empowerment when all around the country, baby girls are raped and murdered, school girls are abducted and forced into the armies and underage girls forced into marriages as full housewives at a tender age of twelve. Or how would a full housewife contribute to national development? How would womenfolk compete with men when the society regards them as inferior and deny them equal opportunities? Women have learnt to accept the unfavourable condition because they see it as normal, their culture and tradition (Jacobs 2011). Traditional practices have turned Nigerian women into powerless humans in the hands of the male and sometimes, the laws of the land. The way our culture is designed oppresses women whether consciously or unconsciously. Nigerian culture frowns at rebellion, especially from the womenfolk. There are sanctions for rebellion which includes violence and the women being ostracized. There are further sanctions for those who do not choose to suffer in silence. The communities isolate victims of gender based violence who choose to report (UNESCO, 2018).

According to Akinsaya (2012), two-thirds of women in certain parts of Lagos State experience physical, sexual and psychological abuses daily; and he generally posits that:

*Due to the disinterest of politicians and policy makers, our carefree cultural attitudes towards abuse, and our women is lack of awareness on what constitute abuse, the exact number of affected women cannot be properly documented. Yes, our culture fuels the ill-treatment of women by failing to provide adequate support for abused women and by encouraging gender inequality. Our culture supports this practice by making it socially acceptable to batter a woman and by expecting a woman to silently endure any ill-fate that befalls her in her matrimonial home. Our culture prevents the woman's parent from helping her.*

The root of the problem of subjugation of women is from the making and formulation of rules, norms and traditions. Right from the traditional era, women are being exempted from the decision making processes and are expected to keep their mouth shut when men are talking. The rules and ways of behaviour are mostly decided by the elders, house-heads, village-heads and traditional rulers who are mostly men. In cases where women are allowed to attend meetings on decision making, their voices are not always heard and whatever they say is not reviewed. The inability to see women as decision makers leaves them no choice than to accept the rules made by men, thus oppressing them (Oluymo, 2014). According to Aina (2005), the way of life of a people is usually difficult to change. There are many traditions that subordinate women and young girls. A good example is on the issue of virginity before marriage in some cultures. A young woman that lost her virginity before the wedding night will be publicly disgraced and banished from the village. This punishment should not

only be given to her. Her male counterpart should also be held responsible because he is also aware of this tradition. In some parts of Nigeria, customary laws supports denial of women's rights on sexual relations and this tend to criminalize women more than men (Female in Nigeria (FIN) 2017). One could still remember the popular case of Sefiat who was impregnated by a man and the community nearly stoned her to death without any penalty for the man who impregnated her. Both the man and woman involved in pre-marital sex should dance to the tune of this crime.

In Nigeria, it has been observed that women and daughters in some tribes are discriminated against when it comes to inheritance of property (i.e. succession). Nigeria being a patrilineal society, the right of inheritance is chiefly by male descent. There are of course some parts of the country where women can inherit from their father's estate e.g. the Yoruba speaking area, which according to Adeyinka (2017), remains one of the most liberal and gender free in the world, yet their culture is still subordinate/autonomous to men, as wives' rights and interests are compromised. In most parts of Igbo land, women are excluded from inheriting the properties of their late father. The patriarchal structure of the traditional society enables men to dominate women. Through the patriarchal system, Nigerian women are born into a culture of male supremacy and socialized into a culture of female subordination. This is a structure of gender inequality/discrimination because women have been oppressed by cultural norms in terms of economic development and education. It is because of these cultural norms that they have less decision making power in their homes, in the economy and less chance of receiving education. People in the society should recognize these social gender inequality issues in the society. Women are the same human beings and everyone should have equal privileges. They should not use a certain type of lens and traditional thought to judge and limit the other people's right and opportunities, for we can work equally. Many conflicts will be resolved and people will live in a better and happier society (Ajayi, 2005).

**Religion :** According to Ekpo (2009), religion is an attitude of the mind which covers motives and beliefs that are expressed in the acts of worship such as prayers and rituals. Ngosian (2005) describes religion in term of beliefs, feelings and conduct. Araar and Taiwo(2006) believe that religion in its essence, is the means by which God as Spirit and man's essential-self communicate. For Anyanwu (1999), religion has to do with man's relationship with the unseen world. A synthesis of the various definitions show that religion is man's interaction with the supernatural forces. In Nigeria, this interaction can be through the traditional religious rites, the Muslim beliefs or the Christian practices (Udofia, 2009). Moreover, a religion has beliefs and norms which need to be taken serious by the believers.

Therefore, religion has a great impact on gender relations, attitude and beliefs. The impact of religion on gender attitudes is largely argued to be the outcome of the role of religion in legitimizing inequalities within societies, so that religious individuals tend to hold less egalitarian values based on the belief that those inequalities are justified and based on a 'natural' order. Religion is a reflection of the society. It was conceived in, and many being born of a patriarchal society exerts much masculine relevance from its law to its deity. This means that religion has a great influence on different societies. Therefore, different religious groups have gender aspect and there are different beliefs which state the role of men and women. In most religions, men and women are ascribed 'natural' roles that center around the domestic role for women and the breadwinner role for men. This clearly means that in many religious groups, women are expected to be dependent on men whilst men are expected to play dominant role in supplying basic necessities to the household. Religion is often used to justify women's subordinate position in the society and family (King, 2005).

According to Sequino and Lovinska (2001), in most religions, women are the majority of believers, but it is men who claim to hold the position of authority and have the rights, including the authority to interpret religious texts. For millions of women around the country, religion is a source of identity, belonging and comfort in times of hardship. Paradoxically however, it is often a force which encourages adherent to accept violence and oppression as part of life, and discourages potentially positive societal change. Religion is mainly associated with gender inequality and men are mainly recognized as compared to women. Sequino and Lovinska (2001) are of the view that religiosity is strongly correlated with gender inequitable attitudes, controlling for a variety of demographic characteristics.

This shows that religion reinforces traditional gender roles in women which aids gender inequality. Furthermore, women too suffer discrimination or relegation in the practice of faith. Christian women are hardly appointed to hold top ecclesiastic posts such as; being among the cardinals, the office of Bishop, and or that of the Imam of a Mosque. In the Roman Catholic Church, the controversy regarding woman priests is still raging. In other Churches, such as the Anglican Church, the ordination of women has led to rifts in the Church. In history there

has never been a woman or female Pope. In the traditional religion or indigenous beliefs, women are not allowed to be masquerades even if they are from the lineage. Also in the traditional priests' lineage, only few women are allowed to be priest while the men are given an upper hand. No matter the ancestral power deposited in a woman, she is expected to lay them down while some are being coerced out of the position. All these are obvious cases of discrimination against women who are perceived to be the "weaker sex" who lack the required physical and mental capacity needed to hold offices (Stump, 2008).

The subordination of women is not news even as there are scriptural readings to buttress this point. For instance, in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:34-35, Saint Paul consented that it was a shameful thing for a woman to speak in the Church and that if she had any question, she should ask her husband who represented her as the law gives them no permission to speak. The Bible also says "wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives be subject to husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5: 22-24). So also, the Quran states "Men have authority over women because Allah has made one superior to the other, good women are obedient" They guard the unseen parts because Allah has guarded them. As for those whom you fear disobedient, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them, but if they return again to obedience, seek not means against them"(Quran: 4, 34).The enlightened ones among the Muslims point out that the beating should only be a last resort, whereas, before Islam, it was the first resort that it should be with a toothbrush, or a handkerchief and should not leave any permanent marks. The last of Ten Commandments given to Moses by God states: "Thou shall not covet thy neighbours' house; thou shall not covet thy neighbour's wife nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's (Exodus 23:31). We clearly see how women are portrayed as the personal property of men. Women are regarded as more valuable than an ox and an ass, but lower than the house.

Religious communities have an enormous amount to answer for and a huge responsibility in addressing gender inequality. As a social foil, few elements are as powerful as religion in sustaining social activities. Religious people committed to gender justice are under an obligation to call upon women for forgiveness. There is much in all our traditions that fosters and sustains images of women and practices by men which serve to deny women their full worth as human beings created by God as religion can be used to argue that women are inferior to men (Shinew,2006).

**Family Structure :** There are various types of family in today's society. Some of the more common structures include the nuclear family which usually consists of a man, his wife and their children, while the polygamous family consist of a man, his wives and their children. For the context of this topic, we will focus on the polygamous family structure. Polygamy is defined as the practice or custom of having more than one wife or husband at the same time (Merriam-Webster.com). The masculine desire for more than one wife has been more often expressed than the feminine desire for more than one husband which is called polyandry. Most of the researches on polygamy have focused on the adults, in particular the wives. Studies on the effects of polygamy on women has found detrimental effects on the mental health of the wives. Studies have shown that polygamous marriages are more likely than are monogamous marriages to be torn by spousal conflict, tension and jealousy (Salman, 2002). Particularly, the stress associated with polygamous family life predisposes mothers and children to psychological problems. Wives in polygamous families are commonly unhappy; the addition of a second or third wife is typically very distressing to the senior wives. Some have perceived this change in the family organization as an abusive or traumatic experience for the wife. Marital distress is linked with suppressed immune function, cardiovascular arousal and increases in stress related hormones (Muhammad, 2016).

A lot of women in polygamous societies are unemployed and thus are economically dependent on their husbands or families. Since these women cannot support themselves through work, they are likely to be forced into agreeing with the man's polygamous tendencies. With few alternative sources of income, they are unlikely to seek another form of marriage, thereby choosing to remain with their children in the polygamous marriage. The mothers' distress has serious implications for their children since it can diminish her level of caring, supervision and involvement.

Some distressed mothers can become withdrawn, depressed and even hostile towards their children (Folbie, 2016).The study of Salman, (2002) found an increased risk in the manifestation of psychiatric disorders among woman of involved in polygamous marriages, including a greater incidence of low self-esteem. This practice treats woman as lesser members of their families and as inferior in status to man. Polygamy forces woman to live in poverty by forcing them to share resources. It also has a detrimental effect of children because when a

man has more than one wife, he often has a large number of children in a short period of time. Conflicts often erupt among the families because several wives and children are competing for small and finite amount of resources. According to Akinola (2005) polygamous marriages often have a negative impact on children most especially the girl child as in most cases she is seen as not having enough value as the male child. The children do not receive the necessary attention from their fathers, the mothers are often ill equipped to provide the best emotional and financial support to their children. Several studies have stressed that a family of two biological parents provides the optimal developmental environment for children and plays a decisive role in reducing physiological distress in children. Disruptive factors such as lack of parental involvement, the psychological unavailability of parents especially the mother figure, dissolution of the family and change in the family system, create discontinuity in the child's immediate environment, which can adversely shape a child's adaptive and development health. The shape occurs when a family adds a new spouse and therefore change from a monogamous to a polygamous family system causes a major systemic disruption that would pose a major challenge to a developing child's sense of trust, security and confidence. This is what happens when marriage becomes about the emotional and sexual wants of adults, divorced from the needs of children from a mother and a father committed to each other for life (Muhammad, 2016).

