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Maternal Health Literacy Project in Rural Areas of Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of Niger State

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Summit Track: The Future is Now: Prioritizing Education, Learning, and Empowerment

Abstract

Northern Nigeria has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. According to the WHO, there are approximately 1,012 maternal deaths that occur per 100,000 live births, equivalent to 1.0% of deaths among 100,000 live births. This statistic emanated partly as a result of the inaccessibility to timely health information, hindering informed decision-making. Our research highlighted the crucial role of librarians and information scientists in addressing this pressing issue by leveraging their expertise and skills, data-driven strategies, digital technologies, and community partnerships, particularly in rural northern Nigeria. Librarians can spearhead intervention programs to enhance women's health literacy and limit maternal mortality. These interventions were tailored to the unique needs of rural women, encompassing factors such as literacy levels, specific health information requirements, preferred communication formats, and optimal timing. Additionally, involving husbands, Village Heads, and community leaders is pivotal for success. The study involved engaging with 316 pregnant women and new mothers residing in rural areas of Niger State, specifically Beji, Bosso, Garatu, Gidan Kwano, and Gidan Mangoro. The primary focus was to combat the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation regarding the causes of maternal mortality. Additionally, our intervention facilitated medical support through collaboration with community health workers and public health practitioners, providing essential services such as free malaria testing, blood pressure checks, and the distribution of routine medications. However, challenges persist, including the need for additional funding to expand coverage to more rural areas within the state and the unpredictable security threats that continue to plague the region. In essence, this study highlighted the critical importance of empowering librarians and information scientists to bridge the health information gap, ultimately contributing to the reduction of maternal mortality in northern Nigeria. While progress has been made, further efforts are necessary to overcome financial constraints and security challenges and ensure comprehensive coverage in rural communities in northern Nigeria.

Keywords: Health information gap, Librarians, Northern Nigeria, Maternal mortality rates, Rural women.

Overcoming Fear as a Barrier to Self-Injection of DMPA-SC for Improved Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Access in Nigeria

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Summit Track: Walking the Talk: Inclusiveness in Access and Utilization of Healthcare Services

Sub-track: Women's Health: Enhancing Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Abstract

The Nigerian government is working to enhance women's access to sexual and reproductive health services (SRH) by promoting Depot Medroxyprogesterone Acetate Subcutaneous (DMPA-SC) self-injection in both public and private sectors. The task-shifting and task-sharing (TSTS) policy empowers community-based distributors, licensed pharmacies, and drugstores to offer DMPA-SC to women and train them on self-injection. This innovative approach aims to reduce barriers to contraceptive use by saving women time and money, as it minimizes trips to healthcare centres. However, the fear of self-injection remains a barrier. In the ICAN1 implementation research study, we interviewed DMPA-SC providers and clients to understand the sources of women's self-injection fears. We particularly examined the role of provider-client relationships in creating a supportive environment for improving access to SRH services, including self-injection of DMPA-SC. Experienced researchers randomly selected Public and Private facilities in Lagos, Enugu, and Plateau, Nigeria. Interviews were conducted in August 2022 with 61 providers of DMPA-SC and 44 SI clients using semi-structured guides. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed. The primary analysis involved reviewing and coding the transcripts and noting key observations within each interview domain. Secondary analysis extracted key insights related to SI. Both analyses were then combined to generate results. Women's fears surrounding SI were influenced by various factors, including discomfort with needles/injections, concerns about making mistakes while injecting themselves, and access to a supportive provider. Also, some providers were reluctant to shift this responsibility to clients who were fearful of SI and as a result, this hindered them from self-injecting. Despite the fear, women who self-inject reported feeling empowered and in control of their health. Self-injection of DMPA-SC can enhance access to SRH services. However, supportive social and structural environments are crucial for its success. To advance self-injection and empower women's health choices, counselling using a more empathetic approach can reduce women's fears. Also, the provider-client relationship should emphasize a more supportive role from the provider, while recognizing women's agency in self-care decision-making. This would ultimately increase their confidence in self-injection while enhancing access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Keywords: Women's health, Contraceptive access, Depot Medroxyprogesterone Acetate (DMPA-SC), Self-injection.

Enumeration of Children and Women of Reproductive Age; a case for accurate data to forestall missed opportunities for accessing care in Gombe State

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Organization: ACE STRATEGY AND CONSULTS LIMITED

Summit Track: Walking the Talk: Gender Inclusiveness in Access and Utilization of Healthcare Services

Abstract

Accurate population data is essential for health planning, policy-making, resource distribution, and routine immunization. However, many developing countries like Nigeria lack up-to-date population level data as the last census was conducted in 2006. This data gap translates to inaccurate planning for children and women of reproductive age, resulting in vaccine stockouts, inadequate immunization, and eventual maternal and child mortality. To this end, we conducted an enumeration of under 2 and 5 children as well as women of reproductive age in Gombe State, Nigeria. This study was carried out as a pointer to the necessity for accurate population data for public health planning using Gombe, Nigeria as a case study. LGA teams were trained on the use of an Open Data Kit (ODK) and further communicated the same to the selected enumerators. Households within 0-2km from all routine immunization-offering health facilities were properly enumerated. Enumerators were escorted by supervisors to ensure adherence to the standing guidelines throughout the process. Collated data were cleaned, analyzed, reported and duly submitted. The study enumerated 70,106, 94,452 and 114,214 under 2, 5 and women of reproductive age (WRA) respectively in Gombe State. These numbers were compared to the Reaching Every Ward (REW) micro plan population estimate that was been used for PHC program planning. Overall, we discovered more than 55,000 unidentified Under 2 children that could have been missed with quality fixed RI sessions. Of the 57,860 children that are missed annually, 44,280 (76%) of them are female. The figure for each age group increased in the following order; under2<under5<WRA. All LGAs possess a higher quota for WRA except Funakaye. The findings show some opportunities to further address the equity concern in immunization and broader PHC programs by addressing the endemic denominator issues, especially in a country like Nigeria that has not had any census since 2006. Detailed population enumeration is highly required for proper health planning/intervention to ensure quality data is used to inform forecasting, procurement, distribution, storage and implementation of the PHC program.

Keywords: Microplan, enumeration, missed opportunities, Gender equity.

Pathways to Contraception: Exploring women's experiences in accessing DMPA-SC self-injectable contraception in Nigeria.

