

# GENDER AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

**Patrick, O.**

*Department of Educational Foundations  
Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island  
Bayelsa State, Nigeria  
E-mail: meetpatola@yahoo.com*

## **ABSTRACT**

*The paper examines the effect of gender on teacher education. It is evident from the data collected that access to teacher education, professional growth and school policies are of major concern. 438 respondents all teachers at various levels of our educational system were randomly selected from 10 states in Nigeria: 5 states from the North and 5 states from the south. A questionnaire containing 20 items on equal access to teacher education, equality in professional growth and school policies which may discriminate against male or female in teacher education was drawn. These items were drawn in line with the research questions. The data collected were analysed using the mean, Standard Deviation and Simple percentage methods. The study revealed that male and female do not have equal access to teacher education, there is disparity in terms of professional growth and there are no school policies discriminating against gender in teacher education. The study recommends that male and female should be given equal opportunity for teacher education, special considerations should be put in place for professional growth among female and school policies must be gender friendly.*

*Keywords: Gender, teacher education, professional, school policies*

## INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession is known to be very unpopular in his carrier choice of students especially in the secondary school. Despite this, it is expected that teacher education must be embraced by both male and female. Teacher education is aimed at the production of teachers of great depth of knowledge, increased skills in teaching, right attitudes and improved human relationships. The development of any nation lies majorly on the quality of teachers as no nation can rise beyond her teachers. This noble profession must enjoy gender equality which means equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, boys and girls. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Equality between men and women could be seen as both a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people centred development.

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female and the relationships between women and men, girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between men and women, in most society's men are assigned special responsibilities, they are made to undertake special activities, they are made to have access to and control over resources, as well as decision making opportunities.

The boys have often remained advantageous in terms of education generally while the girl-child has often been a victim of societal norms and cultural practices which often inhibit her access

to quality education. There seems to be a wide gap between boys and girls in their access to education despite the policy formulation on equal access to boys and girls to education. At the World Education Forum in Dakar 2000, the goal was: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015 with a special focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

The major objective of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals at the millennium summit of World Heads of States at New York in 2000 was gender equality, with particular regard to access to education. Even at the World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien in 1990 the issue of gender equality was also extensively discussed. Gender equality has become an International issue hence UNESCO (2002) opines that many countries has put in place innovative programme to improve girls' access to education. In many cases, these innovations take the form of collaboration between international Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations. Incentives such as scholarship and free access were provided to encourage girl's participation in Education and to increase the share of female teachers.

In choosing a carrier, several factors are put into consideration. The teaching profession is widely accepted as a challenging profession but found to be gender friendly. Fagbulu and Aderrinonye (2003) holds that the general trend of gender disparity in teacher education is that there are more female access to and participation in teacher education in the southern part of Nigeria, while in the Northern part, there are less for male access to and participation in teacher education. Not minding gender stereotype which is evident in students choosing certain subject combinations with the belief that some subjects are appropriate for males or females hence subjects like mathematics, engineering, technology are dominated by males. At the primary, secondary

and tertiary education level, the presence of male and female teachers cannot be ignored, there is the need to know if men and women have equal access to teaching, if they have equal opportunity for professional growth and if any of the gender is often discriminated against on some policies by the school administration.

There is a popular axiom that teaching is a woman's job but very challenging. The development of any nation hinges on the quality of teachers. If the profession is of such a great importance to the socio-economic development of the nation, the role of men and women has to be properly defined. In Nigeria, there is gender inequality as regards access to education; this has attracted the concern of several International Organizations and research agencies. Usually, the girl - child education tends to be relegated to the background in preference to the education of the boy - child. In teacher education, several problems abound ranging from whether boys and girls have equal access to teacher education, if there is any discrimination against gender as to professional growth and if there are policies that favour or discriminate any sex as regards teachers' education.

The main aim of this study is to identify the effect of gender on teacher education. Others are to: examine if male and female have equal access to teachers' education in Nigeria; identify areas of discrimination against any sex by school policies on teacher education; and ascertain if there are discriminations against any sex on professional growth guided by the following research questions.

- Do male and female have equal access to teacher education in Nigeria?
- Do male and female have equal opportunity for professional growth?
- Do the school policies discriminate against male or female in teacher education?

## **GENDER AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

The missionaries saw women education as a way of empowering women to become good wives and good mothers as ascribed to them from creation (Gen 2:18) so, the early schools were specially meant for girls only. However, this method could not stand the test of time. Derby (1990) explained that there was early withdrawal of girls from school for the purpose of marriage. Awe (1969) posited that the curricula of most girls' schools during the missionary period did not emphasize the subjects that are fascinating to girls as the purpose of girls' education then was to prepare them to be good housewives, good mothers and good ornaments for the society French (1995) was of the opinion that a husband would earn enough to support the whole family so that the wife didn't have to work but was instead cocooned in cozy domesticity. These retrogressive ideas changed with time as many African nations regained their independence.

