GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA: FINDING THE MISSING CONUNDRUM IN PUBLIC POLICY

Olabode, Bolanle Motunrayo & Makinde, Wasiu Abiodun

Department of Public Administration, the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria.
Corresponding Contact: Phone Number: +2348068328389.Email: connect2makinde@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Gender equality or mainstreaming has continued to be a front burner in the public discourse over the years. The concept advocated for more women's representation in leadership and participation in activities and policy that affect them. This paper examined the concept of gender mainstreaming in the public administrative system of Nigeria, as a solution to problems of effective public policy. The paper explores literature on gender mainstreaming, public administration, model of gender mainstreaming, public policy and anchored the study on feminism theory. The use of internet, journal articles, thesis, government publication, official reports and archival materials assisted in the source of information. The study revealed that despite increased number of graduate female, high disparity in women/men representation noticed contribute to problem of public policy in Nigeria. It was concluded that gender mainstreaming with strong political will, technical capacity with supporting organisational culture for implementation and accountability on implementation will ensure women's experience and contribution in public policy for effective service delivery and improved standard of living in Nigeria.

Keyword: Gender, Public Administration, Policy, Mainstreaming, Equality, Accountability, Political will, Culture.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Public administration at the inception, both in textbook, curriculum and practices, largely overlooked minorities and dismissed contribution that reflected women's experience. This was evidenced in the early history of United States of America where government declared one half salary for women in government employment on the same job that a man would be paid to perform, until an equality law was enacted in 1963 (Equal Pay Act, 1963). These cultures hold over from early eras have influenced the current inequity in pay, and participation that still exist till today both in United State of America and other part of the world, including Nigeria.

Throughout history however, governmental and agency policies have been developed, implemented and continually revised to address the gender gap and foster equality, especially in the public sector workplace. The focus of gender is not on women per se but on power relations between men and women, their access to resources and decision making power. Agate (2011) argued that equality and gender equality is not the same. While the former advocated for the condition or quality of being equal, agreement in quantity or degree as compared, the later means granting of equal rights and opportunities to both gender, and not emphasizing that men and women are identical being.

Most leadership position is largely occupied by men at the detriment of qualified women around with instance in the present composition of the Executive and legislative arms of government in Nigeria, both at the federal and state level showing a wide margin. Emmanuel (2016) supported the above argument that, data on the gender composition of administrative positions and political position in Nigeria, persistently demonstrated that women are underrepresented at senior management level, with men occupying a disproportionately higher number of positions in both public and private sector.

The argument that women lack basic qualification and experiences to occupy top leadership position cannot stand the test of the present time, with record of women achieving a greet feet in academic record and scholarship in various institutions with the country. Still, women are not having equal opportunity to top management position in most organisations, as well as political position in Nigeria which are largely occupied by men. Though, cultural believe especially in Africa, that women are custodian of the homes is another disadvantage, as some of them failed to maintain a balance between the two challenging factors. Emmanuel (2016) asserts that despite a great number of women

graduates, there are few women at senior management level, most as a result of women being compelled to relinquish or interrupt their career for the sake of their family, to strike a balance between family and work.

Moreover, most argument has always supported women representation in leadership position especially in elective posts. There is little or no argument as to gender balance or mainstreaming in our public administrative system, since administrators' activities exceed implementation, but also professional advices to policymakers in the process of policy formulation. This might provide the solution to challenge of policy summersault being argued by most scholars as the main problem of underdevelopment in Nigeria. Even, there are policies such as child's care, antenatal and post natal care, counselling, among others, that deserved higher percentage of women for formulation as well as implementation, which is the core function of a public administrators. This paper tends to examine how gender mainstreaming or balance in Nigeria public administrative system can brings about desired result in the policy process *vis a vis* improved government activities in the area of service delivery.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Gender Mainstreaming

The concept of gender mainstreaming grew out of frustration with strategies for integrating women into development devised in the 1970s and 1980s that showed a little response towards improving gender equality. Gender mainstreaming term appeared for the first time after the Third World Conference on Women at Nairobi in 1985 and was explicitly adopted in the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995 as a result of the low impact that different policies, programmes and actions were achieving in terms of equality for women in society. Since then, several international and national organisations have adopted a gender mainstreaming strategies (United Nations Development Programme, 2007).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines gender mainstreaming as taking account of gender concerns in all policy, programme, administrative and financial activities, and in organisational procedures, thereby contributing to a profound organisational transformation. Gender mainstreaming is a very ambitious concept that requires total commitment, expertise and most of all goodwill from all stakeholders. Gender mainstreaming does not focus solely on the issues concerning women but goes on further to promote equality among individuals, be they male or female. It provides administrative tools to strengthen democratic governance and service delivery. It aims to address gender equality: accepting and valuing equally the differences between men and women and the different roles they play in society. Gender mainstreaming does not address women in isolation but aims for greater equality between the sexes by bringing a gender equality perspective into everyday policy-making and by complementing the existing traditional gender equality structures (Human Right Education Association, 2014).