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Summit Track: Walking the Talk: Inclusiveness in Access and Utilization of Healthcare Services

Sub-track: Women's Health: Enhancing Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Abstract

Access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in Nigeria remains relatively limited, particularly in underserved regions and among specific segments of the population. The introduction and scale-up of Subcutaneous (SC) depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA-SC) for self-injection by the Nigerian government holds promise in expanding contraceptive access to help women meet their reproductive needs. As Nigeria strives for universal access to comprehensive SRH services, understanding the diverse needs and preferences of women in accessing contraception is vital for effectively enhancing these services. In the ICAN1 formative research study, we explored women's experiences of DMPA-SC including for self-injection (SI), focusing on where and why they engage with various service delivery channels in getting contraception. This paper draws from a dataset of 60 semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in August 2021 with women of reproductive age in Enugu and Plateau states, Nigeria. The participants were purposively selected to represent diverse age groups, contraceptive users, and experiences with DMPA-SC. For this study, we primarily focused on two groups: DMPA-SC users who self-inject (SI users) (n=13) and those who are injected by the healthcare providers (provider-administered users) (n=7). Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using Dedoose software. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and themes in the coded transcripts, drawing from both inductive and deductive approaches. The majority of DMPA-SC users who self-inject preferred obtaining the injection from Primary healthcare centres (PHCs) because it was mostly cost-free, however, few users indicated a willingness to purchase from a pharmacy when PHCs were out of stock. Community-based distributors (CBDs) were another favoured choice for some users due to their community-based presence, cost-free services, and the privacy they offered. Provider-administered DMPA-SC users also favoured public sector providers, primarily for their no-cost services. Our findings highlight the importance of implementation strategies adopting multifaceted approaches to cater to the various pathways women choose to access contraception. Also, women's preference for obtaining free services underpins the need to consider financial barriers to accessing contraception. Making SRH services available and affordable, especially within community-based settings, is essential for meeting women's reproductive needs, and advancing universal and equitable access.

Keywords: Sexual and reproductive health (SRH), Contraceptive access, DMPA-SC, Self-injection.

Use of Digital Banking among Women Entrepreneurs in Nigeria

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Summit Track: Leveraging Technology to Advance Digital Inclusion in Trade and Health

Abstract

The use of digital banking remains insignificant among entrepreneurs in Nigeria despite its global acceptability and associated benefits. Digital banking is availing of banking services through a web interface or a smartphone. In this study, the use of digital banking among women entrepreneurs was examined using data from 12,380 women entrepreneurs who own bank accounts in banks or any other financial institutions in the 2018 Nigeria Demography and Health Survey. The use of digital bank was captured using the variable use mobile telephone for financial transactions and data were analyzed using Descriptive statistics, Chi-square analysis and Logit regression model. The average of the women was 37.93±6.84 years. The majority of the women were married (84.77%) with secondary education (55.93%). A higher percentage of the women engaged in sales and services (77.38%). About 52% of the women entrepreneurs used mobile telephones for financial transactions. The use of mobile telephones for financial transactions was more prominent among educated women entrepreneurs (96.04%), and those engaged in sales and services (78.23%) living in urban areas (72.18%). The logit regression results revealed that women's autonomy over their earnings, education, access to electricity, watching television, living in southern Nigeria, household wealth index and being engaged in clerical jobs positively influenced the use of digital banking while the age of women, living in northern Nigeria and being engaged in agricultural job negatively influenced the use of digital banking among women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. It is thus recommended that more enlightenment should be given to women entrepreneurs on the positive impact of digital banking on their businesses. More emphasis should have been laid on women entrepreneurs in northern Nigeria and rural communities.

Keywords: Digital banking, Women entrepreneurs, Logit regression.

Gender equality in financial inclusion: An intersectionality Theory Perspective

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Organization: Lancaster University

Summit Track: Intersectionality in trade and health:

Sub-track: Addressing Gaps in gender-inclusive programming

Abstract

Many adults in most emerging countries do not have access to a formal financial system; even more alarming is the gender dimension of this exclusion in these countries. Therefore, as Nigeria struggles to provide access to the financial system for adults, women face more obstacles in accessing these financial services and products. This restriction affects these women's access to quality healthcare and trade because finance is at the heart of most socioeconomic activities worldwide. Academically, studies on financial inclusion have not established cogent theoretical uniformity. Therefore, it is unsurprising that scholarly studies on the gender dimension of financial inclusion are still far behind and under-researched. As a result, this study examines gender equality in financial inclusion, using the theory of intersectionality to scrutinise how gender combines with gender norms, social class, and level of education to create obstacles in access to finance for women. This study used semi-structured interviews (SSI) to collect data from women who are experts on gender and financial inclusion in Nigeria. The data collected are currently being analysed using the reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) technique. So far, the preliminary findings show that gender norms, low level of education, and social class, among other factors, combine with being a woman (gender) to create a bottleneck in access to finance for women. Apart from making key theoretical contributions, this study also offers practical ways Nigeria can solve this issue of inequality so that these excluded women can actualise their potential. Also, when the causes of the gender gap in access to finance are correctly understood, the government and other stakeholders can address them effectively. Furthermore, financial inclusion can enhance trade and other economic activities and improve access to health facilities. Therefore, achieving financial inclusion will enable these women to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

Keywords: Financial inclusion, gender equality, intersectionality theory.

Gender Dynamics, Economic Empowerment, and Health Outcomes: Insights from Yobe State, Nigeria

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Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes.

