

GENDER ISSUES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: The World Health Organization sees gender in terms of women and men roles and responsibilities that are socially determined. In today's growing global economy, gender issues have increasingly gained significance most especially, as every nation of the world is in a bid to achieve sustainable development. Since the quality of the environment is determined by the users (the different sexes), and women forms a sizeable portion of the population, this study investigates female gender participation in Environmental Management in Nigeria.

Questionnaire and direct field observation are the instruments for data collection and Ibadan Metropolis consisting of five local government areas was purposely selected for the study. In all, a total of eleven Community Based Organizations that engaged in Environmental Management were identified in the area and simple random sampling techniques was used in selecting Landlords association, out of which 981 questionnaires were randomly administered to members.. The data obtained were analyzed with frequency counts, percentages and chi-square to show variation in the participation of women across the different density zones.

The study found out that, Environmental projects undertaken in the area are road construction and maintenance (3.8%), channelization of stream (0.9%), construction of bridge (1.9%), construction of toilets (21.7%), incinerators (2.8%), clearing of footpaths / bushes (4.7%), construction of culvert (34.9%), seminars and workshop (2.8%) and tree planting (26.5%). However, female gender is grossly underrepresented in the association thereby, accounting for 16.0% of the total membership strength. The adduced reasons for this by the female gender include male egocentrism, lack of education and lack of self-confidence. The study concludes by proffering solutions towards balancing gender inequalities in the area and in Nigeria in general.

Keywords: Gender issues, Environment, Women participation, Environmental Management.

Introduction

Gender issues have increasingly gained significance within the last three decades. The relationship between gender and the built environment has also begun to gain the attention of a number of researchers. Danckleman and Davidson in Amole (1998), Ravetz in Kate (1987), Gilroy and Wood in Das (1988) all maintained that, there has been a growing body of research on women and the environment.

However, it is not limited to the environment alone. It cuts across all spheres of life. According to Chilokwu (2007), the history of women's socio – economic participation in the world was broken by Mao Vijaye Kami Paudit. This was in September 1953 and she was the first woman president of the eight assembly of the United Nations. Seven years later in 1960, Ceylon provided the world with the first woman prime minister in the person of Mrs Sivimaro Bandrancuke. The second to become prime minister was Indira Ghandi of India with the third being Golda Meir, who was the Prime minister of Israel in 1969. Next was Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1980 to 1990 being the fourth in the world..

Instances of women's struggle for peace, justice and economic development abounds not only in the world, but also, in Africa and Nigeria (Ezumah, 2001). For instance, Alberting Simulu, Mary Moodley and Winnie Mandela suffered for justice and peace as they were jailed, kept in solitary confinement, banned under house arrest and harassed in endless ways. In Nigeria, there are people like Mrs Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Margaret Ekpo, Queen Daurauma of Katsina, Queen Amina of Zaria, Professor Grace Alele Williams, Mrs Tejumade Alakija, Mrs Oby Ezekwesili and Dr Ngozi Okonjo – Iweala.

One significant achievement of the United Nations Decade for Women (UN, 1975 – 1985) was that, it directed attention to women as a forgotten factor in the struggle to alleviate some perpetual crises in food, management, health, education, commerce, oil and gas and governance in the developing nations of the world. Also, the world conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, as reported in Rural Development, Special issues, February 1988 called on countries to incorporate growth with equity, people's participation and the integration of women into national objectives and strategies. The Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) on its own reflect the link between poverty and the situation of women by making the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as one of the main goals.

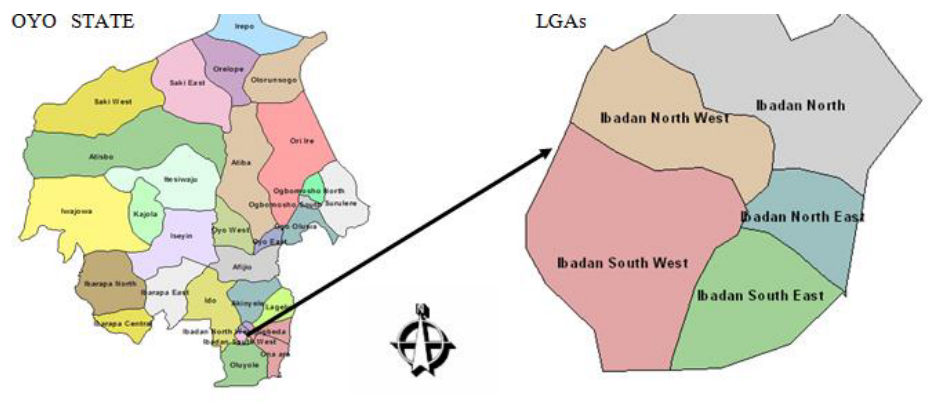
Furthermore, the Monterrey consensus of the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD, 2003) recognized the need to mainstream the gender perspective into development policies at all sectors in order to strengthen the effectiveness of the global economics systems support for development. Thus, to achieve these goals, all socio-culturally perceived attributes of distinction between masculinity and feminist must be eliminated for social and economic advancement of the world. In addition, recent researches on women stress the need to study women gender in greater details so as to identify their potentials and skills, which if properly understood, would be harnessed through proper policy formulation for development. In lieu of this, the study investigates women participation in Environmental Management in Nigeria, since women are the original givers of life and caretakers of the environment. The barriers to participation were identified and solutions were proffered.

