

GENDER EMPOWERMENT MEASURE (G E M) AND THE FATE OF FEMINISM IN NIGERIA

ABDULLAHI DAIYABU MARMARA

Abstract: In analyzing the extent of women's ability to actively participate in economic and social activities, the GEM of Nigeria is critically analyzed in an attempt to explain the value of Nigerian women in terms of gender equality gap. Using simple statistical tools in analyzing historical data, the research explains the extent to which feminism have not been emancipated by efforts of women empowerment which makes Nigeria at the bottom list of countries perceived to be "women's haven". The research concludes by recommending possible ways of uplifting the quality of life of Nigerian girls and women in other to achieve a more balanced socio-economic development in the country.

Key words: Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), Feminism, Empowerment, Gender Equality

I. Introduction; The GEM can be defined as the yardstick in measuring "whether women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life, and take part in decision making" UNDP(1995). Gender equality and women's empowerment is a very crucial factor in terms of developmental target as it happens to be the third out of the eight motives set to achieve in the Millennium Development Goals. As the evolution of GEM is created and understood under the umbrella of Feminists' Economics, prominent feminists ought to change the track of critical study of economics to include in its methodology, epistemology, history, and empirical research, the basis of overcoming andocentric (male and patriarchal) inclination and bias. The protagonist of women emancipation called the attention of social construction of conventional economics, putting economic feminism forward as it question the extent to which topics, models, methods and objectives are tilted towards "cultural masculinity" Nelson (1995)as against normative goals central to all economic endeavors. Women's tireless efforts in child-protection, nurturing and healing tasks, are relegated to the back ground with under-valuation (Janes Jacobs). Changes in agricultural transformation and industrialization systematically examined based on gender effect illuminated negative effect on women. Boserup (1970). The making of women's traditional efforts invisible to national income accounting also plays role in hindering the development horizon of mainstream approach to analysis Waring (1988). . As one in every two men spend time in works that fetch them an income, one in every two women spends their time in works that fetch no income to them Angel-Urdinola and wooden (2008).

This work aims at analyzing; how far the feminist economic ideas have served as a wake-up-call to Nigeria's policy makers in efforts of narrowing down gender gap in fundamental areas of development

such as economics, social, educational and politics, and striking down the imbalances that exist, viewing the GEM as a yardstick.

2. Conceptual componentsThe gem indicators:The GEM indicators are determined using these three major indicators;

1. Female parliamentarian: This considers the number of seats women hold in the Law Making House(s) of a country. This covers the role in civic government translated in power and authority. It gives an avenue for women's participation in decision making as their voices are not just heard, but channeled into law making and respective implementation. Norway according to the Human Development Report (2007/8) have women parliamentary representation of 47%, while Iceland recorded for 37%.

2. Female professional and technical work: This includes, mathematical, engineering science professionals, teaching professional e.t.c UNDP (2007/8). Effective measures are taking to ensure the integration of women in terms of technical and professional works through science and technology in school enrolments which will be analyzed shortly.

3. Female share of income as ratio of men's income: This is the wages, salaries, bonuses, pensions and annuities based on previously earned income. This also includes goods sold and services rendered in self-employment estimated income (P.P.P US), also on the basis of male and female non-agricultural wage, population and per capita GDP. The data analyzed in this work takes the proxy of the above mentioned indicators, it is the data available for female to male secondary school enrolment which covers the prerequisite of achieving all this indicators, also available data on women/men employed in public sectors and high appointments will be presented in the analysis.

Importance of G.E.M

Among the importance of GEM are:

1. It gives value to worthiness as it helps in making efforts of women accounted for.
2. It helps in balance development. This is because allowing for gender discrimination undermines an economy’s effort of meeting important development targets specifically the M.D.Gs
3. It helps in engaging women in the law making process which is an improvement to equal representation
4. It improves the dignity of a country in the international community.

G.E.M. it’s success else where. (reference to norway)

Norway is analyzed to show case the gap between reaping the benefit of GEM and otherwise. Sound consideration towards G E M in Norway have translated into the consideration of the country as among the “world’s best countries for women” going by the participation of women indecision making, earnings and political participation. New York Times (2015).

Norway has been ranked 1st among countries with sound GEM value of 9.10%, this is because of 37.9% of legislators are women, 30% of women senior officials and managers, 50% of female professional and technical works, lastly 0.77 ratio of female to male earned income. Taking a look at Norway’s commitment to GEM (although out ranked by Iceland and Finland for three consecutive years according to World Economic Forum 2013), it is lucid to analyze that women of other countries deserve a chance for a better life. The simple view of the above Norway’s case relative to Nigeria will make deduction on how the fate of feminism is at stake in Nigeria.