Abstract

In Yobe State, Nigeria, deeply rooted traditional gender norms and cultural expectations have long been a driving force behind gender-based disparities in power, decision-making, and health outcomes, particularly affecting women and girls. This study aimed to unravel the intricate gender dynamics within the community, focusing on the influence of traditional norms on women's economic power, and health outcomes. It also sought to examine the potential of men as allies in advancing gender equality and enhancing health outcomes within this context. Through a comprehensive qualitative study, we engaged community members, religious and traditional leaders, state-level stakeholders, and local organizations in Yobe State. Employing in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, we delved into the nuances of gender dynamics, women's economic empowerment, decision-making processes, and access to healthcare services. Thematic coding was used to extract vital insights from respondents' perspectives. Our findings uncovered the pervasive impact of harmful norms, perpetuating a culture of silence around Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The fear of stigma, retaliation, and damage to family reputation discourages reporting. Traditional gender norms not only limit women's political participation and public engagement but also influence their roles in household decision-making. Men often wield greater authority in substantial financial matters, while women exercise more autonomy over daily needs, contributing to gender disparities. Harmful norms favoring men in inheritance laws exacerbate gender-based economic imbalances, deeply rooted in patriarchal values. Sociocultural and religious norms that endorse early marriages for girls often lead to adverse consequences for their well-being and reproductive health. Additionally, cultural beliefs opposing comprehensive sexual education hinder adolescents' access to vital sexual and reproductive health information, further impeding their agency and decision-making. Within households, power imbalances persist, particularly in financial decisions, where male approval is necessary for women to access healthcare. To address these challenges, our study emphasizes the urgency of shifting harmful social norms. Initiatives promoting awareness, community-based approaches, and collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are essential for a comprehensive response to GBV. Furthermore, this study underscores the pivotal role of men as allies in the journey towards challenging and reshaping these harmful norms, ultimately advancing gender equality, and promoting better health outcomes.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Cultural Norms, Women's Empowerment, Health Access, Decision-Making.

Demographic Factors Related to Uptake and Utilization of Contraceptive Services in Nigeria: A Scoping Review

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Organization: Walking the Talk: Gender Inclusiveness in Access and Utilization of Health Care services

Summit Track: Intersectionality in trade and health:

Sub-track: Women's Health: Enhancing Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services.

Abstract

Effective contraceptive services are fundamental to the prevention of unintended pregnancies, and reduced maternal morbidity and mortalities. The dearth of appropriate workable data remains a major challenge to effective planning and intervention programs in Nigeria. This scoping review aims to examine the methodological approaches employed by previous studies in accessing the uptake and utilization of contraceptive services and examines the intricate interplay between demographic variables, uptake and utilization of contraceptive services among women of reproductive in Nigeria. The review also aims to identify facilitators and challenges related to the uptake and utilization of contraceptive services among women of reproductive age in Nigeria. Using data obtained from Google Scholar, PubMed, Cochrane, and RefSeek databases, a review of the literature and previous study findings conducted in Nigeria between the year 2013 and 2022 was undertaken using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) checklist. The main keywords related to the uptake and utilization of contraceptive services among women of reproductive age were used for literature searches. Eligible studies were extracted using independent and double-blind approaches by two reviewers, with discrepancies resolved by the reviewers. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize types of study designs employed in previous studies, information about the uptake and utilization of contraceptive services and associated factors among women of reproductive age in Nigeria. Following an initial screening of 961 studies, a total of 56 eligible studies were included in the review, 92.0% of review studies were cross-section studies, 2.0% were prospective longitudinal and 6.0% were retrospective studies. The main predictors of contraceptive uptake were women's age, religion, place of residence, level of education, employment status and socio-economic status, male partners and attitude of service providers. In conclusion, this review provides a deeper understanding of the demographic dynamics influencing the uptake and utilization of contraceptive services in Nigeria. The insights derived from this review serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, healthcare providers, and researchers, guiding the development of contextual strategies to improve awareness, access and effective utilization of contraceptive services across diverse uptake and utilization of demographic backgrounds in Nigeria.

Keywords: Women of Reproductive Age; Demographic Variables; Contraceptive Uptake and Utilization; Nigeria.

Where Are We After Five Decades of Addressing the Gender Divide in Primary Education Attainment Across Nigeria?

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Organization: Viable Knowledge Masters

Summit Track: The Future is Now: Prioritizing Education, Learning, and Empowerment

Abstract

There have been several interventions aimed at addressing the gender divide in education across low and middle-income countries. Such interventions rolled from the era of the MDGs into the era of the SDGs towards achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs 4 and 5). Evaluating the progress of the interventions can often be a challenge. Yet, it is important to understand how interventions have addressed the gender divide over time, to aid further interventions, including healthcare interventions. We analysed pooled data from the demographic and health surveys executed in Nigeria (2008-2018). We retrospectively investigated the progress made in reducing the gender divide in primary educational attainment over the last 5 decades (1971-2020). We also investigated the changes across geographical units in the country. Using STATA, we estimated a binary regression model to predict the chances of educational attainment, among the male and female genders and further examined their chances of educational attainment within the levels of wealth index and residence types in Nigeria. The gender divide in educational attainment improved across Nigeria. Southern Nigeria achieved parity in the 2011-2020 decade. However, while it has improved over the last 5 decades across the North, girls' educational attainment still lags across its three geopolitical zones, with the Northwest having the worst case in the 2011-2020 decade (0.71). The likelihood of a girl achieving educational attainment in primary education over a boy at the national level is 1.40 (95% CI=1.38, 1.41), while in the north it is 0.63 (95% CI=0.62, 0.64) and 6.89 (95% CI=6.71, 7.08) in the south. Similar situations exist within the cadres of the geopolitical zones, wealth index and urban/rural location. Whilst there has been progress over the last five decades to address the gender divide in primary educational attainment, significant geographic variations continue to exist. Stakeholders need to strengthen efforts across northern Nigeria towards achieving SDGs 4 and 5 and to improve the inclusivity of the female gender in educational attainment.

Keywords: Gender divide, education attainment, parity, Nigeria.

Women's Voter Turnout and Vote-Selling in the 2023 General Elections: Convergent Methods and Unintended Consequences on Political Participation.

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Organization: Policy Innovation Centre

Summit Track: Intersectionality in trade and health:

Sub-track: The Future is Now: Prioritizing Education, Learning and Empowerment

Abstract

Research into gender differences in vote trading faces several bottlenecks not limited to privacy of votes, ethical concerns and data collection challenges. The 2023 general elections offered an opportunity for convergence of methods. While designing an RCT to deter vote trading, a natural experiment on the effect of economic pressures on voting behaviour happened. This convergence of methods offered a unique opportunity for studying gendered voting behaviour. Perceived gender difference in vote trading is a discourse that becomes more relevant with the ongoing debate around the tokenization of women's empowerment and their political interests. It is widely recognized that prioritizing female education is one of the global best investments and guarantees both political awareness and economic empowerment for this vulnerable group. The study examines the unintended consequences of women's voter turnout and vote-selling behaviour on their political participation in the 2023 general elections. A randomized control trial (RCT) was conducted using a mixed method in Nasarawa and Lagos States. The study used a commitment device (community outreach) and reinforcement short messages as nudges to educate them against vote-trading. A total of 998 respondents (including women) were interviewed at the end of the study. Using both descriptive statistics, McNmer Test and DID, the study finds that women were less likely (36.79%) to vote than men (54%) in dire economic conditions. Also, evidence showed that women were less economically empowered and more likely to accept cash or gifts for their votes compared to men. The study also found that women faced a moral dilemma between sustenance from accepting cash or gifts for votes, or not voting at all and voting despite poverty. The data suggests that women were more likely to discount the future as they had more pressing responsibilities for the survival of their families. In summary, the study found that poverty and vote-selling were major factors contributing to lower voter turnout among women in Nigeria. The Naira redesign policy, which was intended to reduce corruption, may have had the unintended consequence of increasing vote-selling among women, as they were more likely to be desperate for cash or gifts. The study then concludes that the relative poverty, the tendency for vote-selling among women, and lower level of participation were unintended consequences of ineffective policy implementation of the Naira redesign policy. The study therefore recommends that there is a need to address the root causes of poverty and vote-selling to increase voter turnout among women in Nigeria. This could include policy options that increase access to economic opportunities for women that go beyond tokenism in women's economic empowerment to women's economic power.

Keywords: Poverty, women empowerment, vote-selling, voters' participation, RCT.

Understanding the Prevalence, Consequences, and Factors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence: A Cross-Sectional Study on Experiences and Impacts

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Organization: First On-Call Initiative

Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes

Sub-track: Gender Norms in Transition: Exploring Innovative Behavioral Approaches to Address Gender-Based Violence (Violence Against Women/Men) and Other Harmful Practices.

Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a global public health concern, particularly affecting women in Nigeria with a prevalence ranging from 28.2% to 78.8%. Risk factors include low education, substance abuse, childhood exposure to violence, and economic stress. IPV has significant consequences, impacting mental health, children's well-being, and socioeconomic status. Reporting remains low due to cultural acceptance, fear, and lack of awareness. Addressing this issue requires enhanced awareness and support systems to combat the high prevalence and severe impacts of IPV in Nigeria. This study aimed to fill a knowledge gap by investigating the prevalence and factors influencing intimate partner violence (IPV) among state civil servants in Calabar, Cross River State. The findings had important implications for policy decisions and interventions to effectively mitigate IPV in the region and contributed to the global understanding of this significant issue. A cross-sectional survey among 253 randomly selected civil servants was conducted using a pretested questionnaire. Data analysis involved Chi-square tests to determine associations between variables. Ethical approval and informed consent were obtained. The average age of respondents was 42.54 ± 9.76 years. 65.6% had good knowledge of IPV. In the study, 61.3% (155) of respondents experienced intimate partner violence (IPV), primarily emotional IPV. 16.2% (41) reported childhood exposure to domestic violence. The effects of IPV included mood changes (47%), loss of interest (37.2%), and suicidal thoughts or attempts (16.6%). Physical injuries from IPV included cuts, punctures, bites, scratches, abrasions, bruises, and broken bones. Social services (17.8%) were the most sought-after help, while lack of knowledge (17.4%) and fear of tarnishing the family name (15%) were reasons for not seeking help. Childhood exposure to IPV increases the likelihood of experiencing IPV later in life. 18.2% had violent acts resulting in pregnancy, and 7.5% reported pregnancy loss due to abuse. Lower education levels for both respondents and partners were significantly associated with experiencing IPV. This research and recommendations emphasize the need for family support, cultural change, government funding, legal reforms, health sector awareness, and educational training to address IPV and improve patient care.

Keywords: Domestic Violence; Female; Pregnancy, Nigeria; Prevalence

It's All About Power: How Gender Norms Shape Women's Agency and Livelihood

Presenting Author: Solape Sonuga

Organization: ElectHER, Lagos State, Nigeria

Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes

Abstract

In a world where gender inequality persists across the globe, its far-reaching repercussions touch upon social, economic, and health outcomes. Despite significant strides toward recognizing the importance of gender and inclusion, deeply ingrained gender norms continue to exert a stifling influence on women's agency and livelihoods. This paper delves into the pressing issue of how these entrenched gender norms mould the economic and health prospects of women, acting as barriers that hinder their full participation in trade and access to healthcare. The core objectives of this research are threefold: Firstly, to explore the role of traditional gender norms in shaping women's decision-making power when it comes to matters of trade and healthcare. Secondly, to investigate how these gender norms contribute to the glaring disparities that exist in accessing economic opportunities and receiving quality healthcare services. Lastly, to dissect the intricate interplay between these gender norms, women's agency, and the outcomes of their livelihoods within a diverse range of socio-cultural contexts. To tackle these objectives comprehensively, this research employs a versatile multi-method approach that seamlessly blends qualitative and quantitative methods. This methodology includes in-depth interviews, carefully crafted surveys, and meticulous analysis of existing data to capture various experiences and perspectives held by women from various demographics and geographic regions. The major result of our investigation illuminates a complex web of gender norms that constrict women's agency in making decisions related to trade and healthcare. These deeply ingrained norms often act as formidable barriers, limiting women's access to economic opportunities and impeding their ability to access quality healthcare services. Significantly, this research underscores the imperative of challenging and transforming these gender norms to pave the way for gender-inclusive trade and healthcare systems. In conclusion, this paper emphasizes the urgent need to recognize and confront these deeply rooted gender norms, working towards the empowerment of women and the enhancement of their livelihoods. It underscores the necessity for policy interventions that address gender norms at multiple levels, thereby fostering a more equitable environment for women's economic engagement and healthcare access.

Keywords: Gender Norms, Women's Agency, Trade, Healthcare, Inequality, Economic Empowerment.