Sadly, when marriage is elastic enough to mean anything, in due time it comes to mean nothing. The only people who substantially benefit from polygamous marriages are men. When men view having multiple wives and children as a sign of prosperity and prestige, women and children are used for sexual satisfaction and free labour. Even when women enter into a polygamous marriage knowingly and willingly, the emotional stain that is placed on all the women involved is stressful to the emotional wellbeing and the mental health of the woman and the children born into those homes

**Early Marriage :** Throughout all cultures, marriage is perceived to be a time of celebration and joy and it symbolizes the coming together of two people who love and respect each other. However, for many young girls, who are forced into early marriage by their parents in the hope that it will advance them both socially and financially, marriage compromises their future and leaves them vulnerable to violence and poverty (Hotchkiss, Godha, Gage & Cappa, 2016). Early marriage refers to any marriage that takes place before a child has reached the age of 18, most early marriages are arranged by parents without the consent of the child. Early marriage is considered to be a violation of human rights and has been recognized as a harmful traditional practice even though it is perceived by many young girls and their family to be a method of securing their future and providing them with protection. However, early marriage tend to perpetuate the cycle of gender inequality and compromises the overall development of the girl child, leaving them socially isolated and with little education. It equally reduces their opportunities for employment and ultimately makes them vulnerable to poverty. According to Shraboni(2016), the consequences of early marriage include:

**Impact on Health :** Where early marriages take place, the understanding is that sexual intercourse will not take place until the first menstruation of the girl. However, this is not always the case, especially where the husband is much older than the wife. There are recorded cases of forced intercourse by much older husbands with wives as young as eight years. Resisting sexual intercourse is not possible in most early marriages, where it is the right of the husband to consummate the marriage and the wife is expected to submit. Forced sexual intercourse can cause vaginal or anal tearing, bleeding or infection and chronic pelvic pain. Skin and tissue damage to the walls of the vagina make females more susceptible to contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

There is a strong correlation between early marriage and early childbearing. UNFPA reports that 93% of married teenagers have begun childbearing as a result of the pressure exerted on them by the family to start having children. The risks of early pregnancy and childbirth are an increased risk of dying, an increased risk of premature labour, complications during delivery, low birth weight of baby and a higher chance that the baby will not survive. In fact, the leading cause of death for girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years is pregnancy related. It has been shown in several countries that between 26 and 37 percent of deaths among adolescents can be attributed to maternal causes.

**Impact on Education:** Education is a right for girls as well as a necessity for their families since it provides enormous social and economic benefits. Denial of education is a direct consequence of early marriage. Since the expectation is that girls will get married early, parents do not see the need for educating them and it is regarded as a waste to invest in the girl's education. There is also the belief that once a girl has given birth, she is a woman and does not belong in school any more.

A major consequence of denying girls an education is that they do not have the necessary qualifications or skills to earn a proper living and are forced into menial occupations when it becomes necessary for them to work. When illiterate women are abandoned, divorced and widowed, they end up in occupations that require them to cook, clean or take care of children. Some may even be forced into the sex trade to earn money. Education is not just about acquiring a qualification or a skill, it provides what has been described as “connectedness”. By interacting with others, individuals learn the social skills that they need to enable them have access to resources and opportunities, and to create social networks for support. This, in turn, will contribute to self-esteem and confidence and give them the capacity to take greater control of their lives.

**Psychosocial Impact:** Early marriage has profound effects on the emotional wellbeing of girls since it causes the loss of childhood, involves forced sexual intercourse and denies girls the freedom and the opportunity for personal development. When a child gets married, she is catapulted into adulthood whether she is emotionally or developmentally ready for the marriage or not. Children who have experienced a loss of childhood go through phases of bereavement. These include denial and isolation in terms of which the child experiences a disbelief that the experience has occurred. There is anger, which is usually evident in other relationships or behaviour, and there is depression, which is an apathetic phase that can have severe consequences, and, finally, acceptance of the loss.

**Poverty:** Early marriage contributes to the perpetuation of poverty in a number of ways. The withdrawal of girls from school restricts their ability to become employed. They do not have the skills or education to become part of income-generating activities and this is further compounded by the maternal and child health problems that emanate from early pregnancies. Child brides are significantly more likely to have more children, which will decrease resources in the family. Child brides are, therefore, far more vulnerable to poverty. The lack of independent income and autonomy will further increase this vulnerability. Girls are confined to their homes and are responsible for household chores and taking care of the children, which isolates them and does not give them access to opportunities and resources.

**Domestic Violence and Abuse:** Child wives are also more vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse because of their position of powerlessness and dependency within the marriage. There is very little information available on the extent of the abuse within early marriages, since this form of abuse occurs within the family and is rarely reported. A survey in Nigeria found that girls who married before the age of 18 were twice as likely to report being physically abused as opposed to those who married later. Child marriage is a rape on the future of the child, one may be persuaded to risk it on the innocent belief that the man will preserve the girl given to him in marriage until she attains maturity. But who puts the check on him or guarantees that the girl will be so preserved especially in this age of rampant sexual abuse and exploitation of minors? How can one place a roasted fish or chicken before a hungry rat and expect the rat to be disciplined enough to preserve the fish or chicken unconsumed? Why would a child of basic school age be faced with marriage at a time she should be engaged with at least, her primary and secondary school education or skills acquisition? Is it not an affront to reason for a child to be kept with a man as a wife when she ought to be with her parents, guardians or relation enjoying her natural childhood age within their means or available resources? No reason should indeed be accepted for the continued rape and distortion on the growth, development, education, right, health, social welfare and general wellbeing of the child all in the name of marriage.

**Consequences of Gender Inequality:** Discrimination against women is a global issue even in developed western nations. Women experience biases on the basis of his/her gender. In developing countries like Nigeria, gender discrimination is rampant in both rural and urban areas. Gender discrimination is largely responsible for poverty and backwardness in Nigeria (World Bank (2013). In today’s world, economic progress is only possible when men and women work side by side. According to Action Aid (2011) some of the consequences include:

**Women and Education:** Women constitute approximately more than half of the population of Nigeria and by denying them education, the possibility of progress is reduced by half (Klassen 2009). Women face many barriers in order to access quality education, with far-reaching consequences. These barriers include school fees, continuous cost of supplies and transportation, time constraints due to women’s roles in domestic tasks, lack of sanitary facilities, early marriage and pregnancy (UNICEF, 2017). Even with significant progress towards universal access to education, women still make up about 54 percent of the global population of the uneducated population (UNESCO, 2014). Among low-income countries, just 20 percent had achieved gender parity at the primary education level, 10 percent at the lower secondary level and 8 percent at the upper secondary level as at 2011. The disadvantages are greatest for the poor: in some developing countries, as many



as nine out of ten of the poorest women have not completed primary education (UNESCO, 2013). As half of the population seems not to be allowed to make use of its talent, Nigeria has not been able to make progress as compared to other countries. It is usually believed that educating the women does not bring in returns but they are wrong (Galor & Weil, 2006). Thirwell(2003) says educating a woman is beneficial for the whole generation; an educated woman can bring up her children better and also contribute towards the family's income.

**Violence:** Violence, privilege, injustice and impunity are intimately linked with violent behavior. They are generally perceived as an integral part of male behaviour and as a normal feature of being a man. Violence is in fact, culturally "masculinised" (Action Aid, 2011). Gender-based violence is related to systems and feelings of power (the oppression of women and certain groups of men). Gender inequality perpetuates a culture of violence. Madise, et al (2007) are of the view that when women are viewed as lesser beings (a person subjected to male authority), men feel less hesitation about using and degrading such women for their selfish satisfaction as their satisfaction is deemed to be of greater importance. Unfortunately, culturally dominant norms of masculinity that encourage men to use violence limit not only men's but also women's and girl's choices, safety and behaviour (Bandera, Barro, Oriana, Iwan, Imran & Rasul, 2013)

**Poverty:** Action Aid (2011) defines extreme poverty as the inability to meet basic consumption needs on a sustainable basis. People who live in extreme poverty lack both income and assets and typically suffer from interrelated, chronic deprivations, including hunger and malnutrition, poor health, limited education and marginalization or exclusion. More women than men live in poverty, according to UN (2013). As of 2013, an estimated 767 million people lived below the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day. According to Gannage(2011), although research in various countries have shown that women are vulnerable to extreme poverty than men. The study identified a range of factors that may predispose them to poverty, these include; not having their own source(s) of income, lack ownership and control over family assets and not been involved in decision making within their households, facing greater burden of unpaid work and are often exposed to gender based violence etc.

**Limitations in Access to Productive Resources and Assets:** Access to productive resources and assets (physical as well as financial) frequently determines the livelihoods available to women. In many countries, women are far less likely than men to own or control key physical assets such as land, house, agricultural equipment, large livestock, and vehicles (Deere & Doss, 2006). Women's land ownership is low in developing countries, particularly across sub-Saharan Africa: For example, women individually own just 17 percent of all documented land in Malawi, 11 percent in Tanzania, 5 percent in Niger and as at 2007 out of the 15,732,850 women in Nigeria only 1,579,341 that is 10% owned landed properties. Doss, Kovarik, Peterman, Quisumbing, and Van-den Bold (2013) said that women also face diminished access to financial instruments, which are vital for poverty reduction. According to World Bank (2014) in developing economies, women are 20 percent less likely to have a formal bank account than men, and are substantially less likely to use savings and lending instruments. Female entrepreneurs are less likely than their male counterparts to obtain financial support from formal institutions and more likely to pay high interest rates. Cultural, regulatory, and legal barriers constitute the root of these discrepancies. For example, according to the Women, Business and the Law Report of 2014, almost 90 percent of the 143 countries studied restrict women's economic opportunities, in areas such as registering a business and inheriting property, through at least one legal difference between the sexes. Twenty-eight countries have ten or more legal differences (International Finance Corporation, 2014). The lack of access to assets and productive resources often leads women to the informal sector where earnings are typically low, economic uncertainty is high and few social benefits are available (Chen, 2011). This contributes to their asset deficit and limits their ability to break the cycle of poverty.

**Economic Growth:** Economists believe that fixed capital, human capital and labour force are the main factors which can affect economic growth (Bano & Jong-Whalee, 2004). Gender equality is a key factor which contributes to the economic growth of a nation. The United Nations Population Fund believe that economic growth and social equality should go hand in hand, arguing that "gender inequality holds back the growth of individuals, development of countries, and the evolution of societies, to the disadvantage of men and women with women mostly affected".

The discrimination against women remains a common occurrence in today's society and serves to hinder economic prosperity. The empowerment of women through such things as the promotion of women's rights and an increase in the access of women to resources and education proves to be the key to the advancement of economic development (Blackden, 2007). Gender equality in the work force and in social relationships are the

two primary factors that instill economic growth. The influential role of gender equality on economic growth is most directly illustrated in the participation of women in the labour force. When women are not involved in the workforce, only part of the able workforce is being utilized thus, economic resources are wasted. Gender equality allows for an increase in women in the working class, thereby leading to an expansion of the labour force and an increase in economic productivity (Dollar & Gatti, 2009).

**Women and Reproductive Health :** Women living in extreme poverty often have limited control over their reproductive health resulting in early childbirth, narrow spacing between births, and increased fertility, all of which can impact a woman's overall health and keep her from continuing her education or pursuing paid employment (Greene, 2008). Women in several countries in Africa were found to have become sexually active at early ages and were less likely to use birth control than wealthy women. This puts them at higher risk of unplanned pregnancy and disease transmission (Madise, Zulu & Crera, 2007). On a household level, high fertility rates contribute to extreme poverty since they reduce the per capita investment in the health and education of children (Sustainable Development Solutions Network 2012). Nation-wide, high fertility rates reduce a government's per capita investments in infrastructure and social services.