Materials and Methods

The Study Area

The study covers Ibadan metropolitan city, which is the largest indigenous city in Africa and is the capital of Oyo state, Nigeria. It is made up of eleven local government areas, five of which are within the inner city- Ibadan North-West, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan South-East, Ibadan North, and Ibadan South-West. The remaining six encompassing local government areas are Akinyele, Lagelu, Egbeda, Ona-Ara, Oluyole and Iddo local government areas. Ibadan lies at latitude 7 °23' N and Longitude 3° 56'E. It is located at the transition zone between the forest and grassland areas of the country. The population of central Ibadan which is made up of the five Local Government Areas is 1,338,659 according to Census result of 2006 covering an area of 128 square kilometer (Oloyede- Kosoko and Akingbogun, 2013)

Figure 1: The Study Area



Source: Oloyede- Kosoko and Akingbogun (2013)

Methods of collection of data and Analysis

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Questionnaire and direct field observation form the basis for collecting primary data, while secondary data was collected from relevant books and journals. The first step is the identification of Community Based Organizations that engage in Environmental Management in the different density zones in the Metropolis as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Different Community Based Organizations in Ibadan Metropolis According to Density Zones

Types of CBO	Number of Density zones				
	Low	Medium	High	Total	% of overall Total
1. Community Development Association	3	8	14	25	17.7
2. Co-operative Societies	4	8	9	21	14.9
3. Social Clubs	4	8	11	23	16.3
4. Religion – based Organizations	5	10	7	22	15.6
5. Professional/Occupational Organizations	6	4	8	18	12.8
6. Age grades	-	-	3	3	2.1
7. Youth Associations	-	1	4	5	3.6
8. International Associations	-	-	1	1	0.7
9. Landlords Association	1	5	5	11	7.8
10. Political Associations	-	1	3	4	2.8
11. Commercial/trade Associations	3	2	3	8	5.7
Total	26	47	68	141	100.0

Source: Authors' field survey (2014)

Out of these, simple random sampling technique was used to select Landlords Association for the study, since they are close to the grassroots as they are the house owners in the area. The total membership of the Landlords Association in the different density zones is 1,962; thus, a total of 981 questionnaires were randomly administered to the members representing 50% of the population. The questionnaires were administered in such a way that 50% of the members in the different zones were randomly chosen. A total of 978 questionnaires were retrieved back representing 99.6% which is considered valid for the assessment of the situation under study. The data obtained were analysed with frequency counts, percentage and chi-square to show variation in the participation of women across the different density zones.

Discussion of findings

A total of 106 Environmental Management projects were undertaken by the association in the area. These include *road construction and maintenance* (3.8%), *channelization of stream* (0.9%), *construction of bridge* (1.9%), *construction of toilets* (21.7%), *incinerators* (2.8%), *clearing of footpaths / bushes* (4.7%), *construction of culverts* (34.9%), *seminars and workshops* (2.8%) and *tree planting* (26.5%). The trees were planted around public buildings such as schools, community centers etc. to provide such necessities as fruits, shade, stakes, shrines, medicinal and environmental protection through erosion control. Table 2 shows the environmental projects undertaken by the association, while Plate 1 shows a local road constructed in the area.

Table 2: Environmental Projects undertaken in Ibadan Metropolis

Types of project	Frequency	Percentages
Road construction	4	3.8
Channelization of stream	1	0.9
Construction of bridge	2	1.9
Construction of toilets	23	21.7
Construction of incinerators	3	2.8
Clearing of bushes/footpaths	5	4.7
Construction of culvert	37	34.9
Seminars/workshops	3	2.8
Tree planting	28	26.5
Total	106	100.0

Source: Authors' field survey (2014)

Plate 1: Road constructed in the study area



Source: Authors' field survey (2014).

Plate 2: A bridge constructed by the Association



Source: Authors’ field survey (2014)

Of the total membership strength, 314 female genders were represented, which shows that they are grossly underrepresented in the association. Out of 253 (80.6%) female gender randomly sampled for the study, 31 (12.3%) of the sampled female members of the association took part in Environmental Management projects; environmental sanitation through sweeping and drainage clearance account for 54 (21.3%), while 168(66.4%) respondents did not take part thereby, having limited decision making in the association in the area (Table 3).