Knowledge, Attitudes and Behavioral Factors Influencing Gender-Based Violence among Adults in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes

Abstract

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is increasingly prevalent in Cross River State with spousal violence being the highest at 47.4%. This study aimed to determine the knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral factors influencing gender-based violence among adults in Cross River State. A mixed-method design was used to survey and interview adults, 18 years and older. The research protocol was approved by the Cross River State Ministry of Health's Ethical Clearance Committee. A majority of the respondents were females 315 (59.8%), and more than a third 184 (35.0%) were 24-35 years old, 246 (46.7%) were single, and 205 (38.9%) were married. The majority of respondents 299 (56.8%) had completed the secondary level of education followed by tertiary, 175 (33.2%), Primary, 46 (8.7%), and no formal education, 7 (1.3%). Knowledge level by age showed that 40 (55.6%) of 18-24 years old, 77 (60.6%) of 25-34 years old, and 43 (58.1%) of 35-44 years had high GBV knowledge levels. The employed respondents were 376 (71.3%), the unemployed were 138 (26.2%) and the retired were 13 (2.5%). Of those employed, 292 (77.7%) were self-employed while 84 (22.3%) were employees. The mean \pm standard deviation of the total knowledge score is 43.5 ± 13.5 with a maximum score of 68 and minimum 16 giving a range of 52. A little more than half, 209 (58.2%) had a high GBV knowledge level. For the types of GBV, the majority identified wife beating, 298 (83%), verbal abuse, 301 (83.8%), the threat of injury with a weapon, 233 (64.9%), and husband beating, 165 (46%). Other types, female genital mutilation, 86 (24%), forced marriage, 106 (29.5%), and child marriage, 100 (27.9%), were identified by a little more than a third of the respondents. Residents of Obanliku reported the highest proportion of forced marriage, 32 (76%), and child marriage 30 (71.4%), while Yala reported the highest proportion of financial deprivation, 34 (91.8%), and husband beating, 27 (72.9%), and Akpabuyo had the highest proportion for wife beating 49 (94.2%) occurring in their communities. The type of GBV Knowledge was limited to verbal and physical violence. The limited knowledge influenced attitudes and behaviour toward prevention practices. There is a need for high-level advocacy, community sensitization, law strengthening, adaptive leadership modelling, and innovative behavioural change communication at the grassroots level.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, gender norms, physical abuse, spousal abuse, community sensitization.

Female Workers in Trade and Exploitation in The Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

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Organization: National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)

Summit Track: Intersectionality in Trade and Health

Abstract

Numerous surveys and official statistics seem to indicate that the Nigerian business environment has been inundated with small and medium-scale enterprises for decades. Within this landscape, wholesale and retail trading in household goods, intermediate and spare parts merchandise, as well as support services hold sway in this business, because competition is high, enterprises and traders often devise various marketing strategies to not only survive but to stay ahead of the curve. One of such strategy is to engage young and attractive girls in their ads and as 'salesgirls' in their showrooms and retail shops. Using a survey method, this study investigates the prevalence of this phenomenon and the tendency for the traders' preference for female assistance within the framework of theories explaining gender relations in the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria a case study. Preliminary findings show that aside from being subject to labour-related exploitation such as discriminatory low pay, disproportionate exposure to disregard or non-compliance to standard safety and protection procedures, female workers are likely to become victims of sexism leading to sexual exploitation and abuse, a major theme often not given the attention it deserves in existing literature on Gender Inclusion, Trade and Health.

Keywords: Gender, Salesgirls, Trade, Sexual exploitation, FCT

Social Norms that Delay Commencement of Antenatal Care (ANC) Visits in Northern Nigeria: Experience from implementing the Revised WHO ANC Guidelines.

Presenting Author: Hadiza Salele

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Organization: Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)

Summit Track: Walking the Talk: Gender Inclusiveness in Access and Utilization of Healthcare Services

Abstract

One of the targets of sustainability development, goal 3 is to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births and Nigeria reported 512 per 100,000 live births, according to the 2018 National Demographic Health Survey. It has been established that Quality ANC care is paramount to reducing preventable maternal and neonatal mortality. The WHO updated the ANC guidelines to improve positive pregnancy experience, and quality and ultimately save more lives. These recommendations included a switch from four focus ANC visits to eight ANC contact models. In 2018, CHAI, in collaboration with the Ministries of Health, implemented a comprehensive SRH strategy to reduce maternal and neonatal deaths in Kaduna, Kano, and Katsina States. CHAI built the capacity of 1632 health care providers on Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care, which incorporated sessions on the 2016 ANC recommendations. In addition, 5,059 Traditional Birth Attendants were oriented on demand generation for comprehensive SRH to increase awareness of the new ANC model. They sensitized pregnant women on the commencement of ANC within 12 to 14 weeks of gestation. Service data was analysed to measure trends in first ANC attendance, and qualitative surveys were conducted with women and TBAs to understand the sociocultural factors that affect ANC attendance rates. Baseline data collected in May 2019 showed that only 6% of pregnant women attended ANC within 14 weeks, which increased to 25% in January 2022. Success factors contributing to the trend include collaborative sensitization efforts between male and female community change agents and incorporating approaches to reach female family heads (mothers-in-law). Focus Group Discussions unveiled that the main norm affecting the first ANC attendance rate was the expectation to conceal pregnancy until it is apparent, i.e., at about 20 weeks of gestation in communities. Additionally, women who have gone through multiple pregnancies prefer to commence ANC visits late during pregnancy. Social norms pose a threat to ANC service uptake in rural communities and achieving sustainable development goals. Norm-shifting interventions should be designed to target specific reference groups to improve ANC uptake.

Key Words: Ward Development Committees, Women's Agency, Basic Health Care Provision Fund, Leadership, Decision Making.

Examining the Barriers and Enablers of Gender Responsive Trade Policies in Nigeria

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Organization: Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities

Summit Track: The Role of Trade in Promoting Gender Equality and the SDGs

Abstract

This study sought to examine the various barriers and enablers of gender-responsive trade policies in Nigeria. A qualitative research method was employed in the study, with data collection methods including in-depth interviews and documentation review. Participants were comprised of trade policy experts, policymakers and civil society actors. The findings of the study revealed that major barriers to implementing gender-responsive trade policies in Nigeria include: pervasive cultural norms which privilege men over women; the lack of awareness and understanding of the importance of gender-responsive trade policy among policymakers; limited capacity to effectively engage with the public and civil society on gender-related issues; and overall lack of dedicated resources to gender responsiveness in trade policy. Furthermore, the study found that some implementing enablers for gender responsive trade policies in Nigeria include; increased access to finance for women-owned businesses, the establishment of gender-sensitive structures and institutions within trade policy processes; increased awareness and understanding of gender sensitivity among conflicting stakeholders; and the greater inclusion of gender-related considerations into discourse of trade policy-making. The study recommends that there is a need to increase collaboration between government, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure that gender-responsive trade policies are implemented.

Keywords: Barriers, Enablers, trade, policy, Nigeria.

Empowering Adolescents for Safer Sexual Reproductive Health Practices in Yobe State, Nigeria.