Rees (2018) identifies the three principles as the basis for gender mainstreaming activity: (a) to regard the individual as a whole person; challenging the traditional role of the bread-winner being the male and the female's participation in the workforce to be minimal. To regard the individual as a whole means to move away from stereotypes, thus recognising the importance of the work-life balance; (b) Democracy and participation. This principal encourages civic participation in the decision-making processes, involving training in corporate governance, capacity building and allocating resources on the basis of need rather than on historical patterns. This principal aims at creating a culture of equal participation for women and men; and (c) Fairness, justice and equity. The third set of principles act as the social justice driver of mainstreaming, emphasising transparency, gender balance in decision making, equal outcomes and opportunities; thus creating an environment that leads to better governance. Rees (2018) argues that when applying gender mainstreaming practices, one should take into consideration a wider view to promote equality, not just the ability of each individual to perform the task assigned to them. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming incorporates a gender equality perspective into mainstream policies as they are developed, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

United Nations Economic and Social Council describe gender mainstreaming as a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated (HREA, 2014). Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality with interdependent or complementary roles of men and women are recognised, so that one cannot be changed without also affecting the other; aiming at transforming not only unequal relationships between genders but also the structures that produce inequality. Gender issues are not confined to one sector but must be

addressed across the board, gender needs to be addressed as part of mainstream, "normal" institutional activities and not simply left to specialist women's institutions. In this regard, this task is the responsibility of the entire organization and cannot be carried out by any single individual or sector.

2.2   Model of Gender Mainstreaming

There are many gender integration frameworks, each organisation using its own. For example, in 1999, Inter Action's Commission on the Advancement of Women developed the framework which sees integration as an organic process, similar to a living tree as quoted in World Health Organisation, Gender mainstreaming manual in 2016.
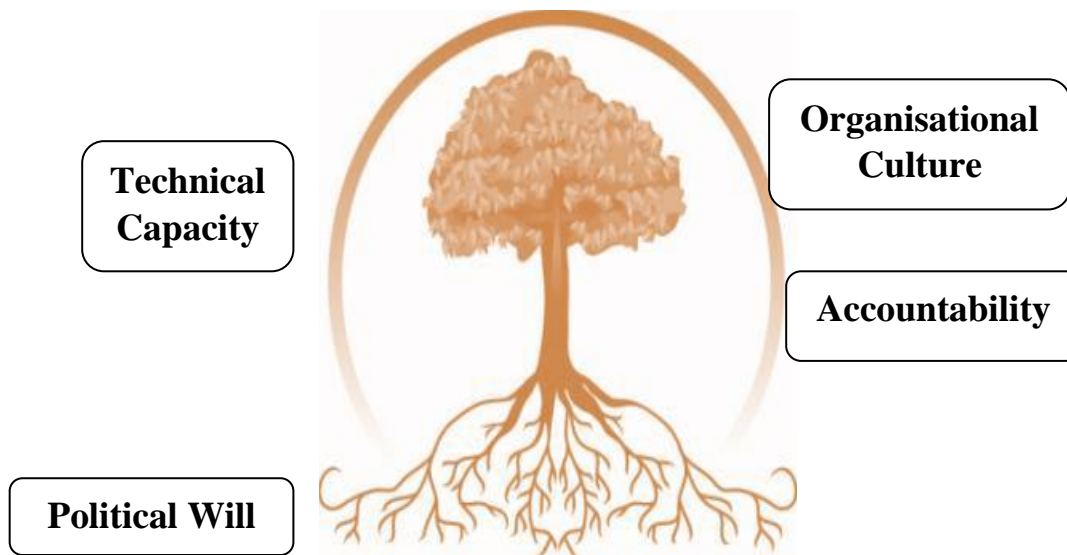
At the root of the process is political will. An organization with strong political will, like a tree with strong roots, can support the development of three vital branches:
   I.   technical capacity,
  II.   accountability and a
 III.   positive organizational culture.
All components are inter-related and activities can fall into multiple categories.

   I.   **Political Will**
Political will becomes evident when top-level leadership/managers (publicly) support the issue of gender equality and follow up its implementation, e.g. whether they commit staff, time and financial resources, show public support in speeches and written communications, when organisation adopts and advocates a gender policy, and institutes needed policies and procedures, and ways to recognize progress in gender mainstreaming.