3 Analysis: The fate of nigerian women The condition of economic feminism in Nigeria is regrettably not worthy of celebration, this is because of the un-documentation of the GEM data which are the bedrock of narrowing gender inequality. In 2007/08 HDI Report, Nigeria happens to be amongst the unranked countries as GEM indicators could not be estimated. Although the number of female legislators is known to be 22%, and also 0.45 ratio of female to male income which is very poor when

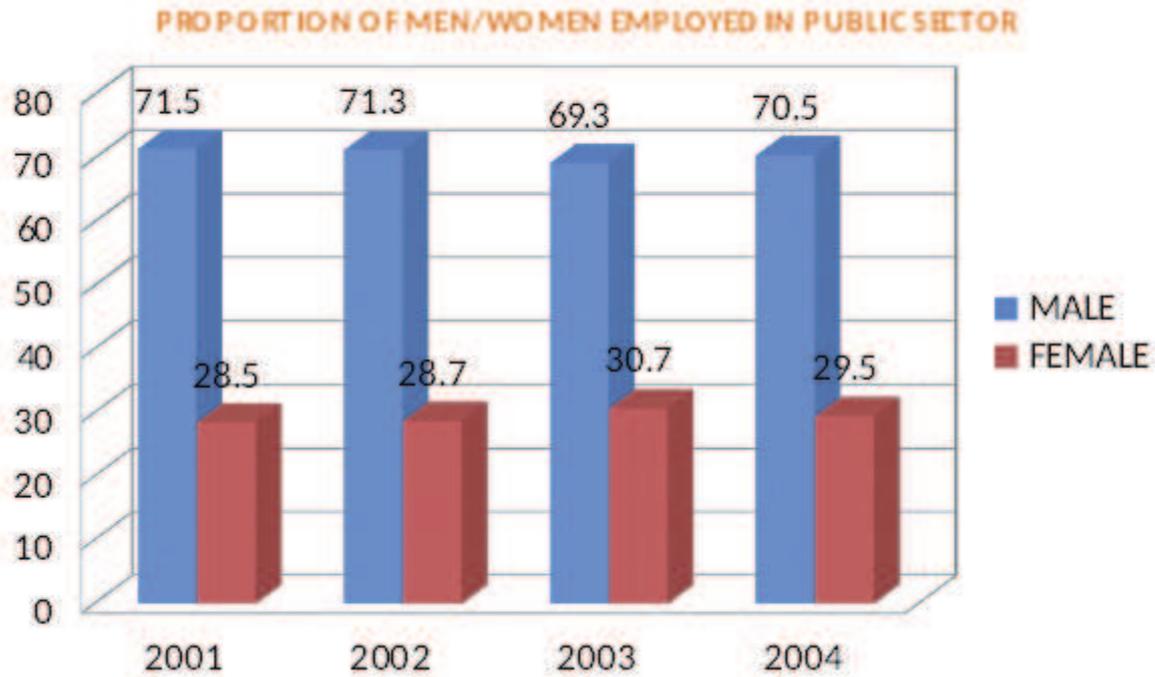
compared to other countries, the percentage of female senior officials and managers and also percentage off male technical and professional workers were not estimated. This thwarted the attempt of West African Communities to overcome such a problem before the year 2004. Nigeria was 106th out of 136 countries in terms of wide gender gap index in 2013. African countries with population and less natural resources and revenue like South Africa and Mozambique have done better than Nigeria (ranked 17th and 26th respectively). This can showcase the extent to which policy makers in Nigeria have little interest in giving women the better condition of life they deserve. The antecedents of such a situation is made a factual when considering the following data.

Table 1; Post Primary Enrolment

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE
2004	3,539,708	2,739,754
2005	3,543,625	2,854,718
2006	3,642,871	2,893,167
2007	3,460,146	2,608,014
2008	3,682,141	2,943,802