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Contributing authors: Maxwell Obubu, Ifeoma Chukwumerije, Joy Ikott, Precious Nwadike, Nkata Chuku, Alozie Ananaba, Oluwatosin Kolade, Rotimi Oduloju

Organization: Health Systems Consult Limited (HSCL), Abuja

Summit Track: The Future is Now: Prioritizing Education, Learning, and Empowerment

Abstract

Adolescent sexuality and reproductive health have emerged as paramount concerns in Nigeria, particularly in Yobe State. This demographic grapples with significant challenges such as unintended pregnancies, maternal mortality, and the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Disturbingly, data illustrates that adolescents in Yobe State often initiate sexual activity as early as nine years of age. This early onset of sexual activity contributes to a higher prevalence of reproductive health issues, primarily driven by a lack of comprehensive information and limited access to essential services. The primary aim of our study is to shed light on the prevailing community perceptions and cultural norms that influence adolescent access to Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services in Yobe State, Nigeria. To accomplish this, we undertook an extensive qualitative research initiative involving a spectrum of critical stakeholders encompassing community members, influential religious and traditional leaders, state-level stakeholders, and various local organizations operating within Yobe State. Our research methodology involved in-depth interviews and meticulously conducted focus group discussions (FGDs). The collected data was systematically analyzed through thematic coding to unearth crucial insights gleaned from respondents' perspectives. Our findings underscore a prevailing sentiment within the community that strongly discourages condom use, particularly among unmarried individuals, citing moral misconduct as the primary concern. Instead, the community places significant emphasis on advocating abstinence over the use of contraceptives among adolescents. While there is recognition of the value of sex education, it remains a sensitive and rarely discussed topic within the community. A pervasive notion that adolescents using condoms or contraceptives might inadvertently encourage premarital sexual activity, thus contradicting deeply rooted cultural and religious norms, was a salient finding in our research. In conclusion, the study underscores the urgency of raising awareness among parents and communities while respecting and preserving moral values. Given the substantial number of sexually active adolescents in Yobe State, a critical imperative exists to safeguard their sexual well-being and, in parallel, to educate them comprehensively about preventive measures and the potential consequences of early and unprotected sexual activity.

Keywords: Adolescents, Sexual Reproductive Health, Community Perceptions, Contraceptives, Sex Education.

Addressing Gender Norms to Increase Women's Agency in Community Leadership and Decision-Making on Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal and Neonatal Health (SRMNH) in Kaduna, Kano, And Katsina States

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Organization: Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)

Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes.

Abstract

Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHC PF) of the National Health Act 2014 recognizes the Ward Development Committee (WDC) as the fourth level of health care delivery in Nigeria and realizes the role of the WDCs in the conduct of enrolment of beneficiaries, monitoring service provision and utilization, funds management as well as quality assurance, among others. The WDC operational guidelines stipulate that WDC membership should have at least 40% female representation and one woman occupying an executive position. However, in 2019, CHAI worked with the government to map the functional WDCs in Kaduna, Kano, and Katsina, and results showed that only 17% of WDC members are women and just 13% of all WDCs have at least one female executive member. CHAI supported the state governments to conduct advocacy/sensitization meetings for 1,456 WDCs, and community and government stakeholders to address gaps and ensure a standardized operationalization of WDCs. CHAI built the capacity of 1,364 female WDC members on leadership using a developed comprehensive curriculum with topics including gender and socialization, self-awareness, communication skills, power, the role of men as partners of SRMNH, and good leadership skills, thereby equipping them for better functionality in their families and society at large. Review meeting sessions were conducted with female and male WDCs to understand to which extent women have increased participation and leadership in household and community decision-making bodies. Gender norms, including lack of spousal permission and couple communication, the perception that women are ill-suited for leadership, shyness, and lack of women's confidence, affected women's participation in WDCs. After the training, Female WDC members showed improved confidence and assertiveness for participation and interest in leadership roles. There was a 217% increase in the number of female WDC members across the states from baseline to end-line. WDCs with women in leadership positions increased from 27% at baseline to 90% at the end-line. There is a need to ensure standardized operationalization of WDC, and gender-responsive strategies should be implemented to increase women's participation in household and community leadership.

Key Words: Ward Development Committees, Women's Agency, Basic Health Care Provision Fund, Leadership, Decision Making

Gender Assessment Outcomes Of Women Participation In Household And Community Decision-Making In Nigeria

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Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better
Health Outcomes

Abstract

This study attempts to evaluate the diminishing role of women in fishery governance in Nigeria and Ghana. It is widely believed that the fisheries sector in both countries has been traditionally male-dominated, yet there is limited systematic research examining the role of women in politics, decision-making and economic activities in the sector. Various studies have established that the exclusion of women from fisheries governance has been caused by several factors, including socio-cultural attitudes, inadequate education and training opportunities and limited access to resources. The main objective of this research is to examine the current status of women's involvement in fisheries governance in both countries and to understand the factors affecting their participation. The study adopts a qualitative comparative case study of two countries to explore how effective policies and strategies can be developed to ensure women have an equal say in fisheries governance. We analyzed the fisheries governance systems in three coastal areas per country which were purposively selected. A total of 12 key informants' interviews and twelve focus group discussions were conducted to access the perceptions and experiences of participants from the fisheries sector and relevant civil society organizations. Secondly, information, such as statistics from relevant government Ministries, international and regional fisheries organization, and previously published papers were also collected and analyzed. We utilized Python programming analytics to identify recurring themes and patterns as well as identify statistically significant relationships within the datasets. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the current challenges faced by women in fisheries governance in Nigeria and Ghana. It is hoped that this research will help inform policy-makers and other stakeholders on the necessary steps required to ensure that women have an equal say in decision-making and economic activities in fisheries governance. The study underscores the urgency of addressing the diminishing voices of women in fisheries governance. The study advocates for inclusive policies and interventions that promote gender equity, amplify women's role in decision-making and enhance their access to resources and economic benefits.

Keywords: Diminishing, voice, women, fisheries, governance.