  II.   **Organisational Culture**
Organizational culture involves progress toward a gender balanced staff and governance structure, equal valuing of women and men in the workplace, among others.

This also includes patterns of behaviour and codes of conduct within the organisation that help ensure gender equality, or undermine gender equality – how people relate, what are seen as acceptable ideas, how people are "expected to behave" and what behaviours are rewarded.

This field is also linked to climate of open communication, as well as if the culture of the organisation also reflects how it communicates gender equality and how gender equality is reflected in the internal and external documents of the organisation.

At the governance structure this means ensuring that women and men can participate at different levels of the organisation. It also requires ensuring that, once they are recruited and hired, they receive equitable treatment and opportunities to perform their duties to the best of their ability. In a gender-responsive working environment, all staff members, regardless of sex or position, perceive themselves to be stakeholders in effectively implementing organizational objectives, with policies and programmes that enhance their ability to do so. These could include instituting paid parental leave (for both sexes), establishing zero-tolerance policies on sexual harassment and adopting gender-responsive language in official communications.

A gender-responsive work environment also considers the different roles men and women play when balancing the dual responsibilities of professional and personal life. Women often have less time to engage in professional duties due to domestic roles. Equitable, needs-based flexible models of work such as telecommuting and flexitime can increase the satisfaction and productivity of both women and men, creating a supportive work environment. This may also require policies that account for the specific needs of women and men such as breastfeeding or accommodating child-care facility hours.

III.   Technical Capacity / Gender Competences

Technical capacity, skills and gender competences needed to carry out the practical aspects of gender integration must be developed. This is the aspect that moves organisation beyond awareness to application. This aspect includes staff skills in gender analysis, adoption of systems for gender disaggregated data, and development of gender sensitive tools and procedures. This part involves gender responsive organizational procedures as well as strengthen individual skills, including nurturing an ongoing community of learning amongst staff. Important part of technical capacity is linked to human management. For example, for organisations to take gender mainstreaming seriously, clear human resource plans and strategies must ensure that gender mainstreaming is fully integrated into work plans with the concrete human and financial resources allocated to it. An organisation can assign responsibility for gender mainstreaming in various ways: designate a gender focal point or gender unit; conclude specific activities in the terms of reference of certain staff members; and require gender competencies in recruitment procedures.

IV.   Accountability

Because gender integration ultimately involves organisational change, systems of accountability are also essential. Both incentives and requirements are necessary to encourage and reinforce new behaviours, within individuals and within an organisation as a whole. There are the mechanisms by which an organisation determines the extent to which it is "walking the talk" in terms of integrating gender equality in its programmes and organisational structures. In this regard, the high leadership needs to demand accountability within their spheres of responsibility for how the strategy has been applied and make sure that consequences are drawn from the results of internal and external evaluations and appraisals. This shows that the organisation expressly wishes efforts to be made to promote gender equality and supports such efforts accordingly. Example of accountability would be to also set and assess annual targets for implementing a gender strategy.

Another opportunity to increase accountability in this field is to build gender equality into job descriptions, work plans, and performance assessments. A positive action in this field is also, for example, if organisation's documents and rewards progress in the field of gender equality (e.g. GIZ *e*very two years, holds a company-wide Gender Competition, with awards for special approaches in this field).

2.3   Concept of Public Administration

Public Administration has been defined by various scholars, all centered on the government actions or inactions for changes in the standard of living, governance, politics and economy. The most common and first definition of Public Administration given by the father of the study Woodrow Wilson, that, public administration is the detailed and systematic application of law (public policy), shows that public administrators are machinery for executive arm of government for carrying out their action plan. Professor V. Bariss was quoted in Agate (2011) that public administration is the use of management, politics and legal history in order to implement the mandates of government legislation and its fulfilment, which ensure the provision of functions of regulations and services to the society or a part of it.

F. A Nigro and L.G Nigro asserts that public administration is a cooperative group effort in a public setting that covers all three branches, that is, executive, legislative and judicial and their interrelationship, which has important role in

the formulation of public policy and is closely associated with numerous private groups and individual in providing services to the community (Naidu, 2006). Public administration activities have a significant impact on daily life. They determine the way political and economic decisions made by governments are implemented and how budgets are allocated and spent. For this reason, the equal participation of women and men, especially at decision-making levels, is a necessary condition for inclusive and gender-responsive public administration systems.

2.4   Concept of Public Policy

In Carl J. Friedrich's opinion public policy is a proposed course o: action of a person, group or government within a given environment providing opportunities and obstacles which the policy was proposed to utilise and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realise an objective or purpose. From these definitions, it is clear that public policies are governmental decisions, and are actually the result of activities which the government undertakes in pursuance of certain goals and objectives. It can also be said that public policy formulation and implementation involves a well planned pattern or course of activity.