The Educational System was redefined and gender inequality was removed. Several government policies were promulgated, studies were carried out and series of campaign were also launched to ensure that boys and girls have equal access to education. The Federal Ministry of Education in 1987 came out with a blue print on the education of women.

- Increasing awareness campaigns for women's education
- Pegging of legal age at first marriage at a minimum of 18 years for women
- Enforcing legal provisions of penalties for withdrawal of girls from school for marriage
- Expanding facilities for 'second chance' functional and literacy education for adult women.
- Providing education for women with special needs, like nomadic education and education for women in purdah etc.
- Establishing women education departments in Federal and State Ministries of Education and

- Establishing women education centers by the Federal Ministry of Education in all the States of the Federation.

Despite these positive move, teacher education often witness gender gulf and this necessitated a study by the National Commission for Colleges of Education in 1995 with the principal aim of investigating the issues of gender discrimination as it affects students and staff in Colleges of Education. UNESCO (2005) stated that the study for gender issues was necessary because teacher education as it was then replicated gender differentiation since there was almost no training on gender issues in the curricula of pre-and in-service teacher training institutions and programmes. Enrolment into the College of Education also replicated gender discrimination. In some states for example, Yobe there was 93.6% male enrolment in 1992 as against 64% for female enrolment in Anambra State. On the contrary there was 74.6% female enrolment as against 25.4% male enrolment in the same 1992. NCCE (2003) holds that the general trend of gender disparity in teacher education is that there is more female access to and participation in teacher education in the southern part of Nigeria, while in the Northern part, there are less for male access to and participation in teacher education.

**Table 1:** Enrolment trend in Colleges of Education in Nigeria by Gender Year and selected States for the Year 2000/2001

States	MF	F	FPR
Abia	1198	852	71.12
Anambra	5319	4977	93.7
Edo	3431	222	64.8
Ekiti	3352	2610	77.9
Ogun	5886	3730	63.4
Adamawa	5211	1792	34.4
Jigawa	1989	881	44.3
Katsina	3062	526	16.9
Kebbi	1999	470	23.5
Yobe	2266	417	18.4

Source: NCCE Statistical Digest on Colleges of Education vol. 6, April 2002

The table 1 clearly shows the disparity between the Northern States and Southern States of the Federation as regards access to and participation of male and female in teacher education. Generally speaking, the percentage of male teachers is still far above the female teachers in Nigeria.

**Table 2: Teachers in Nigeria by Qualification and Gender**

Qualification	Male %	Female %
Graduate W/TU	61.21	38.79
Graduate	72.24	27.76
NCE	54.88	45.12
Grade I	76.60	23.40
Grade II	67.98	32.02
HSC	81.75	18.25
WASC	81.99	18.01
Special	69.22	30.18
Others	73.14	26.86
Total	61.69	38.31

Source: FME/UBE National Schools Census 2003

Awe and Adedeji (1990) opined that gender gaps exist especially as regards girls' access to and participation in education but the magnitude of such gaps as well as their courses differ from zone to zone. The gaps were more in the northern zone when compared to the gaps in the southern zone. Ajibade (1985) Bako Rango and Yuns (1985) and Bitkon (1973) identified religion, parental influence, patrilineal social system, conservatism to tradition and culture, early marriage and the pudah system as some of the factors causing gender gaps in education in Nigeria. However, Agbau (1976) and Iredia (1984) identified social norms, parental attitudes, and low literacy level of parents, poverty and lack of government policy as additional factors.

For teacher education to be meaningful, there is the need to find out if male and female have the same equal access to this form of education and if they also have equal professional growth

on the job. Most school policies could discriminate against gender and thereby affect access to teacher education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study is intended to find out the effect of gender inequality on teacher education. Using the stratified random sampling technique, 500 respondents were selected from 10 states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 5 States from the North and 5 from the southern states. The respondents include primary school teachers, secondary school teachers and lecturers in the Colleges of Education and faculties of Education in the University. 438 questionnaires were returned. The instrument 'Gender and teacher Education' (GTA) was designed by the researcher. The instrument consisted of two sections "A" and "B". Section "A" sought information on the personal data of the respondent while section B consisted of 20 items related to the issue of equal access to and participation in teacher education by both male and female, the opportunity of professional growth and school policies that may discriminate gender equality.