A Comparative Analysis of Diminishing Voice of Women in Fisheries Governance in Nigeria and Ghana

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Organization: Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Nigeria

Summit Track: Pathways out of Poverty: Closing Systematic Gender Gaps in Agricultural Productivity: Value Chain, pathways and Entrepreneurial opportunities

Abstract

This study attempts to evaluate the diminishing role of women in fishery governance in Nigeria and Ghana. It is widely believed that the fisheries sector in both countries has been traditionally male-dominated, yet there is limited systematic research examining the role of women in politics, decision-making and economic activities in the sector. Various studies have established that the exclusion of women from fisheries governance has been caused by several factors, including socio-cultural attitudes, inadequate education and training opportunities and limited access to resources. The main objective of this research is to examine the current status of women's involvement in fisheries governance in both countries and to understand the factors affecting their participation. The study adopts a qualitative comparative case study of two countries to explore how effective policies and strategies can be developed to ensure women have an equal say in fisheries governance. We analyzed the fisheries governance systems in three coastal areas per country which were purposively selected. A total of 12 key informants' interviews and twelve focus group discussions were conducted to access the perceptions and experiences of participants from the fisheries sector and relevant civil society organizations. Secondly, information, such as statistics from relevant government Ministries, international and regional fisheries organization, and previously published papers were also collected and analyzed. We utilized Python programming analytics to identify recurring themes and patterns as well as identify statistically significant relationships within the datasets. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the current challenges faced by women in fisheries governance in Nigeria and Ghana. It is hoped that this research will help inform policy-makers and other stakeholders on the necessary steps required to ensure that women have an equal say in decision-making and economic activities in fisheries governance. The study underscores the urgency of addressing the diminishing voices of women in fisheries governance. The study advocates for inclusive policies and interventions that promote gender equity, amplify women's role in decision-making and enhance their access to resources and economic benefits.

Keywords: Diminishing, voice, women, fisheries, governance.

Empowering Women for Transformed Lives through the Women Empowerment Group Approach in the Federal Capital Territory

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Organization: United States Agency for International Development/ Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria

Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norm to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes.

Abstract

In Nigeria, gender norms, attitudes and lack of financial control inform societal expectations and roles in families. This in turn influences decision-making about women's healthcare, family size, and the responsibility for caring for children. To address this specific challenge in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the USAID Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria project designed the Women's Empowerment Group (WEG) approach. It aims to create safe spaces where women can learn about health, build their capacity to identify opportunities, engage in income-generating activities, and gain the confidence to participate in joint decision-making with their spouses. 18 community facilitators in the FCT were trained and mentored for three months, equipped with the knowledge and skills required to form and nurture women's empowerment groups within their respective communities. Following the three-month mentoring period, these facilitators assisted women in establishing a total of 19 women empowerment groups comprising of 375 women in their communities. These groups meet weekly, with the facilitators conducting health-focused capacity-building sessions. Additionally, group members make contributions which enable them to request loans for starting or supporting their businesses. In addition, capacity-building sessions on income-generating activities and skill acquisition are provided to members to enhance financial independence. A pre-activity assessment was conducted before the official engagement in June 2022 with the groups, and a post-activity assessment following the completion of their first cycle in December 2022 was also conducted. They included key informant interviews with the Women Empowerment Group members and revealed a significant 25.3% increase in the number of women engaged in income-generating activities, thus empowering them in health-related decision-making. Additionally, spousal communication and joint decision-making saw a significant 32% increase. Notably, the Women Empowerment Group approach experienced remarkable growth, strongly underscoring its effectiveness in empowering women, and enhancing their economic independence, and agency. The Women Empowerment Group approach has not only significantly enhanced women's economic empowerment but has also empowered them to assume decision-making roles. This approach has heightened their health knowledge and awareness. Interventions aimed at empowering women, like this, hold transformative potential for health outcomes, greater agency and economic empowerment leading to healthier and empowered individuals, families, and communities.

Keywords: Maternal health, Economic empowerment, Skill acquisition, Gender norms, Women Empowerment Group.

Walk The Talk: Innovative Approaches to Building Equitable, Inclusive and Sustainable Climate-Resilient Food Systems in Africa

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Organization: University of Abuja

Summit Track: Gender and Inclusion in the Agricultural Value Chain: Addressing Missed Opportunities for Sustainable Development

Abstract

Across Africa, women play a critical role in agricultural activities and food production. However, they are frequently subjected to systemic discrimination, have limited access to resources, and are underrepresented in decision-making processes. This study emphasizes the importance of inclusive policies and initiatives that empower women by providing them with access to land, financial resources, and educational opportunities. Women can be empowered and their agricultural productivity can be increased by land tenure systems that prioritise women's land rights, microfinance initiatives tailored to women's needs, and the incorporation of digital technologies. It is also critical to build the capacity of women farmers through education and training programmes. These programmes should not only improve agricultural techniques but also build leadership and entrepreneurial skills. The goal of this study is to assess the extent to which gender-inclusive agricultural practices, policies, and interventions have been implemented across African regions, as well as to assess the impact of these gender-inclusive approaches on women's empowerment, income generation, and participation in agricultural decision-making. The study collects secondary data from reputable sources such as national statistical offices, international Organizations, and research institutions to compile relevant policy documents and reports on gender inclusion and agriculture in Africa. Following that, thematic analysis was used to find recurring themes, patterns, and narratives in the data to identify trends, policy gaps, and best practices in promoting equitable and inclusive climate-resilient food systems. In conclusion, empowering women in agriculture benefits not only gender equity but also food security in Africa. This study emphasizes the importance of "walking the talk" while also providing a comprehensive foundation for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners seeking to create positive change in the African food systems landscape by translating these innovative approaches into concrete actions to achieve sustainable, equitable, and climate-resilient food systems.

Keywords: Innovative Approaches, Equitable, Inclusive, Food Systems, Africa.