Public policy making can be characterized as a dynamic, complex, and interactive system through which public problems are identified and countered by creating new public policy or by reforming existing public policy. Public problems can originate in endless ways and require different policy responses (such as regulations, subsidies, import quotas, and laws) on the local, national, or international level. Government holds a legal monopoly to initiate or threaten physical force to achieve its ends. Public policy making is a continuous process that has many feedback loops. Verification and program evaluation are essential to the functioning of this system. The public problems that influence public policy making can be of economic, social, or political nature. Each system is influenced by different public problems and issues, and has different stakeholders; as such, each requires different public policy. In public policy making, numerous individuals, corporations, non-profit organizations and interest groups compete and collaborate to influence policymakers to act in a particular way (Pellissery, 2015). The above justifies the involvement of all, both men and women to formulate and especially implement policy that will bring about desired change in the life of the people.

2.5   Problems Associated with Gender Equality in Nigeria

Emmanuel (2016) identified seven major reasons for the lack of substantial progress being made in gender equality at the workplace: (a) differing perceptions of the problem. He also argues that despite overwhelming evidence that gender imbalance is entrenched in organisations, many men persist to view organisations, bureaucracy, and leadership hierarchical structures as being gender neutral phenomena; (b) opposition of men who do not want to treat women as equals in the workplace.

These men believe that women are less suited for roles that require leadership; (c) the private-public dichotomy. This is the belief that men and women should be of equal rank in the family domain (the private sphere), but they should be of different rank on the job (the public sphere), with women being on the lower organisational leadership hierarchical rung; (d) the debate over essentialism and malleability of gender. This is the belief that women are somehow better than men in some matters or that men make better leaders than women, and that women and men tend to differ consistently from each other in predictable ways; (e) the dilemma of professional autonomy. Literature illustrates that while many women believe that high-quality teamwork attains productive work, men are more likely to value self-directed problem solving and are less likely to accept the joint problem solving concept. This attitude unjustifiably limits women from demonstrating and gaining recognition for their ability to work with men and taking a leadership role; (f) failure in action. Emmanuel (2016) argues that while many men do not consciously oppose gender equality in the workplace, these men take a passive approach to the issue. Hence, the reason for the discrepancy between what is acknowledged and what is practiced; and (g) the time-lag for the democratic process to work. The literature illustrates that the time involved in executing the democratic process from the decision phase to actual implementation of gender reforms has sustained the hesitant and incremental approach to the integration of women at all levels of organisations.

2.6   Theoretical Framework

Feminist theories first emerged as early as 1794 in publications such as *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft, "The Changing Woman "Ain't I a Woman", "Speech after Arrest for Illegal Voting", and so on. "The Changing Woman" is a Navajo Myth that gave credit to a woman who, in the end, populated the world. In 1851, Sojourner Truth addressed women's rights issues through her publication, "Ain't I a Woman". Sojourner Truth addressed the issue of women having limited rights due to men's flawed perception of women. Truth argued that if a woman of colour can perform tasks that were supposedly limited to men, then any woman of any colour could perform those same tasks. After her arrest for illegally voting, Susan B. Anthony gave a speech within court in which she addressed the issues of language within the constitution documented in her publication, "Speech after Arrest for Illegal voting" in 1872. Anthony questioned the authoritative principles of the constitution and its male-gendered language. She raised the question of why women are accountable to be punished under law but they cannot use the law for their own protection (women could not vote, own property, nor themselves in marriage). She also critiqued the constitution for its male-gendered language and questioned why women should have to abide by laws that do not specify women.

Feminism as a political movement first emerged in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. This period was similar to the enlightenment, which grew from such political movements as liberalism, conservatism and socialism. That was regarded as the first feminism-wave depending on the existing political ideas. Liberal feminism emerged as the first one, then came Marxist, socialistic, radical and other types of feminism. Liberal feminism theory supports the idea that the roles of male and female gender cannot be interpreted from biological point of view, they have formed through socialization process (Moore, 1994). This type of feminism is reprimanded for its superficial approach to global female problems by focussing, for example, only on family or mass media. Theory of Marxist feminism relates female problems to capitalism (Moore, 1994). Women are regarded as reproductive agents who produce and take care of the future labour generation in capitalism by introducing ductility. This movement of feminism is reprimanded for its simplified feminist interpretation in capitalism. Theory of radical feminism (also social feminism) mentions that the reason of women oppression is men, their enforced power and self-enrichment at the expense of women, also fight against the violence towards women (rape etc.) attributed by men to show their power in the society (Moore, 1994). According to this theory, the situation in society cannot be changed because men have created the system we live in and are in its leadership.