Additionally, each pregnancy puts a woman's health at risk. A woman living in sub-Saharan Africa is 47 times more likely to die of maternal causes over her lifetime than a woman living in the United States (UNDP 2011). However, a one-year analysis across 172 countries showed that the use of contraceptives reduced maternal deaths by 44 percent (Ahmed, Li, Lu & Tsui, 2012). The death of a mother is a tragedy in itself, but it also has devastating effects on the survival of her children. The economic stability of her family, and the productivity of her community. A World Bank study carried out in 2015 indicated that the Nigerians maternal mortality rate is 821 per 100,000 births and that an infant whose mother had died is approximately eight times more likely to die in the first year of life than one whose mother remained alive (Ronsmans, Chowdhury, Dasgupta, Ahmed & Koblinsky, 2010)

Lack of empowerment in the realm of reproductive health also contributes to disease transmission. For example, young women 15–24 years old in sub-Saharan Africa are twice as likely as young men to be living with HIV. HIV/AIDS can push people and households into poverty by reducing labour capacity and increasing medical expenses. It can also have long-term consequences on children and families (Bell, Devarajan & Gersbach, 2004). When women are empowered in the realm of reproductive health, far-reaching, multigenerational effects can ensue. This is because healthier women with fewer children are more able to seek employment and increase household income and assets, maintain the health of their families, and send their children to school.

**Importance of Educated Women:** We all appreciate the fact that education is extremely important and crucial to our lives but it is also clear that not everyone can receive the level of education they have the right to. This leads us to divide people into two groups; educated and uneducated people. Illiteracy affects all areas of life. Those with low literacy skills are far more likely to live in poverty, face health problems because they can't read prescription labels and instructions and grow isolated in a world increasingly dependent on computers. A lot of children are raised in households where parents are low-skilled or illiterate, and we all know that only a certain amount of learning happens in the classroom. WHO (2015) is of the view that a mother is the principal provider of the primary care that a child needs during the first six years of his/her life. The type of care depends to a large extent on her knowledge and understanding of some aspects of basic nutrition and health care. According to Awan and Ahmed (2015) education is the most important factor which plays a leading role in human resource development. It promotes productive health and creates opportunities for the socially and economically deprived sections of society. It is true that women have many special tasks in life and their spheres of duties are different from those of the men. Unless a woman gets proper education, her prospective faculties get crippled. It is only by imparting proper education into them that we can expect them to discharge their duties nicely and decently.

Childhood is the impressionable stage and anything good or bad taught to the child makes an impression on his/her mind. We cannot have educated and ideal citizens when the mother themselves are foolish and ignorant. Every woman is a potential mother. The future of a child depends on how it is brought up and educated in childhood. An educated mother is naturally expected to bring up and educate children better than an uneducated mother. Napoleon Bonaparte says that "give me an educated woman; I will give you an educated nation". In day to day life, the real problems are faced first by women and then the same problems are conveyed to men for solution. If the women are educated, they can solve all the problems of their houses. It is said that whenever any man gets education, it is only useful for him but whenever any woman gets education, it is useful for the whole family. An educated woman gives an educated family and an educated family can make society better. We

cannot imagine a good society without the education of women (World Economic Outlook 2019). According to Awan (2014) men and women are like the two sides of a coin, without one, the other cannot exist. Education of women cannot only give an educated family but can also be helpful in eradicating many social evils such as human capital and unemployment problem etc. Social peace can be established. A woman has to play three distinct parts in the course of her life in each of which certain duties are expected of her. The first duty of a woman is to be a good daughter. The second is to be a good wife. And the third is to be a good mother.

According to Awan and Asma (2015) an educated mother can serve her country in the sense that she produces good citizens with tolerant views and vast outlooks. Uneducated mothers are superstitious. They do not have elementary medical knowledge. The alarming figure of infant mortality is mostly due to the ignorance of mothers. Educated women will give the nation healthy enlightened and decently brought up children. The parent's level of education has far reaching role to play in girl child education. Okojie (2002) observes that those girls whose parents had received formal education tend to have positive attitude while participating in education than those girls whose parents did not go to School at all. Slovenia (2008) comments that for a girl to make the most of her educational needs, she should have an easy access to the basic instruments of education like books, newspaper, light and silence for convenient study. She notes that these needs could only be understood by those parents who had undergone formal education: the home environment must be supportive towards girl child participation for a positive self-esteem. The livelihood that girls remain in school could also be influenced by cultural attitude within the family. In many instances, parental education was a more significant predictor than any other factor. Research carried out by UNICEF (2017) in 55 countries including Nigeria discovered that children of educated women were more likely to go to school and have become more educated than their parent (mother), the likelihood of their children benefitting more from education is high. In essence, if educated girls become mothers, there was a high chance that they would send their children to School, thereby passing on and doubling the benefits for themselves and the society.

According to Costa (2002) his research revealed a relationship between student socio-economic status in terms of their parents' level of education and types of occupation. The study confirmed that there was a strong relationship between children's occupation aspirations and their parents' socio-economic status as well as parents' level of education. Essentially, parents tend to become role models for their children and therefore, it is not surprising that students tend to prefer careers resembling those of their parents. As everyone knows, women empowerment is essential for sustainable economic growth and reduction in poverty in developing countries (MacCulloch, 2011). In the World Bank Report, it is suggested that women empowerment is being progressively recognized as an important policy goal for improving not just the wellbeing of women but also for its positive impact on the family (King and Mason, 2001). It is only through education that poverty can be eliminated and today, uneducated parents are willing to change paths so that their children can make a better life for themselves, changing the fate of generations to come. When women are equipped with equal rights and equal access to education, they go on to participate in business and economic activities which tends to bring about increased earning power and income to combat current and future poverty through feeding and providing for the member of their family.

**Women in Politics :** Nigeria's return to democracy in May 1999 rekindled hopes of having greater women participation in politics and governance. Unfortunately, in the last two decades, much has not been achieved in terms of an expanding the political space in ways that would allow for the women to participate actively. Even though women represent a significant proportion of the voting populace, they have been very negligible in terms of occupying elective and appointive position. Political, economic, social, cultural and institutional factors are some of the major constraints generally holding women back in politics (Nwoye & Ifenyi, 2017). There is growing recognition of the untapped capacity and talents of women and women's leadership. Over the last decade, the rate of women representation in national parliaments globally has increased from 15 percent in 2002 to 19.8 percent in 2012. Some regions have seen particularly dramatic increase, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of women in parliaments has rose from 13.7% to 19.8%. This is still well below the 30 percent benchmark often identified as the necessary level of representation to achieve a "critical mass" – not to mention falling short of women's representation as half of the world's population (Wilber & Roxane, 2011).

The full and equitable participation of women in public life is essential to building and sustaining strong, vibrant democracies. According to Volden, Alan, Wiseman and Dana (2010), the meaningful participation of women in national, local and community leadership roles has become an important focus of global development policy. Still, some may ask why it matters if women become political leaders, elected policymakers or civil society activists.

Why does the world need more women to be involved in all aspect of the political process? Women's political participation results in tangible gains for democracy including greater responsiveness to citizen needs, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and more sustainable peace (Wilber & Roxane, 2011). Women's participation in politics helps advance gender equality and affects both the range of policy issues that are considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. Research indicates that a legislator's gender has a distinct impact on policy priorities, making it critical that women are present in politics to represent the concerns of women and other marginalized voters by helping to improve the responsiveness of policy making and governance (The Institute for Inclusive Security, 2009). There is strong evidence that as more women are elected into office, there is a corollary increase in policy making that emphasizes quality of life and reflects the priorities of families, women, ethnic and racial minorities. Women's political participation has profound positive and democratic impact on communities, legislatures, political parties, and citizen's lives, and helps democracy deliver its dividends to the people (Svaleryd, 2007).

Research shows that women's leadership and conflict resolution styles embody democratic ideals and that women tend to work in a less hierarchical, more participatory and more collaborative way than male colleagues (Rosenthal, 2001). Women are also more likely to work across party lines, even in highly partisan environments. Research showed that women lawmakers tend to see issues that have to do with women as broadsocial issues. This is possibly as a result of the role that women have traditionally played both as mothers and caregivers in their communities (O'Connor, Undated). More women therefore see government as a tool to help serve under-represented or minority groups (Camissa and Reingold, 2004). Women lawmakers therefore have often been perceived as being more sensitive and responsive to community concerns and constituency needs. Evidence from developing countries around the world shows that an increase in women's participation in the political life of their countries often leads to improved socio-economic conditions. This is because many of these women, more readily than their male counterparts, tackle poverty reduction and service delivery as areas of primary importance to their constituents and supporters, as can be seen in the Nigerian political space.

Women are deeply committed to peace building and post-conflict reconstruction because they always have a unique and powerful perspective to bring to the negotiating table. Women suffer disproportionately during armed conflict and often advocate most strongly for stabilization, reconstruction and the prevention of further conflict. Moreover, research shows that women's engagement in the transitional processes and post-conflict governments can "increase the legitimacy of nascent institutions, decrease government corruption, broaden the political agenda, promote consultative policymaking and encourage collaboration across ideological lines and social sectors (Women for Women International, 2007) The participation of women in politics in 2003, 2007 and 2011 in Nigeria, shows that in the three periods of election, women participation was very minimal. For example, the country has never produced a female president in history. The National assembly (N/A) has 109 seats. Women occupied 3 (2.27%) in 2003, 9 (8.28%) in 2007 and 7(6.4%) in 2011. In the house of representative, there are 360 seats, women occupied 21 seats (5.83%) in 2003, 25 (6.98%) in 2007 and the same number in 2011. For governorship, no state has been able to produce any female governor. The state houses of assembly have 990 seats with women occupying 38(3.84%) in 2003, 54(5.45%) in 2007 and 68(6.9%) in 2011. According to Agbalajobi (2009) women are regarded as the weaker sex owing to social values, norms and beliefs, which have neglected their meaningful contributions and have placed them in a subordinate position to men in the nation's political system. This 'sexual division of labour' in the political system is often traced to the onset of colonialism in Nigeria. Their Western cultural notion of male superiority reflected in their relations with Nigerians.

Women engagement in politics is crucial as it tends to enhance gender equality and affects the policy issues that get considered as well as the types of solutions that are proposed. Moreover, not every woman elected will place women issues or rights at the forefront of her own agenda. Clearly, women representation is not the only factor but it is a critical factor for the development of inclusive, responsive and transparent democracies.

### **III. EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

**Gender Inequality and Development of the Women :** According to Nwoye (2017), development is not that easy to achieve especially, if there is less production. In this case, a country's economy is stagnant and there will be limiting factors such as inequality and corruption. Out of the many factors that hinder development, gender inequality is one of the core issues that have been highlighted. Gender disparity or discrimination often has immense impact on development (UNDP, 2011). To enjoy sustained development in a community or country, it is wise to enhance the standard of living and economic health.