The instrument was validated by experts in teacher education and a reliability test was also conducted using the test - re-test method. This was analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient statistics and a computed result of 0.86 was obtained. The instrument was therefore considered highly reliable. The data obtained from this study were analysed using mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) statistical tools. The mean of 2.5 was taken as the critical value for decision such that as the mean response falls below 2.5 was regarded as Disagreed while a mean on or above 2.5 was regarded as Agree. The frequency and simple percentage method was also employed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 3:** Equal Access to Teacher Education Probable factors responsible for this unequal access to teacher education

Factors	Mean	SD	Decision
Personal Interest	3.1	0.89	Agree
Social factor	2.7	0.74	Agree
Religions factor	2.6	0.63	Agree
Gender stereotype	2.7	0.61	Agree
Economic factor	2.8	0.78	Agree
Institutional factor	2.9	0.60	Agree

The table 3 above shows that greater part of the total respondents strongly Agreed that male and female do not have equal access to teacher education. This is in agreement with the studies of Fagbulu and Aderononye (2001), NCCE (1995) and Derby (1990). The identified factors are the personal interest of the individual concerned as not very many men are interested in teacher education as a result of gender stereotype, teaching is looked at as 'women" job". Other social factors such as society influence, parents wish etc as well as economic factor of parents. Religion was also identified as a factor as most religion does not allow girls to be too exposed to the public and it also favour early marriage.

**Table 4:** Gender and Professional Growth Probable factors responsible for this unequal professional growth

Factors	Mean	SD	Decision
Age	1.4	0.34	Agree
Creativity	2.6	0.71	Agree
Interest	2.5	0.68	Agree
Commitment	2.7	0.72	Agree
Length of service	2.6	0.71	Agree
Diligence	2.7	0.72	Agree
Assuming responsibilities	3.2	0.84	Agree
Participation in decision making	3.1	0.86	Agree
Executing projects	2.9	0.74	Agree
Extra - curricula activities	2.8	0.73	Agree

The table 4 shows that male and female do not have equal professional growth. The factors that may encourages promotion are the level of creativity, interest on the job, commitment length of service, diligence, assuming responsibilities, participation in decision making, executing projects and participation in extra-curricula activities. Women often play a dual role; as mothers and as teachers there is that likelihood for conflict or ineffectiveness which may not be deliberate but as a result of other domestic activities the woman must also carryout.

**Table 5:** Do the school policies discriminate against male or female in teacher education.

Response Mode	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	32	7.3
Agree	73	16.7
Strongly Disagree	293	67
Disagree	40	9
Total	438	100

More than half of the total respondents are of the opinion that there are no school policies discriminating against male or female concerning their access to or participation in teacher education. Apart from personal interest, social, economic, and religious factors that tend to widen the gap between male and female access to education, the school opens a level play ground for male and female to develop their potentials on the job.

From the study, there is no equal access to and participation of male and female in teacher education. The factors responsible for this could be traced to personal interest, social factor, religious factor, gender stereotype, economic factor and institutional factor. However, the Federal Government has opened the gates of teacher education to all without discrimination and these factors enumerated depend on the geo-political zone under study.

Male and female do not have equal professional growth not because there are policies discriminating against any gender but because the women are faced with a lot of other domestic duties as house keepers and this has direct effect on their professional growth. There are no school policies that discriminate against male and female as regards access and participation in teacher education. The schools which are directly under the control and supervision of the various ministries of education open up education to both male and female equally. There is no discrimination in choice of subjects, extra-curricula activities, religion, etc

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn and recommendations made that male and female should have equal access to and participation in teacher education. A better orientation programme should be organized especially in areas where the girl school enrolment is found to be very low. Women should be given special consideration in terms of professional growth as their domestic activities often conflict with their level of effectiveness on the job. Finally, school policies should be made to be more gender friendly.

## **REFERENCES**

- Agbau, M. A** (1976). A look at boys and girls' enrolment into Secondary Schools in the mid-western State 1966 - 1970. B.A. (Ed) thesis. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Ajibade, A. I.** (1985). A Critical Study on the Causes of early Marriage and the effect on the education of indigenes in Maiduguri Metropolitan. B.Ed. Thesis University of Maiduguri

- Awe, B.** (1969). 100 years of Women Education: Centenary Celebration 1869 - 1969. *Lagos: Special Magazine on Anglican Girls Grammar School.*
- Awe, B and Adeleji, P.** (1990). Girls and Women Education in Nigeria. A bibliography for the Seminar on Girls Education in Nigeria, Primary and Early Secondary.
- Bako, A. Rango E and Yunis M. M.** (1985). The Problem of girls' education in Bauchi, Gongola and Sokoto States. B.Ed. Thesis, Ahmad Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna.
- Derbie, I.** (1980). The School Education of Girls. Paris: UNESCO
- ESA/Education Sector Analysis** (2003). *Problems of Education in Nigeria.* Ibadan: Sibon Books Ltd.
- FME/UBE National Schools Census 2003**
- French, J.** (1990). *The Education of Girls: A Handbook for Parents.* London: Casseil Educational Ltd.
- Iredia, A. I.** (1984). A Sociological Study. Project submitted to the Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Calabar.
- Fagbulu, I and Aderinoye R.** (2003). Nigerian private Sector and Girls Education A report on the 2003 FME/UNESCO Private sector Round Table on Building Momentum to Eliminate Gender Gaps by 2005. Abuja: UNESCO
- National Commission for Colleges of Education** (2002). Statistical Digest on Colleges of Education, Vol. 6, April
- UNESCO** (2002). FFA Global Monitoring Report. Paris: UNESCO