Table 3: Spatial Variation of Female Gender Participation in Environmental Management across Density Zones in Ibadan Metropolis

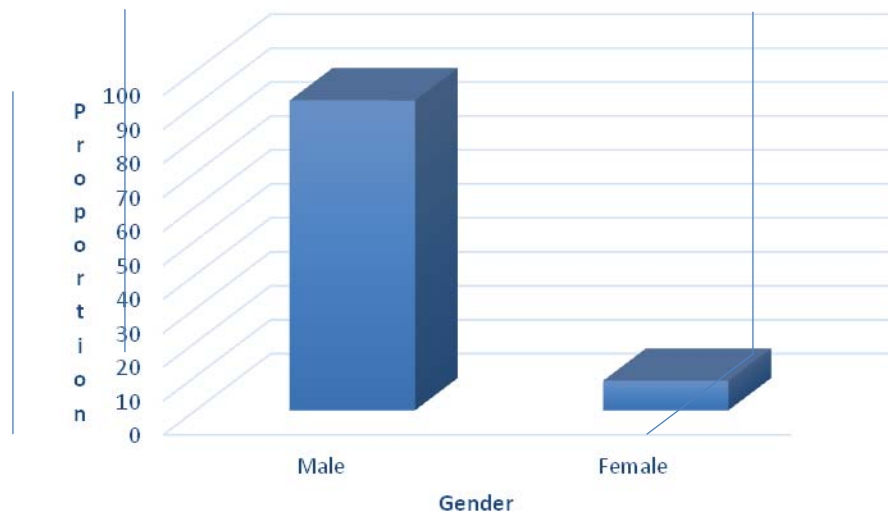
Density Area	Environmental Management Project		Environmental Sanitation		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	16	23.12	14	20.3	39	56.5	69	100.0
Medium	12	13.8	18	20.7	57	65.5	87	100.0
Low	3	3.1	22	22.7	72	74.2	97	100.0
Total	31	12.3	54	21.3	168	66.4	253	100.0

$X^2 = 148.129, df = 3, P = 0.000$

Source: Authors’ field survey (2014).

This low participation of women in the Metropolis therefore, supports the submission of Shiva (1998) and Mohammed (2012) from feminist and gender perspectives that, lack of women participation in environmental management is a cause of continuing environmental problems. The lack of information on how to empower the real actors, and ways in which such actors themselves want to be engaged has resulted into over generalizing the situation. However, the involvement of the women in environmental sanitation in the study area should be seen as part of what Moser (1993) and Shettima (2006) termed reproductive roles of women which include biological reproduction and all those activities (cooking, clearing, washing, fetching water, fuel and fodder) that guarantee the continued reproduction of the labour force. From figure 2 therefore, 91.3% male gender took part in environmental management in the area as opposed to 8.7% female gender.

Figure 2: Gender Participation in Environmental Management in Ibadan Metropolis



Source: Authors' field survey (2014)

The spatial variation of female gender participation in environmental management as shown in Table 3 above shows that the bulk of the respondents that did not participate are from the low density areas (70.5%). This therefore, is a subject of further investigation as they may possibly be involved in technical training, policy advocacy, project proposal preparations, planning and program designing, and supervision of environmental programs as observed by Guiriba (2010). The reasons adduced to low participation of women were however, traced to the followings:

- Male egocentrism: Male egocentrism has to do with the domineering attitude of men. As noted by Akinsola (2002), men are treated as the primary being in Nigerian society, while women are barely visible.
- Low Level Education: The prevailing notions about the literacy level of women, ignorance and consequently, their incapability to take part in any important task have hindered their contribution to decision making and planning.
- Self-confidence: Another factor is the fragile nature of majority of women; they feel shy a lot and are always afraid of talking in the public which may hinder them from making meaningful contribution to development.

Recommendations

Opportunities should be provided for women to encourage their participation in environmental management particularly, decision making process at all levels; include them as managers, projects designers and planners, and as implementers and evaluators of environmental programs and projects.

There should be means of facilitating and improve women's access to information and education particularly, along the area of science and technology, management, economics and sociology, in order to enhance their knowledge, skills and opportunities for participation in environmental decisions.

Promote the participation of local communities particularly, women in the identification of public service needs, spatial planning and the provision and design of infrastructure. Also, establish strategies and mechanisms to increase the proportion of women, particularly, at the grassroots levels, as decision makers, planners, technical advisers and beneficiaries in the design, development and implementation of policies and programs for

environmental management. Furthermore, Non-governmental organizations should conduct advocacy programs on environment and provide opportunities for women to participate in decision making, regarding sustainable development.

Environmental education that is gender sensitive and gender responsive should be given by government in both formal and informal settings. The primary goal of this is to raise environmental awareness and consciousness and actions of the majority of the population so they will be more vigilant and committed in keeping watch over the environment.

Conclusion

This study has shown that female gender participation in environmental management in Nigeria is low and it is crucial to integrate them as the original actors of the environment. This could be achieved by bringing women into organizations at high levels to ensure visibility and credibility as achieving sustainable environment and development can only be achieved through collaborative works and efforts of all the stakeholders, the women and the men, the young and old, communities, church, mosque, academia, local government unions, civil society groups, business and the households.

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