Unfortunately, this cannot be possible if there is evident inequality between men and women (Onyenenkwa & Nkamnebe, 2011). To measure gender inequality as a factor that hinders development, it is wise to look at the differences among women and men in areas such as health, education, access to economic opportunities and decision making. Decades ago, women were often deprived of the opportunity to access quality education and healthcare. However, with globalization and many changes in the world, little progress has been made in these areas. The role of women in nation building can never be underestimated. In fact, this is why the issue of the role of women in nation building and development has continued to attract global attention (UNDP, 2009).

The development process affects women and men in different ways. The penetration of capitalism led to the modernization and restricting of subsistence and centrally planned economies. It also increases the gender-based disadvantages, especially for the woman who has to carry the domestic burden and still has to look for ways to develop herself. The modern sector takes many of the economic activities, such as food processing and cloth making, which has long been the means by which many women supported themselves and their families. Modernization of agriculture has altered the division of labour between the sexes thereby increasing women's dependent status, as well as their workload (Aigbokhan, 2008). The question here is why are women more in the menial job sector? The reason is probably because women are under-represented in the key areas of the society e.g. politics, decision making power in the family etc. There are a lot of constraints like poverty, ignorance, preventing the woman from getting education and good healthcare. These are the major areas that can help in the development of women. They are also the major sectors where women are under-represented (Araar & Duclos, 2010). For several years, men have subjugated women politically and this has translated into the obvious low participation of women in the Nigerian political scene. It is surprising that in Nigeria's sixty years of existence as an independent country, men have been at the mainstream of her political activities. From 1960, Nigeria has been under military and civilian regimes. In all these periods however, there is no single record showing that a woman was appointed as military or civilian governor. Record has it that Mrs. Virginia Etieba acted as Governor of Anambra State for some days after the kangaroo impeachment of the Governor, Mr. Peter Obi in 2007. It is believed that women constitute the majority of Nigeria's population. This means that the rate of Nigeria's political development may increase if women were involved in active politicking.

The United Nations says that hunger and poverty would be uncontrollable as long as the larger percentage of human resources especially women are neglected and not included in economic, social, religious and political agenda. A peep into Nigeria's political history shows an abysmally low participation of women in the political scene. However, in recent years, an increasing fraction of women are showing deeper interest and getting more involved in politics while majority of women still view it as the exclusive responsibility of men. Women's desire to be active participants in Nigerian politics has been under serious checks by a lot of constraints such as religion, culture etc. In some Nigerian societies, it is a taboo for a woman to participate in politics. According to Ocho (2005), issues that concern education and life, the women are created to bear children and nurture them. They are the major source of love in the family. It is the love mothers have for their children and their husbands that binds members of the family together and makes the life worth living. While engaged in this very important work of procreation and sustenance, they do not have the opportunity, like their male counterparts, to pursue productive work that would give them more opportunities. Gender equality means that men and women have equal opportunities to realize their individual potentials both to contribute to their country's economic and social development and to benefit equally from their participation in the society (Fatile, Adeju & Kehinde, 2011). According to Sayer (2005), gender inequality is based on gender biases and stereotypes in a particular society. Even though gender equality refers to the fair treatment of both sexes, most of the practices indicating gender inequality in the developing world persistently show a heavy bias against women. These biases and stereotypes can also create problems for the male folks, it tends to constrain men and women from working effectively together for the development of their society. In practical terms, this means a lower quality of life for women (e.g. more hours worked/less leisure, fewer educational opportunities, more violence, rape, less political representation) and less income (e.g. less access to land or credit, lower pay in the formal sector).

Gender biases and stereotypes are a significant factor in the perpetuation of poverty because they are often socially acquired and not biologically determined. The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria makes provisions for equality among all gender of women, guarantees and protects the rights and interest of women. In the same vein, it considers the religious, traditional and cultural norms that govern the society. Initiatives such as the establishment of the federal ministry of women affairs, the better life for rural women programme, the family support programme (FSP) and the family economic advancement programme

(FEAP) were aimed at strengthening women's role in achieving their development goals. Unfortunately, this form of approach to the development of women has been faulted for it fails to inculcate and achieve the actual developmental needs of women. Instead of achieving gender equality, most development programmes using this approach have further deepened the crisis and even increased women subordination (Abulahi, Adekeye & Shehu, 2011).

Many of these programmes and initiatives ended up as windows of corruption for politicians and failed to address the emancipation of the women folk. The situation of women is worse in the rural areas where negative attitudes and beliefs about women participation in the socio-economic development of the society are culturally entrenched (Jordan, 2010). Consequently, there is the urgent need to critically examine gender divisions with a view to understand the cause of the problem and prefer solution that will promote gender equality that could facilitate social integration and sustainable development in Nigeria. Achieving gender equality means going further than improving the quality of female health and education. It means, among other things, that women and men from all walks of life should be able to make their own choices, have access to decision making bodies and positions, have reasonable access to economic resources, as well as the opportunity to participate actively in society and politics.

Gender equality does not necessarily mean equal numbers of men and women or girls and boys in all activities, nor does it mean treating them the same way. It means equality of opportunities and a society in which men and women are able to lead equally fulfilled lives. The aim of gender equality recognizes that men and women have different priorities, face different constraints and have different aspirations. Above all, the absence of gender equality means a huge loss of human potential and has far reaching implications for both men and women and for development of the society (Stewart, 2005). Gender inequality will increase poverty because when a certain group in the society is discriminated, production will decrease and there will be less income in homes meaning that government will also acquire less revenue from taxes. In the economic aspect, it will negatively impact demand and consumption, supply and production system and affect savings and investment. The effects is felt immediately on the nation's development where indicators of insecurity, poor governance and lack of social cohesion will be evident. Therefore, government needs to come up with convincing ways of reducing the impact of gender inequality on development (Stewart, 2005). Inequality in gender hinders both growth and development. Thus closing the gender gap would mean higher growth and productivity as well as greater economic stability. Promoting gender equality can therefore be an economic game changer.

**Domestic Burden and Development of Women:** All over the world, women are employed in occupation with little or no pay in rich households. It might be folding the laundry or staying home to take care of a sick child. In poor households, domestic chores tend to be more physically arduous; like fetching water and chopping wood, wherever you are, it's considered women's work. It affects women across the globe regardless of their levels of education and income of the level of development of their countries, while some countries have made strides to recognise, reduce and redistribute domestic burden, the largest share of the burden continues to fall on women (Cotter, Hermsen & Vanneman, 2011). Domestic chores are house work which include cooking, dishwashing, laundry, cleaning and maintenance within the house, gardening and pet care, repairs and other maintenance outside the home, purchasing and household management. It also consists of childcare which ranges from physical care, supervision, teaching, reading, to playing with daughters and sons aged less than 14, living in the household with both parents. Domestic work is both an important aspect of economic activity and an indispensable factor contributing to the well-being of individuals, their family and societies (Stislit, 2007). Every day, a woman spends time cooking, cleaning and caring for children, the ill and the elderly. Despite this, domestic work is commonly left out of policy agenda formulation due to a common misperception that unlike standard market work measures, it is too difficult to measure and less relevant.

According to Indira (2015) women typically spend more time on domestic work than men on account of social norms that view domestic work as female prerogative. Women across different region, socio-economic classes and cultures spend an important part of their day on meeting the expectations of their domestic and reproductive roles. This in addition to their paid activities, thus creating the double burden of work for women. How society and policy makers address issues concerning domestic chores has important implications for the achievement of gender equality. That is, they can either expand the capabilities and chores of women and men or confine women to traditional roles associated with the female (Razavi, 2007). The unequal distribution of domestic chores between women and men represents an infringement on women's rights (UN, 2013). It also puts brake on their economic empowerment. Gender inequality in domestic chores is the missing link that

influences development. This is because it has a negative implications on women's ability to actively take part in the skilled labour market and the type/quality of employment opportunities available to them. Time is a limited resource often expended on labour and leisure, productive and reproductive activities, paid and unpaid work. Every extra minute that a woman spends on domestic work represents one minute less that she could potentially spend on income-generating activities or invest in her education or vocational skill. The growing involvement of women in the labour market has not been followed by a significant increase in the participation of men in family responsibilities. In Africa, employed women dedicate about five hours a day to domestic work, two hours more than the time spent by employed men on the same activities (Eurostat, 2016). In western countries, the main reduction in the gender inequality has been achieved in childcare, with the increase in the sharing of household tasks between male and female remaining at a lower level (Maria & Gutierrez-Domenech, 2010).

Since the 1960, however, the spread of globalisation has given rise to new opportunities for women to participate in paid jobs that has challenged the assumption that their primary adult role is that of a caretaker for the family and the home (Sayer, 2005). The spread of globalisation has created more opportunities for women to enter paid employment but has not relieved them of the time spent on domestic chores (Pearson, 2009). Because of social norms and expectations, the burden of unpaid work primarily falls on the female members of the household. Even if the male members of the household are available to perform the chores after they return home from their paid job, it is often seen that the women are always taking on the bulk of the work after they return home (Indira, 2015). This inequality emphasizes the gender division of labour and how it encourages gender inequality. Furthermore, it illuminates how those socially constructed gender norms have created a system that encourages women to continue to carry the "double burden" of care services.

The UNDP (2011) conducted a time use study that analysed the amount of time women and men spend on paid and unpaid household and community work in thirty-one countries across the world including countries classified as "industrial", "developing" and "transition" economies. They found that in almost every country studied, women worked longer hours than men but received the "lowest share of income and recognition" for their economic inputs while women's work remained "unpaid, unrecognised and undervalued". Moreover, in the case of paid and unpaid work hours, the study concluded that within industrial countries, women spent two-thirds of their total work burden on unpaid activities and only one-third on paid activities (shares were reversed for men). In developing countries women spent two-thirds of their total work hours on unpaid labour but less than one quarter of the men's total work hour was spent on unpaid labour (UNDP, 2009). Additionally, Pearson (2000) argues that women in developing countries tend to shoulder a majority of the unpaid work due to the fact that men refuse to undertake women's chores because women as a gender have cultural obligations to others that men as a gender do not bear. The uneven distribution of unpaid care labour among men and women is thus demonstrated globally, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria and Ecuador, where women redistribute increased unpaid care labour to females from extended family instead of procuring male participation.

More recent research in 2011 has found that attitude towards gender and societal roles have changed very little since the mid-1990s, with attitudes hovering at about sixty to seventy percent egalitarian. This study discovered that egalitarian but traditional gender frame emerged in popular culture during this period. The discovery supports each gender assuming their traditional roles without appearing sexist or discriminatory and is responsible for this backlash (Otter, David, Hermsen, Joan & Yanneman, 2011). Stephanie Cointz, a professor of family history at Evergreen State College noted that one of the factors contributing to gender inequality is that most men still expect women and men to assume traditional gender roles in the households and for women to carry out a larger share of the housework (Coontz, 2013). Researchers from the University of Maryland have found that while men have steadily begun to perform more household labour since 1965, most of the essential and traditionally feminine duties are still carried out by women, men generally carry out more non-essential or infrequent tasks such as taking out the trash and cleaning the compound. Both genders tend to have roughly equal amount of work time, men have more uninterrupted leisure time when compared to women (Bittman, & Wacjman, 2000). Working mothers also tend to get less sleep when compared with their working husbands (Maume, Sebastian & Bardo, 2010).