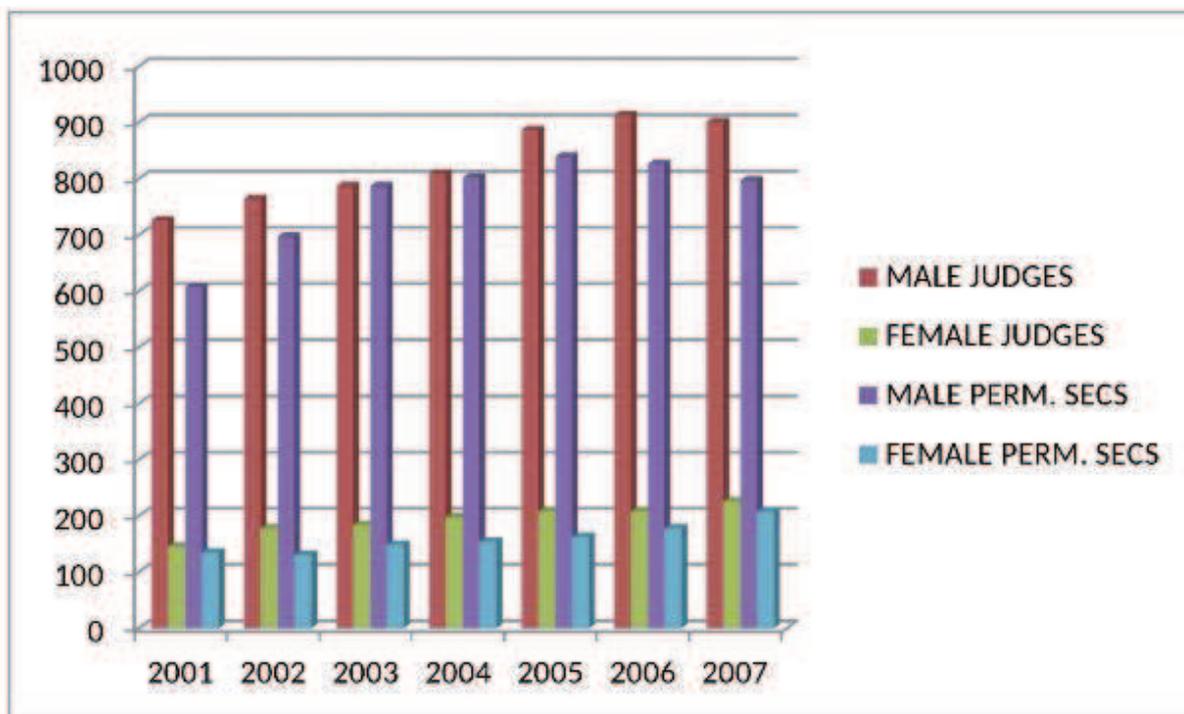
Source: Federal Ministry of Education UBEC (2009)

Table 1 shows that although the gap in enrolment is slightly reducing, the sample shows that the overall figure is significantly lower than the boy’s enrolment. This can be seen as a testimony of UNESCO EFA monitoring report of 2008 which opined a wide disparity in the enrolment ratio between boys and girls. UNESCO (2008). Also the completion of the secondary education is compromised at the expense of factors like: marriages, harassment, less prioritizing girl child education due to economic difficulties of parents and guardians. Evident from the above description surely will undermine the closing of gender disparity in the country.



Source: Fatile et al 2011

Figure 1: Proportion of Men/Women Employed in the Public Sector



Source; National Bureau for Statistics

Figure 2: Males and Females appointments in the Public Sector

Evidence from Figure 1 also shows the disparity in the employment of women in the public sector as the male takes the lion share of 70% ratio to female. The government employment is a very important income

opportunity to Nigerians as other private businesses do not fetch higher income when compared, yet the window opened for the absorption of women into the public sector is very restrictive. This alone will be a

reason why Nigeria can be listed among countries with low GEM rating. Also, taking a look at Figure 2, the appointment made to high professionals like Judges and Permanent Secretaries is skewed towards men's favor. This is because appointments in favor of men are averagely four times greater than those in favor of women.

4. Conclusions: The analysis of gender disparity in Nigeria sequel to previous discussion shows that; feminism is at its lowest performance in Nigeria as education which is the bedrock of every achievement is fractured against women. Also government attitude towards important appointments in the civil service lacks adequate representation of women. As such, the fate of women in Nigeria is at stake. The

idea of women empowerment in Nigeria should not be over emphasized since women constitute a considerable population of Nigeria. As such empowering them will make the economy perform well as they are a positive compliment to the overall progress of the economy. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for women should be emphasized as they provide a good pressure that influences government decisions. Ministries such as Women Affairs should equally be maintained with accountability. This can be done by appointing credible women at the helm of affairs that will put great efforts in ensuring the protection and empowerment of women's livelihood in the country.

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Abdullahi Daiyabu Marmara

Email: admarmara@yahoo.co.uk

Economics Department SRM University, kattankulathur, Chennai 603203