Theory of dual system offers a more profound analysis on women's role in society and problems thereto. It provides a combination of radical and Marxist feminism elements by emphasizing that women have a place in capitalism, yet women are oppressed also by men. The role of a housewife and mother restricts woman's opportunities in professional life. A situation where a man is viewed a servant of capitalism by oppressing a woman, without any chances to treat a woman differently, may be considered a drawback of the dual system theory. Black feminism (also called multiracial feminism) supports African-American and Asian women, to which ethnocentric role is also being attributed (Moore, 1994). Yet, the overall idea of feminism remains unchanged – the emphasis is put on gender equality, not on the superiority of women.

3.   DISCUSSIONS

Gender issue has become multidisciplinary discussion almost in all field of human endeavour. This shows the relevance of women's representation and experience on all matters that will improve the standard of living of people and contribute to national development. The study discovered through content analysis of the literature that women are underrepresented in leadership position, managerial and political, as well as in the core public administrative system in Nigeria and other part of the world. This is in no small measure affect the effectiveness of policy making, implementation and evaluation for economic and national development.
The study affirms that despite increased in women graduate in the society, the undeserved discrimination against women due to culture, family life and religious belief affect their chance to be part of decision makers on matters that affect them. The problem of public policy in Nigeria cannot be ameliorated if all actors, including women are not involved.

4.   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   Conclusion

Women comprise a large segment of the available managerial talent across the globe, yet their representation at top level managerial positions in business and public administration, is rather obscure. Especially, under the crisis, it is of

crucial importance to apply all the resource available in the society, including human resources, in order to be more efficient at work and achieve good results. Therefore it is utterly important to evaluate and provide equal opportunities in public administration for both genders because gender discrimination causes also economic consequences in effect as well as defect in national development.

4.2   Recommendations

The study recommended as follows:
- Government should ensure formulation of policy that will prevent discrimination against women for leadership position as well as employment in the public administration.
- Women should be given equal education and support as men, to ensure quality contribution on national matters.
- Women should organise themselves in groups to support any noticed discrimination against their gender.
- In formation of policy that relates to women matter, more representation of the gender should be considered for effective public policy.

REFERENCES

Agate, Z (2011). Gender issues in Public administration in Latvia. *Management theory and Studies for rural business and development, 2* (26), 271-278.

Bronagh, H (2015). Strategies for Increased Participation of Women in Leadership across the Commonwealth. Commonwealth Secretariat Publisher.

Emmanuel, C (2016). Leadership in the Public Service: Is There A Gender Difference? *Journal of Business Research, 14*, 1-27.

Naidu, S. P. (2006). Public Administration Concept and Theories. New Delhi: New Age International Publisher Ltd.

Maria, J. D & Helisse, L (2011). Women in Public Administration. Theory and Practices. United Kingdom: Jones and Barnett Learning Ltd.

Moore, S. (1994). Sociology. BPP (Letts Educational): Great Britain.

Rees, T. (2003). *Mainstreaming Equality in the European Union: Education, training, and Labour Market Policies*, New York: Routledge.

Rees, T. (2018). *Gender Mainstreaming: Principles, Tools and Prerequisites*, Paper presented at the Gender Impact Assessment Workshops, Department for Women in Society, Ministry of Social policy, Malta.

United Nations Development Programme. Gender Mainstreaming a Key Driver of Development in Environment & Energy. New York, 2007

United Nations Development Programme (2014). Gender Equality in Public Administration. UNDP Global Report on Gender.

Hanne, N. J (2008). Gender, public administration and new institutionalism; new combinations towards a feminist institutionalism? Paper presented at ECPR, Rennes 11-16. April 2008. Workshop 12: Gender, Politics, and Institutions: Towards a Feminist Institutionalism?

Human Rights Education Association. Course on *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. September – November, 2014*

Ifenowo, B. O (2013). Public Administration Theme and Perspectives. Lagos: Olas Print Publisher Ltd.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (2015). Gender Mainstreaming. Gender Tool Box.

World Health Organisation. Gender Mainstreaming Manual for Health Managers: A Practical Approach. Geneva, 2016

Women in National Parliament (2017). Policymakers and Gender Equality. What they know and how they know it.

USAID (2016). Gender Integration in Democracy, Human Right and Governance Programming Toolkit.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2008). Gender in Local Government: A Sourcebook for Trainers.

Pellissery, S (2015). Public Policy. The SAGE Encyclopedia of World Poverty. Sage.
    1.