As women increase their paid work time, they do not achieve a corresponding reduction in their unpaid work hours nor have men increased their share of unpaid work at the same rate that women have increased their share of paid work. Balancing paid and unpaid work obligations is taking a toll on women. Reports of increasing stress level are therefore not uncommon. In fact, women report higher levels of symptoms related to depression

and anxiety, including low life satisfaction, subjective well-being and negatively impact their ability to navigate life outside their homes. Their undertaking of unpaid labour therefore becomes a barrier to entering into the paid employment sector or in the case of those who enter paid labour, they still are left with a “double-burden” of labour. Because women spend more time providing unpaid domestic work than in the paid work force unlike men, they are also spending less time bringing in incomes into the household. Because women are traditionally believed to bring in less income than men, they are discouraged from investing in education and skills. This further entrenches women into domestic unpaid work thereby creating a cycle of social norms that is difficult to break and exacerbates gender inequality. This form of gender inequality feeds into the dynamic of gender risk which explains why it is women and girls that are most disadvantaged. They also explain why women are the most affected by poverty.

According to Lucy (2007), even if women do enter the paid work force, they are usually still held accountable for the majority of the domestic unpaid work at home. This phenomenon of having to work a full day in the paid work force and then come home and complete a full day of unpaid domestic work is known as the double burden. The double burden negatively affects women because it gives them less time to spend in the paid work force, resulting in men dedicating more time to the work force, and therefore likely getting promoted over women. Inequality not only rubs women of economic opportunities, it is also costly to the society in the form of lower productivity and foregone economic growth. It is seen that a fairer allocation of unpaid work would not only benefit women but would also lead to more efficient work forces and stronger economies

**Gender Education and Development of Women :** Education is said to be a vehicle that breaks the shackles of poverty thereby leading to transformation, development and progress (Oluyemo, 2014). Gender inequality is a common phenomenon in African education institutions. A number of efforts have been underway to rectify gender inequality. However, much still remains to be done across all educational sectors. For instance, with the 2005 MDG’s first deadline for attainment of gender parity in primary and secondary schools enrolment already missed, the ability of women and girls to empower themselves economically and socially by going to school or by engaging in productive and civic activities is still being constrained by their division of labour (CEC REPORT 2007). Education which is seen as the main tool for liberation is not made available to all because of gender bias. Ogbomo(2005) submitted that in Nigeria, like any other developing country, notable difference exists in the way men and women participates in community development activities, even though women play a significant role in nation building. In Nigeria, educational facilities are generally believed to be inadequate, and access, limited to women (Stella, 2007). According to UNESCO(2014), the gap between the female and male literacy rate is not just about men and women and the educational opportunities provided for them, it is also a statement about the society’s development, and its capacity and willingness to provide such opportunities. The pride of any society lies in its culture since no society in the world could be considered great without reference to its tradition and culture (Mbakogu cited in Babaghian, 2009). Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country with different cultures among the ethnic groups. The people’s way of life, thoughts and beliefs have in some way promoted positive change, growth and progress in the nation, while in some other ways, it has also hindered progress and growth.

Culture is one basic assessment of whether a society is either developing slowly or rapidly. Rapid development of a society is dependent on the quality of human resources which is also determined by the quality of education obtained by them. However, development is the qualitative and quantitative positive transformation of the lives of a people that does not only enhance their material well-being but also ensures their social well-being including the restoration of human dignity. All these could be brought about mainly through education (Mbakogu, 2009). Disparity in educational opportunities in Nigeria is the result of factors such as socio-cultural, socio economic, customs and traditions. In a report released in 2011, an international organisation, Action Aid identified some effects of the aforementioned. These are discussed as follows:

**Illiteracy among Parents in Nigeria:** Some parents especially in the rural areas still have not realized the importance of education for girls. They still believe it is a waste of resources since the girl will be married into another family. Investments in female education are of particular interest and importance to development because available estimates suggest that the rates of return on investments in female education in terms of economic productivity are at least as high as the rates on investments in male education. There are positive effects of women’s education on non-market factors related to human resource development. These can be observed in areas like health, nutrition, children’s education, population growth, reductions in fertility and infant and child mortality (Awan, 2015). There is a widespread perception that better educated women are more able to process information and use goods and services effectively.



Distance of schools from home could make parents feel reluctant in sending their daughters to school. Mothers in particular, tend to express fear of what could happen to their girls on the way to school especially at this time where both the young and old engage in social vices such as kidnapping, rape and ritual killings among other vices. The mothers prefer to keep them at home for safety and for commercial as well as domestic purposes thereby denying them access to education as well as usefulness to the society.

**Socio-Political Influences:** Education is regarded by Nigerians as the main instrument for the social, political and economic development of the nation. Thus, the strength, security and well-being of Nigeria rest squarely on the quality of education provided for the citizens. It will continue to be a great asset to many as a steady source of manpower supply for the national economy (onlinenigeria.com).

**Opportunity costs:** The opportunity costs of parents sending their children to school are the children's time that could have been of economic importance to the family either in terms of income generating activities or in supporting the functioning of the household. As a result, those boys or girls, whichever, are denied access to school. Even though National Policy on Education (2004) made it clear that education is a tool for excellence and a fundamental right of all human persons as enshrined in the United Nations Charter (and Charter of Association Continental and Regional Bodies), verifiable evidences in Nigeria indicate that access to education for the female gender has been hampered by several factors (Chinekezi, 2014). According to UNESCO (2005), Nigeria is classified as a low development country in Educational accessibility. Action Aid (2011) indicated that two-third of the world illiterates are females and the rate of employment for women is also two-third when compared with that of men. Importantly in Nigeria, women are not enjoying the same privilege as men. The female adult literacy rate (ages 15 and above) for the country was 54.4% and male 74.4%; the combined gross enrolment for primary, secondary and tertiary schools for female was 57 percent and male 71 percent.

The female's literacy, enrolment and achievement rates are much lower against the backdrop of education as a basic and fundamental right of all citizens. Consequently, Akudo (2013) affirms that women are fewer than men in certain socio-economic activities. According to him, the percentages of female workers in some selected professions were as follows: Architects, 2.4%, Quantity Surveyors 3.5%, Lawyers/Jurist 25.4%, Lecturers 11.8%, Obstetricians and Gynaecologists 8.4%, Paediatricians 33.3%, Media practitioners 18.3%. In essence, few women go to school, hardly participate in politics and they have no voice in issues relating to development. Afolabi (2005) in his research findings indicated that where educational opportunities exist for girls, their participation is significantly low compared to that of boys by 20% at the primary level and dropping again at the secondary and tertiary levels (UNESCO, 2014).

On the other hand, Okemakinde (2014) shows that this inequality has its root in the colonial system of education which was primarily tailored towards meeting the manpower need of the colonial government that obviously alienated women from educational and economic opportunities. Women in Nigeria are the most affected by poverty due to the nonchalant attitude towards female education and the prevalence of early marriage which tend to further impoverish the womenfolk, and subject them to discrimination (Sayer, 2005). James (2008) further posited that the incidence of poverty is rampant among the female gender in Africa because of the discrimination in educational opportunities against the female gender. Nigeria occupies a disparaging 123<sup>rd</sup> position with the estimated income for female as low as US\$614 against an international average of US\$1,495 (UMDP). Lack of education has been a strong barrier to female participation in the formal sector. The social pressure on females such as early marriages and consideration of female education as secondary to that of the male coupled with certain inhibitive religious practices in some parts of Nigeria are the major causes of the high illiteracy rate among women. As the impact of negative effects of early marriage in Nigeria, the girls are at a double disadvantage in terms of having access to quality education, especially in the North, where those practices are widespread (Jordan, 2010).

Education gives women the opportunity to be less dependent on men and have more control over their reproductive health which results in fewer births and a greater spacing between births which is healthy for both the mother and the child. Feyisetan (2000) argued that, because women lack education and information about family planning, they grow up with low self-esteem, low social status and are often falling victims of unwanted pregnancies. The biggest risk factor in all of these is unsafe abortion and in most cases, untimely death. According to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (2006), educational opportunities for the girl child tend to be affected by patriarchal attitudes about gender roles. This results in some parents attaching greater importance to the education of boys against that of the girls. This is always the case especially when parents lack resources to enrol all their children in school.

In some families, investing in women education is traditionally regarded as investing for the benefit of the family she will eventually marry into. This argument holds in particular for higher education which involves greater financial commitment and is seen to be less necessary for females whose main role will be home keeping and child rearing. Men and women need to restore a balance in their choice of professions. Although young men are increasingly choosing typically male professions, they still remain present in traditionally female jobs such as secretaries, nurses. Some courses related to nursing, language, home economics and teaching have been viewed as feminine. The females have been seen by teachers as minorities and some cases treated as such (Oyelere, 2007). Women are not often found in the science and the technological fields, yet there is no evidence that these fields require special intelligence not possessed by women. Careers in these fields are often the preserve of men until some "aggressive" females decided to break the barrier and demand the chance to practice.

The choice of subjects or courses in higher education is strongly connected to the gender of the students (Stella, 2007). Even though the number of female graduate in Mathematics, science and technology has slightly increased during the last few years, mostly, men enrol in such subjects. In Nigeria, more than 80% of the students in teaching, health and welfare are women (Ganguli, Hausmann & Viarengo, 2011). In some countries, the participation of women in these levels decreased by nearly 30%. As a result, women do not have access to higher positions like men therefore having less access to money and highly skilled jobs. The choice of subject or discipline should be led by a genuine interest in the field. This is only possible if the future possibilities of women and men within a specific area are equal. These preconditions will be eliminated when neither sex has to explain or justify their own choice of subjects. According to Hannah (2018), gender stereotyping exists in the school curriculum and the academic streaming process. This is where certain subjects and courses such as Sciences, Mathematics and other technical disciplines are regarded as masculine, while secretarial studies, home economics are feminine. This classification denies both sexes the opportunity to benefit from the exposure to all subject areas or a wider choice of subjects. The female inferiority complex established from childhood through social interactions in the home, including the differential levels of support and motivation influence the aspirations of both boys and girls.

Women in Nigeria have had various challenges in order to obtain equal opportunities in all forms of formal education in Nigeria. Education is a basic human right and has been recognised as such since the 1948 adoption of the universal declaration on human right. A positive correlation exists between the enrolment of girls in primary school and the gross national product and increase in life expectancy. Because of this correlation, enrolments in schools represent the largest component of the investment in the human capital in any society. Rapid socioeconomic development of a nation has been observed to depend on the calibre of women and their education in that country. Education bestows on women a disposition for lifelong acquisition of knowledge, values, attitudes, competence and skills. To ensure equal access to education, the national policy on education states that access to education is a right for all Nigerian children regardless of gender, religion and disability (Agbalajobi, 2009). Education is widely recognized as the gateway to economic security and opportunity, particularly for girls and women. According to United Nation Treaty Collection (2011), approximately 1 million students are enrolled in higher education in Nigeria. Higher education ratio for 18-25 years olds (approximately 17 million people): 5%. With regard to gender inequality in education, literature was lacking on the statistics of girls and boys in higher education. However, studies in gender gap in education suggest gender inequality in every level of education in Nigeria (Oyelere, 2007). Okojie (2002) is of the view that this could be as a result of expectations, attitudes and bias in communities and families. Economic costs, social traditions, religious and cultural beliefs limit girls' educational opportunities, while the boys are encouraged to get education.

The consequence of having a large number of women outside formal schooling system brings developmental challenges to both current and future generations. The gender inequality in Education is acute in virtually all African countries and in most disciplines. The goal of the National Gender Policy is to build a just society devoid of discrimination and harness the full potentials of all society group regardless of sex or circumstances. The policy seeks to promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and protect the health, social, economic and political wellbeing of all citizens in order to achieve equitable rapid economic growth. This is intended to provide equitable and evidence based planning and governance system where human, social, financial and technological resources are efficiently and effectively deployed for sustainable development (Lynne, Not Dated). According to Stella, (2007), despite reported progress, there is still a persistent gap between women and men's access to education. Combating the high rate of illiteracy among women and girls remains an urgent global need. According to UNESCO institute of statistics, it is now estimated that two thirds of the world's 875 million illiterate adults are women.

Over the past 20 years, significant progress has been made with regard to sex/gender disparity in higher education. It is of particular interest that in countries where tertiary education has expanded significantly, women's school enrolment has increased more than men's. The education sector, being a part of society, is very much influenced by the existing gender categories and stereotypes of the society. The power division of the society between men and women is reflected in academics. Even though the academia perceives itself as a progressive part of society which is the key for innovations, the reality looks different. Gender inequality in education has a direct impact on economic growth because it lowers the average quality of human capital. This appears to be an important factor contributing to Africa's poor growth performance over the past 30 years (Indira, 2015). Klassen (2009) identified a strong association between gender inequality in education and how it influences human capital. Today's situation in education is far away from an equal participation of women and men in the different educational levels. It is noteworthy that an increase in number of the female gender in education has not translated into an increase in the number of women occupying important positions in the society. Those women in such position earn less money and are often subjected to discrimination.

The distribution of power and financial means is not the same for women and men as well as the personal benefits that result from education. This is a direct result of the bias situation in the society, which has a lot of benefits reserved for men. Education plays a key role in shaping societies and building active citizens. A lot of people who will take powerful roles in a society have a required background in education. This implies that schools should make deliberate efforts to encourage gender equality so as to enhance societal development.

Despite reported progress, there is still a persistent gap between women and men's access to education. Combating the high rate of illiteracy among women and girls remain an urgent global need. To achieve social equality in the society, there should be equal access to education without any gender bias. In other to also achieve overall development in every sector of every nation, there is need for gender equality. Every Nigerian women and men, young and old must be made to participate in the nation's journey to greatness. Women education in this regard becomes the tool for such equality and participation (James, 2008). Gender inequality requires an approach that ensures that citizens not only have access to complete education cycles, but are also empowered equally through education. A wide gender gap exists in educational access, learning, achievement and continuation in education in many settings, most often at the expense women.

**Family Decision Making and Development of Women :** In patriarchal societies, normative principles, institutions and beliefs that differ across ethnic groups play a prominent role in guiding and shaping family life. Within a patriarchal dominant structure, a woman has virtually no decision-making authority and also receives the least with respect to resource allocation (Oyediran, 2008). Although the Nigerian culture is heterogeneous, yet it is homogenous (different but alike) in according low status to women. This is because societal norms convey little need for marital partners to communicate their desires to each other. As a result, decision-making on family-related issues are prone to external influences (relatives, friends) whereas wives preferences are probably shaped, to a large extent, by family norms and pressures (Caldwell & Calwell, 2007). Modernization has facilitated the emergence of nuclear families that operate outside the confines of the traditional extended family control. Yet family life in male dominated societies is operated under the guidance of normative values and beliefs that vary from one place to another. Because of education and other western values, few of the cultural values have been modified, though the conventional family relationships and gender roles are never completely obliterated, even among the most westernised Nigerians (Kritz & Makinwa-Adebusoye, 2009).

To the child, the most important actors in the world are not world leaders or heads of government but parents and caregivers who make crucial household decisions on a daily basis. How members of households decide to use their collective resources determines the quality of healthcare, education and protection that each family member receives. When women who are often the caregivers for children, are excluded from household decision-making processes, their well-being as well as their children's may be at risk. Evidence from 30 countries including Nigeria (drawn from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), one of the most direct sources of information on household decision-making dynamics) reveals that in many households, women have little influence over important household decision. Overall, the data paints a picture of extreme gender inequality (Adamu, 2004). Even though the decision on women's healthcare is vital to the health and well-being of both women and children, women still do not have the power to make decisions concerning it. Gender-based power inequalities can restrict open communication between partners about reproductive health decisions as well as access to reproductive health services. This in turn can contribute to poor health outcomes (Ganle, Mavuso & Maharaj, 2013). According to Angel-Udinola and Woden (2008), much progress has been made over the last several decades to improve maternal health worldwide.

With this progress notwithstanding, high maternal mortality still persists in many parts of Nigeria as many women still do not have access to health facilities and skilled birth attendants. A number of recent studies suggest that social factors like religious beliefs, cultural norms concerning pregnancy management and the need to seek permission from husbands before care is assessed play important roles in determining whether women deliver at home or in a health facility, undergoing a Caesarean section etc. (Ganle, Otopiri, Parker & Fit-Patrick, 2013). Several factors come to bear on reproductive decision making in Nigeria. Besides the influence of the extended family, both men and women subscribe to the prevalence of gender ideology of male authority in matters of family size and composition. Evidence from WHO (1995) shows that men's views are more influential than women's views in family decision making. Between Eighty and Seventy eight percent of men and women surveyed confirmed this position. The degree of adherence to this position varies from one ethnic group to another. Kritz and Makinwa (2009) submit that adherence is very high among the Kanuri and Hausa but relatively low among the Yoruba, Igbo and Ijaw. For instance, if the man wants more children, the woman will have to agree rather than live in a polygamous situation.

Women have limited management of daily household expenditure even when household decisions on daily expenditure have an impact on the children's well-being, education and particularly their health. In many households across the developing world which include Nigeria, men have a firm hold on decisions on this expenditure. More than 40 percent of women indicated that their husband had exclusive control over household expenditure as they felt excluded from decision making on household purchases (Mairiga & Abdulkarim, 2010). The DHS data also reveal that men dominate decision making on major purchases such as land, cars and livestock. These assets can be crucial for sustaining and increasing a family wealth and income and are often regarded as a sound long-term investment. However, the short-term cost of such purchase can consume a large share of household income that might otherwise be used for more important immediate household needs such as medicine, school supplies and food (Adamu, (2004).

According to Ngosian, (2005) For a lot of women across Nigeria especially in the north, as a result of the Purdah tradition, there is restricted mobility and freedom in their homes even though they have to provide for their own needs as well as those of their children. Women require the ability to move freely within and outside the household and men often exert a high degree of control over women's mobility. In a lot of homes, husbands alone decide when they can visit friends or relatives, as women require a man's permission before leaving home to visit friends and family. Gender discrimination in the household is often rooted in patriarchal tendencies that place value on the social status of men over women. A reasonable proportion of men believe that wives should submit to their husband's authority on household decisions. But tradition is the only factor determining bargaining power within families. Even within the most homogenous societies, every family is unique and there is no simple set of rules that can explain the dynamics of household decision-making. Several studies have also demonstrated that women's decision-making power is influenced by education, control of income, employment status, place of residence, spousal age difference, age at marriage, ethnicity, family type etc. (Oyediran, 2008)

The strongest say in household decision-making often belongs to the family member who controls the largest share of household income and assets. A lot of women are at a disadvantage in terms of economic affluence because they earn less than men and tend to own fewer assets as only a few women are free from this clog in the wheel of progress. Smaller salaries and less control over household income constrain women's abilities to accumulate capital. Gender biases in property and inheritance laws and other channels of acquiring assets including state land distribution programmes leave women and children at greater risk of poverty. The consequences of exclusion from owning properties or assets can be even more direct, particularly when a marriage breaks down or the husband dies. Comparing rural and urban dwellers, studies observed that women in the rural areas are less likely to have autonomy in decision making compared to their urban counterparts. This is because there is less modernisation in the rural areas and the women in rural areas live in severe poverty without any means of improving their living conditions. Age and number of living children is a significant positive association between women's age and autonomy in decision-making. This association also exists for the number of living children. Women with more living children are more likely to take part in decision-making. As women get older, they gain autonomy in household decision-making (Senarat & Gunawardenan, 2009). A newly married daughter-in-law has less decision-making power in the household and she is expected to perform household duties under supervision of her mother-in-law as the primary decision-maker (Dali, & Shrestha 2009). The issue of security and fulfillment of desire also becomes less important as women get older. The increased levels of knowledge, self-confidence and assertiveness, education confers increase income earning potential for the woman.

The more education the woman gets, the higher her decision-making power in the home. She will become more aware of her fundamental human right as a human being not as a woman. The distribution of household bargaining power is also influenced by a woman's age at marriage and the age difference between a woman and her husband. Evidence from around the world shows that the age gap between husbands and wives can vary enormously among households. In case of child marriage, when the age gap between spouses is in the extreme, the burden of domestic work and childcare severely constrains the life choices available to married girls and child mothers. This, in turn, affects the power that women have over household decisions. Research has shown that the women from the northern part of Nigeria are more submissive to their husbands and allow the man to take most of the household decisions (Kira, 2003). The nuclear family settings have more autonomy in decision-making than their counterparts in the polygamous setting. This is because in this polygamous setting, decisions can be taken only by the man else there will be a rift.

In spite of the prevalence of cultural factors in domestic decision-making, this literature still throws more light on the centrality of the control and allocation of economic resources (Isiugo-Abanike 2004). Changes in income-generating capacity of spouses precipitate changes in decision-making processes. Thus, anything that can have a direct influence on the income-generating capacity of couples can be considered to be a good correlate of domestic decision-making. Since the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) in 1986 in Nigeria, the socio-economic environment of the country has witnessed some structural transformation. In addition to the objective of rightsizing the public service through privatization, retrenchment and employment embargo, freezing of public service salaries across the board, cutting off public spending with its effect on citizens' education and health, devaluation and continuous depreciation of the domestic currency coupled with accompanied inflation, the dynamics and incident of poverty and the associated coping mechanisms constitute the critical component of the transformation. The reforms altered the distribution of benefits within the household by affecting the source of income. (National Bureau of Statistics 2010).

Nigeria's per capita income reached 1,951,271 USD in December 2017 compared with 2,156,840 USD in December 2016. Consequently, upon the economic crisis of 2015 when the economy fell into recession (World Economic Outlook Data Base, 2019), Nigeria overtook India as the country with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty, with an estimated 87 million Nigerians, or around half of the country's population thought to be living on less than \$1.90 a day (Bukola Adebayo reporting for CNN, 2018). The level of inequality and disparity across the regions is not better either on inequality, while the lowest 10 percent of the population shared about 2% of the country's income, about 40% is shared by the richest 10% of the population (Odusola, 2003). In order for women to better their lots as well as complement the declining income-generating power of men, more women are forced to seek income activities. In addition to women's increased mobility and visibility, whether due to new opportunities for earning income or to join a credit program, the relative decline in men's resources appears to have facilitated the emergence of a new perception of the rights and roles of their partners. This view tends to tally with the conclusion of Feyisetan (2000) about men's newly perceived role of women in the face of active participation in economic activities, which is summarized thus: since the woman now supports the family, she should be involved in decisions that affect her life and consequently her ability to support the family. But this view does not tally with the United Nations (2013) research which shows that even when women contribute to the upkeep of the home, men still feel that they have a right to dictate and make most decisions as the head of the home (Male chauvinism).

The consequences of women's exclusion from household decisions can be dire for the men as it had been for the women. According to a research conducted by the International Food Policy Research in 2012, if women and men have equal influence in decision-making, the incidence of under-weight children under three years old in South Asia would fall up to 13 percentage points resulting in 13.4 million fewer under-nourished children in the region. In sub-Saharan Africa, an additional 1.7 million children would be adequately nourished. A woman's empowerment within the household increases the likelihood that her children, particularly girls, will be educated. Ensuring that women have a greater voice in household and community decisions is critical to fulfilling their rights as well as the rights of children.

**Summary :** The literature review showed that gender inequality has consequences on the development of women in the society. In the course of review, it was observed that even though the 1999 constitution of Nigeria clearly stipulated gender equality, women still have meagre resources, little or no right and little opportunity to improve their lives. They are restricted in terms of education, monetary returns for their work (domestic burden), development opportunities and opportunities to influence decision making at the level of the family and the society. However, through the review of previous researches, it has come to light that demographic variables

such as culture, religion, family structure, parents' educational status/qualification and early marriage have continued to be clogs in the wheel of progress in gender equality. It was observed in the literature that there are some conflicting submissions in gender education because it was observed that women's right to education was higher in some places than in others as a result of location, culture and religion. This has been the case for a long time, though there has been a shift due to time difference, it cannot be totally changed. Additionally, the emphasis of most literature reviewed was on the relative interaction of the identified variables on the development of women. Nonetheless, women development do not come relatively. The present study seeks to bridge this a gap through combining the variables to know the interaction of all these variables on women development. Furthermore, most reviewed literature focused on location outside Ekiti State, this indicated that few of these studies were undertaken in Ekiti State.

#### **IV. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the explanation of the procedure employed in this study. It focuses on the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, research instrument, validity of instrument, reliability of the instrument and administration of the instrument and data analysis.

**Research Design :** This study adopted the descriptive research design of the survey type. This type of design was considered appropriate because, it focuses on the observation and perception of the existing situation, describes and interprets what is concerned with issues, conditions, practice or relationship that exist; views, beliefs and attitudes that are held, processes that are going on and trends that are developing. The study is therefore concerned with describing the existing phenomenon in order to identify their relevance to a given situation without manipulation of variables. A survey research studies a sample from a large population from where inferences would be drawn about the characteristics of the defined population. Survey as a research technique uses questionnaire to gather information from a sample of people. A descriptive survey is a form of planned collection of data from a large population for the purpose of analyzing the relationships between the independent variables (Gender Inequality) and the dependent variable (Development of Women)

**Population:** The population of this study consisted of all women both literate and illiterate from the sixteen Local Government Areas of Ekiti State. The local Government Areas in Ekiti State are divided into 3 Senatorial Districts, five local Government areas from the North, five from the Central and six from the South.

**Sample and Sampling Technique:** The sample of the study consisted of 381 women (both literate and illiterate), selected from 12 Local Government Areas out of the 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Ekiti State using a multistage sampling procedure. Stage one involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select 4 LGAs in each of the senatorial districts in Ekiti State. Stage two involved the use of systematic random sampling technique to select 35 women from each of the twelve LGAs. This category of women were selected based on the fact that they had experienced one form of gender inequality or another.

**Research Instrument:** A questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Questionnaire on Gender Inequality and Development of Women (QGIDW)" was used for this study. The instrument is comprised of 4 sections A, B, C and D. Section A elicited respondents' socio-demographic data such as location, age, gender, educational qualification, religion, parents' occupation and parents' level of education; Section B consisted of 15 items that elicited information on the indicators as well as level of gender inequality in the society. While Section C consisted of 10 items that measured the level of women development in Ekiti State, Section D consisted of 10 items that elicited information on the consequences of gender inequality. Scores on Sections B, C and D were awarded on 4 point likert-type rating scale ranging from strongly agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 to strongly disagree (SD) = 1

**Validity of the Instrument: To ensure the face and content validity of** the instrument, it was subjected to screening by the researcher's supervisor, experts in Social Studies as well as Tests and Measurement in the Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The experts determined the suitability of the instrument in measuring what it was supposed to measure and ensured that the instrument contains proper items that could actually elicit the intended responses on gender inequality and development of the woman in Nigeria. The experts also reviewed the items in terms of clarity to ensure that the remaining items in the instruments would be a true representative of the contents specified by the concepts under the study. Initially, there were 47 items but after vetting by the experts it was reduced to 35 items. Thereafter, the final instruments were considered to have met both the face and content validity requirements.

**Reliability of the Instrument:** The reliability of the instruments was ensured through the test-retest method where a trial testing was carried out on 20 females who are not part of the sample and within two weeks, the same instrument was re-administered on the same set of respondents. The responses collected from the two administrations were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics. A reliability co-efficient value of 0.75 level was obtained. This is considered statistically high enough to make the instruments reliable for the study.

**Administration of the Instrument:** The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher and 3 research assistants. A letter introducing the purpose of the research accompanied the copies of the questionnaire which enhanced respondents' cooperation. One of the research assistants helped to interpret the questions for women who do not understand English language. It is however important to note that only 381 copies of the questionnaire were properly filled and returned out of the 420 administered. This was used as the sample for the study.

**Data Analysis:** The data collected from the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions raised were answered using frequency counts, percentage, mean, and standard deviation while hypotheses 1-4 were analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics and hypothesis 5 was analysed using Multiple regression analysis. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of data and discussion of findings. Presentation of data was carried out in two stages. The first stage involved answering of the research questions earlier raised in the study and the second stage covered the testing of hypotheses. Discussion of the findings is presented at the end of the analysis.

### Results

**Question 1:** What is the level of women development in Ekiti State?

In answering the question, score on women development in Ekiti State were used. Mean score, standard deviation, frequency counts and percentage were used to illustrate the responses to item 1-10 in section C of the 'Questionnaire on Gender Inequality and Development of Women (QGIDW)'. The level of women development in Ekiti State is presented in table 1

**Table 1:** Level of Women Development in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Item	N	Mean	SD	Remark
Policy making	381	2.07	0.811	High
Empowerment	381	2.03	0.748	High
Knowledge ability	381	1.94	0.764	High
In-service training	381	2.00	0.818	High
Offshore training	381	1.80	0.733	Low
Under-representation	381	1.49	0.717	Low
Non-economic reward ventures	381	2.05	0.809	High
Financially incapacitated	381	1.92	0.858	Low
Family decision making	381	2.17	1.016	High
Home care	381	1.57	0.702	Low

**Mean Cut Off = 1.90**

Table 1 presents the level of women development in Ekiti State. The indicators of women development above shows the expected mean level which include policy making, empowerment, knowledge ability, in-service training, non-economic reward ventures and family decision making while other level of women development fall below the expected mean.

**Question 2:** What is the level of gender inequality in Ekiti state?

**Table 2:** Level of Gender Inequality in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Item	N	Mean	SD	Remark

Gender Education	381	9.20	2.607	High
Domestic Burden	381	10.26	2.765	High
Family Decision Making	381	10.01	2.920	High

Mean Cut Off = 9.82

Table 2 presents the level of gender inequality in Ekiti State. The level of gender inequality above is manifested in the expected mean under the domestic burden and family decision making while the other level of gender inequality falls below the expected mean.

**Question 3:** What are the consequences of gender inequality on the development of women in Ekiti State?

**Table 3:** Frequency Count and Percentage of Consequences of Gender Inequality on Women Development

Item	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Women are harassed and bullied due to their gender	211	55.4	103	27.0	36	9.4	31	8.1	1.99	0.832
There is restriction of career choices for women	127	33.3	120	31.5	80	21.0	54	14.2	2.39	0.971
Socio-economic conditions of the economy is at low because education of women is not priority	101	26.5	154	40.4	95	24.9	31	8.1	2.15	0.906
Women play limited roles in decision making matters in and outside the home	82	21.5	173	45.4	72	18.9	54	14.2	2.31	0.937
Women are at disadvantaged when it comes to access to economic and social resources unlike the male counterpart	92	24.1	138	36.2	82	21.5	69	18.1	2.45	1.079
Women bear the brunt of poverty	96	25.2	144	37.8	70	18.4	71	18.6	2.50	1.063
Unchallenged culture of male dominance led to the subordination and exclusion of many women	138	36.2	187	49.1	31	8.1	25	6.6	1.87	0.859
Women are regarded second class in the society	137	36.0	144	37.8	62	16.3	38	10.0	1.98	0.970
There are more illiterate women than men	125	32.8	139	36.5	89	23.4	28	7.3	2.05	0.925
Domestic violence is on the rise against women	130	34.1	166	43.6	40	10.5	45	11.8	2.00	0.960

It is evident from Table 3 above that 211 (55.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that women are harassed and bullied due to their gender, 103 (27%) agreed, 36 (9.4%) while 31 (8.1%) strongly disagreed; 127 (33.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a restriction in the career choices for women, 120 (31.5%) agreed, 80 (21%) while 54 (14.2%) strongly disagreed; 82 (21.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that women play limited roles in decision-making matters in and outside the home, 173 (45.4%) agreed, 72 (18.9%) while 54 (14.2%) strongly disagreed. It was also revealed from the table that, 130 (34.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that domestic violence is on the rise against women, 166 (43.6%) agreed, 40 (10.5%) while 45 (11.8%) strongly disagreed. It can therefore be said that the consequences of gender inequality on the development of women in Ekiti State are that; women are harassed and bullied due to their gender, there is restriction in career choices for women, women play limited roles in decision making matters in and outside the homes. It was also discovered that domestic violence is on the rise against women.

### Testing of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between gender inequality and development of women in Ekiti State. In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to gender inequality and women development were computed using 'Questionnaire on Gender Inequality and Development of Women (QGIDW)'. The scores were subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Relationship between Gender Inequality and Development of Women

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r <sub>cal</sub>	Sig.
Women Development	381	25.84	2.824	-0.120*	0.02
Gender Inequality	381	41.69	6.578		

*p* < 0.05 (Significant Result)

The results in table 4 shows that  $r_{cal}(-0.120)$  is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between gender inequality and the



development of women in Ekiti State. This means that gender equality in the society will invariably result to women development in the society.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between domestic burden and development of women in Ekiti State. In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to domestic burden and women development were computed and subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 5

**Table 5:** Relationship between Domestic Burden and Development of Women

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r <sub>cal</sub>	Sig.
Women Development	381	25.84	2.824	-0.004	0.94
Domestic Burden	381	10.01	2.920		

*p*>0.05 (Not Significant)

The results in table 5 shows that r<sub>cal</sub>(-0.004) is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that there was no significant relationship between domestic burden and development of women in Ekiti State. The relationship between domestic burden and development of women is negative and statistically not significant. This means that, increase in domestic burden result to low rate of women development in Ekiti State.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between gender education and development of women in Ekiti State. To test the hypothesis, scores relating to gender education and women development were computed and subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 6

**Table 6:** Relationship between Gender Education and Development of Women

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r <sub>cal</sub>	Sig.
Women Development	381	25.84	2.824	0.125*	0.01
Gender Education	381	10.26	2.765		

*P*<0.05 (Significant Result)

The results in table 6 shows that r<sub>cal</sub>(0.125) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between gender education and development of women in Ekiti State. This means that increase in gender education will result to an increase women development in Ekiti State.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant relationship between family decision making and the development of women in Ekiti State. To test the hypothesis, scores relating to family decision making and women development were computed and subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 7

**Table 7:** Relationship between Family Decision Making and Development of Women

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r <sub>cal</sub>	Sig.
Women Development	381	25.84	2.824	0.186*	0.00
Family Decision Making	381	9.20	2.607		

*P*<0.05 (Significant Result): The results in table 7 shows that r<sub>cal</sub>(0.186) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between family decision making and development of women in Ekiti State. This means that increase in women's participation in decision making within the family setting will invariably result to women development.

**Hypothesis 5:** Gender inequality variables will not significantly determine development of women in Ekiti State.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to gender inequality variables and women development were computed and subjected to statistical analysis involving regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 8

**Table 8:** Determinants of Women Development

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	7.688	.717		10.714	.000
Gender Education	-.114	.064	-.118	-1.774	.077
Domestic Burden	.172	.070	.168	2.466	.014
Family Decision Making	.166	.056	.154	2.957	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Women Development  
**R**= 0.224, **R**<sup>2</sup>=0.050, **Adjusted R**<sup>2</sup>= 0.042, **F**= 6.620, **Sig**= 0.000

Table 8 shows that there is significant positive multiple correlation between the determinant variables (gender education, domestic burden and family decision making) and women development in Ekiti State ( $r=0.224$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This implies that all the determinant variables are factors that can exert influence on women development. The value of the coefficient of determination ( $r^2=0.050$ ) indicates that all the determinant variables jointly accounted for 5% ( $r^2 \times 100$ ) of the total variance in women development in Ekiti State, Nigeria while the remaining 95% unexplained variation is largely due other variables outside the regression model.

The single best determinant of women development in Ekiti State is domestic burden ( $\beta = 0.168$ ). This was closely followed by family decision making ( $\beta = 0.154$ ) and gender education ( $\beta = -0.118$ ). The calculated F-ratio (6.620) was significant at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the determinant variables jointly provide a significant explanation for the variation in women development in Ekiti State. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that gender inequality variables significantly determined development of women in Ekiti State.

## VI. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study revealed that the level of women development in Ekiti State was moderate. This indicates that the rate at which women are being empowered to be self-sustaining is moderate. It also indicates that the rate of women's vulnerability and dependency in all spheres of life was moderate. This finding corroborated that of Zahrah (2017) whose submission indicated that there are twice as many women below the poverty line than men. This finding is also in line with the findings of Lynne (n.d.) who found out that the rate of maternal mortality and violence against women make Nigeria one of the toughest place to be born as a girl. The findings further showed that the level of gender inequality in Ekiti State was moderate. This indicates that the rate of gender disparity in Ekiti was moderate. This further indicates that the rate of discrimination that takes place on the basis of gender was moderate. This finding is in line with the submission of Kira (2003), he opined that men have been traditionally viewed as the breadwinner of the family, thus, the job held by men have been historically, economically valuable and occupations predominated by men.

The consequences of gender inequality based on the findings indicated women are harassed and bullied due to their gender, there is restriction in career choices for women, women play limited roles in decision making matters in and outside the homes. It was also discovered that domestic violence is on the rise against women in Ekiti State. It was also revealed from the findings of the study that there was significant relationship between gender inequality and development of women in Ekiti State. This established the fact that development of any form in the society could be traceable to certain factors, among which is gender equality. This corroborated the findings Onyenenkwa & Nkamnebe (2011), they stated that, 'to enjoy sustained and concerted undertakings of a community or country, it is wise to increase quality standard of living and economic health. Unfortunately, this cannot be possible if there is evident inequality between men and women as it blocks any dreams of development'. The findings further established that there was no significant relationship between domestic burden and development of women in Ekiti State. The finding of this study supports the findings of Cotter, Hermsen & Vanneman (2011) which indicated that all over the world, women are doing works they are not getting paid for in rich households. The chores women do range from folding the laundry or staying home to take care of a sick child. In poor households, domestic chores tend to be more physically demanding; like fetching water and splitting wood. This affects women across the globe regardless of their levels of education and income and the level of development of their countries. While some countries have made efforts to recognise, reduce and redistribute domestic burden, the largest share of the burden continues to fall on women.

It was also established from the findings of the study that there was significant relationship between gender education and development of women in Ekiti state. This finding corroborated that of Oluyemo, (2014) who opined that education is a vehicle that breaks the shackles of poverty thereby leading to transformation, development and progress. The findings further established the fact that there was significant relationship between family decision making and development of women in Ekiti state. The reason for the finding could be as a result of the patriarchal nature of the society. It is believed that the male gender is the head of the family. Thus, decision making about family issues should be the concern of the male gender alone. This finding support that of Oyediran, (2008). In his opinion, in patriarchal societies like Nigeria, traditional norms and practices limit women's autonomous decisions on issues that affect their lives as men exercise significant influence on the household decision-making processes. He further submitted that, within a patriarchal dominant structure, a woman has virtually no decision-making authority and also receives the least with respect to resource allocation. It was revealed from the findings that gender inequality variables jointly determined the development of women in Ekiti State. The result of this study revealed that domestic burden is the single best determinant of development of women. This could be because peaceful coexistence among mankind enhances productivity and development.

## **VII. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the study's summary, conclusion and recommendations. It also presents the limitations to the study, contributions to knowledge as well as suggestions for further studies.

**Summary :** The study examined gender inequality and development of women in Ekiti State. The study specifically examined the level of women development, gender inequality as well as the consequences of gender inequality on the development of women in Ekiti State. The study further examined the relationship between gender education, domestic burden family decision making and development of women in Ekiti State. The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in the study. The population for the study consisted of all women both literate and illiterate from the sixteen Local Government Areas of Ekiti State. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select the sample for the study which consisted of 381 females who have experienced one form of gender inequality or the other.

An instrument designed by the researcher tagged 'Questionnaire on Gender Inequality and Development of Women (QGIDW)' was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity through the assistance of the researcher's supervisor and some experts in the areas of Social Studies as well as Tests and Measurement, in the Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method and 0.75 reliability co-efficient was obtained and considered high enough for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean, standard deviation and percentage were used to answer the research questions while inferential statistics of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Regression Analysis were used to test the hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that:

1. the level of women development in Ekiti State was moderate;
2. the level of gender inequality in Ekiti State was moderate;
3. there was significant relationship between gender inequality and development of women in Ekiti State;
4. there was no significant relationship between domestic burden and development of women in Ekiti State;
5. there was significant relationship between gender education and development of women in Ekiti State;
6. there was significant relationship between family decision making and development of women in Ekiti State; and that
7. gender inequality variables significantly determined development of women in Ekiti State.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore concluded that the level of women development and gender inequality in Ekiti State was moderate. It was also concluded that there was significant relationship between gender education, family decision making and women development in Ekiti State. However, there was no relationship between domestic burden and development of women in Ekiti State. It finally concluded that gender inequality variables significantly determined the development of women in Ekiti State.

## **Recommendations**

With respect to the findings of this study, it is recommended that;

1. Government should design and implement culturally-responsive education and campaign programmes that take into account ethnicity, culture, and community social norms;
2. Interventions should be made by the government to bridge gender gaps by changing some policies and laws, improving technology and infrastructure, capability building, advocacy and shaping attitudes;
3. Political parties should encourage women participation in politics by making political party forms for public offices completely free as this will encourage women's participation in decision making;
4. Government and policy makers should improve women's access to education and health care as this is the backbone of development for every woman

**Limitations to the Study :** The researcher encountered some difficulties while conducting the study. In the course of the administration of the instrument, some women were unwilling to respond to the questionnaire but with persuasion, they eventually cooperated.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

The outcome of the study has provided information on;

1. the level of women development.
2. the level of gender inequality.
3. Influence of gender variables (gender education, domestic burden, family decision making) on the development of Women.
4. gender equality determined women development.

### **Suggestion for Further Studies**

It is suggested that similar studies could be carried out in other states of the federation to know if similar findings could be obtained. Similar studies could also be carried out on causes of gender inequality as well as factors that could influence the development of women in the society.

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**APPENDIX**

**EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON GENDER INEQUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN (QGIDW)**

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to examine gender inequality and the development of women in the society. Your sincere cooperation in completing this questionnaire would be highly appreciated.

Your responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality

**Section A**

**Bio-Data of Respondent**

1. Local Government Area
2. Age: 18-25 ( ), 26-35 ( ), 36-45 ( ), 46 and above ( )
3. Level of Education of women:
  - A. Informal education ( )
  - B. Primary School Leaving Certificate ( )
  - C. Secondary School ( )
  - D. O.N.D ( )
  - E. HND ( )
  - F. BSc ( )
  - G. Master's Degree ( )
  - H. PHD ( )

**Section B: Gender Inequality**

Kindly respond to the following items on the forms of gender inequality in the society by putting a tick ( ) against the appropriate option as: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

**S/N Item**

**SA A D SD**

**Gender Education**

- 1 Women find it difficult to attain the educational level they want because of finance
- 2 There are more women in schools than men
- 3 Society prefers educated women
- 4 Women still do better in school than men if given the opportunity
- 5 Women find it difficult to go back to school after child birth

**Domestic Burden**

- 6 Women tend to be more engaged in household chores than men
- 7 Women shy away from house chores than men
- 8 Women tend to hold more responsibilities in the home front than the men
- 9 Women tend to be more committed in carrying out duties than men
- 10 Women find it disrespectful to be engaged in domestic chores than men

**Family Decision**

- 11 The task of decision making dwells more on the man than on the woman
- 12 Men are more prominent in making the right decision
- 13 Men are more involved in making major decision towards the progress of the family than women

- 14 Men decision are often lopsided and geared towards selfish interest/personal needs
- 15 Decision made by both sexes in mutual agreement tends to be more profitable

**Section C: Women Development**

Kindly respond to the following items on the forms of gender inequality in the society by putting a tick ( ) against the appropriate option as: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	Women are often opportune to hold position of policy making				
2	Empowerment programmes tend to develop more women than men <sup>3</sup>				
3	Women tend to be more knowledgeable than men in tackling societal issues				
4	Organisation/establishment encourages frequent in-service training for career women than men				
5	Offshore training of both sexes help to eradicate societal problems				
6	Under-representation of women in the society is as a result of lack of development				
7	Women are mostly engaged in non-economic reward ventures				
8	Women are mostly financially incapacitated				
9	Women are often denied opportunity to contribute to family issues				
10	Women carry much burden of children and hence, very poor in most cases				

**Section D: Consequences of Gender Inequality**

Kindly respond to the following items on the consequences of gender inequality in the society, by putting a tick ( ) against the appropriate option as: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	Women are harassed and bullied due to their gender				
2	There is restriction of career choices for women				
3	Socio-economic conditions of the economy is at low because education of women is not priority				
4	Women play limited roles in decision making matters in and outside the home				
5	Women are at disadvantaged when it comes to access to economic and social resources unlike the male counterpart				
6	Women bear the brunt of poverty				
7	Unchallenged culture of male dominance led to the subordination and exclusion of many women				
8	Women are regarded second class in the society				
9	There are more illiterate women than men				
10	Domestic violence is on the rise against women				