Nigeria's Multilateral Trade Agreements and the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal

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Summit Track: The Role of Trade in Promoting Gender Equality and the SDG - Gender Equality in Trade Agreements and Policies

Abstract

In 2017, Nigeria, a signatory member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), signed the agreement on 'Gender and Trade'. The main focus of the agreement as given by the informal working group (IWG) is 'inclusive trade and gender equality'. Similarly, in July 2019, Nigeria signed the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA). The main objective is to remove tariffs on 90% of goods, thereby encouraging more intra-regional trade across the African continent. In 2020, a World Bank report on women and trade argues for the positive and negative effects of trade, trade agreements, and trade policies on women. Women in developing countries including Nigeria are said to make up 33% of the total workforce of exporting firms. Based on the World Bank report, there are concerns that AfCFTA may further damage the export propensity of highly import-dependent countries like Nigeria with the attendant negative effects on women engaged in the export sector. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the direct and indirect effects of exports, health financing, mortality rate, and female life expectancy on women's social inclusion in the period before and after 2017 when Nigeria signed and started implementing policies on inclusive trade and gender equality. Using the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) with a shift period of 2017, the policy variable reveals that exports positively and significantly affected women's social inclusion. However, in the long run, current health and education expenditure, maternal mortality rate, and manufactured exports have a direct negative effect on women's inclusion. While manufactured export and female life expectancy indirectly and positively affected women's inclusion. Current education expenditure, mortality rate, and agriculture exports have direct positive effects on women's inclusion. While current expenditure on health has direct negative effects. Agricultural exports and female life expectancy have positive indirect effects on women's inclusion. Food export, health financing, mortality rate, and female life expectancy have no significant direct or indirect effect on women's inclusion in the long run. The study recommended among others the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at encouraging export to other African countries due to its trickle-down effects on female inclusion. Improved investment in human capital development, mainly health and education with a special focus on the female folk to enhance female inclusion is advocated.

Keywords: Gender and Trade; trade impacts; trade agreements; women in exports and imports; women inclusion.

Breaking Barriers for a Brighter Future: Empowering Women, Trade, and Health in Northern Nigeria

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Summit Track: Gender Norms in Transition: Exploring Innovative Behavioural Approaches to Address Gender-Based Violence (Against Women/Men) and Other Harmful Practices.

Abstract

In Northern Nigeria, women face formidable barriers to empowerment, including limited access to education, employment opportunities, and healthcare. These challenges are compounded by harmful gender norms and practices prevalent in the region, such as early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). Empowering women is crucial to enhancing trade and health in Northern Nigeria, as they play pivotal roles in both sectors, yet their potential is often constrained by societal constraints and discrimination. This study employed a rigorous review of interdisciplinary literature and research on women's empowerment, trade dynamics, and healthcare accessibility in Northern Nigeria. The review encompassed various disciplines, including economics, public health, and gender studies, to analyze the multifaceted implications of empowering women on trade and health in the region. The synthesis of existing research underscores that empowering women yields numerous positive outcomes for trade and health in Northern Nigeria. When women are empowered, they are more likely to initiate businesses, actively engage in trade, and achieve higher incomes, contributing to increased economic growth and job creation. Additionally, empowered women exhibit a higher propensity to seek healthcare for themselves and their children, resulting in improved health outcomes across the community. The findings emphasize the critical importance of empowering women to drive progress in trade and health in Northern Nigeria. Addressing gender disparities and fostering an enabling environment for women is essential. Strategic actions, including investments in girls' education, promoting economic empowerment through employment and financial inclusion, challenging harmful gender norms, and enhancing healthcare systems to cater to the unique needs of women and girls, are imperative. In envisioning a more promising future for Northern Nigeria, breaking barriers and nurturing empowerment among women is fundamental. Additional recommendations include supporting women-led enterprises, advocating for gender-sensitive trade policies, amplifying access to superior healthcare services for women and girls, and fostering gender equality through heightened awareness of women's rights. These collective efforts can lead to a brighter and more equitable future for all in Northern Nigeria.

Keywords: Women's Empowerment, Gender Norms, Trade, Health, Northern Nigeria.

Elevating Gender and Social Norms Research: Unveiling the Significance, Advantages, and Challenges in Harnessing Participatory Data Collection Approaches

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Contributing authors: Pushpendra Mishra, Olamide Adigun

Organization: Ipsos Nigeria

Summit Track: Shifting harmful social norms to advance livelihoods and better health outcomes

Abstract

Fostering gender equality is integral to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. However, this mission necessitates high-quality data on gender and social norms. Traditional data collection methods have long grappled with inherent limitations. In response, participatory approaches have emerged as a transformative solution, providing a holistic understanding of communities and individuals, surpassing the constraints of conventional techniques. In a rapid cross-sectional study, we engaged 26 seasoned qualitative researchers actively immersed in the art of qualitative research. Their experiences were sought in utilizing participatory approaches for the collection of gender and social norms data, spanning the diverse landscapes of northern, western, and eastern Nigeria. Over 60% (61.5%) of respondents were females, with 23.1% having 3 to 5 years and 19.2% boasting over a decade in the field of qualitative data collection. Participatory approaches redefine data collection, going beyond conventional Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). These methods actively engage participants dynamically through a spectrum of activities, enabling expressions beyond mere verbal communication. The heightened flexibility enhances response richness, empowering respondents and proving exceptionally effective, especially in exploring sensitive topics. The participatory approach's exploratory nature and effectiveness in rural areas set it apart from traditional FGDs, making it well-received for its depth, communication flexibility, and enriching qualities. These methods encourage knowledge generation, openness, and effective probing, resulting in increased responses and diverse insights. However, challenges linger in the realm of participatory approaches. They demand more time and resources, potentially risking participant fatigue. Communication hurdles also loom large, particularly in the context of varying literacy levels. This study underscores the pivotal role of participatory approaches in data collection for gender and social norms research. Empowering individuals to actively participate yields high-quality data, invaluable for monitoring Sustainable Development Goals and fostering evidence-based programming. It reaffirms that empowering data collection methods are essential in the journey toward gender equality and achieving the broader spectrum of SDGs.

Keywords: Participatory approaches (Gender box, Social network mapping, 2 by 2 table, free listing and body mapping), Gender and social norms.

Technological Adoption and Performance of Female Traders in the Informal Sector in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Summit Track: Leveraging Technology to Advance Digital Inclusion in Trade and Health

Abstract

Women form a larger percentage of the global population in both developed and developing economies and they play active roles in the informal sector. This sector is a significant contributor to national employment and output and is largely dominated by about 82.1% of women but the performance and transformation of their businesses have been unimpressive despite the availability of emerging technologies. The adoption of technology is a way to assist women compete and perform better in businesses but this practice has been largely slow. Empirically, only 2% of women in micro enterprises adopt technology in their trading activities and the need to change this narrative is essential for trade competitiveness. The study aims to investigate the technological adoption and performance of female traders in the informal sector in Oyo State. Survey design was employed in the study while all women in micro enterprises (employing less than 10 persons) formed the population of the study out of which 240 female traders across four sectors (agriculture, distributive trade, technical services and manufacturing) were sampled for the study using stratified and random sampling technique from two urban and rural areas in the State. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaires and interviews which were analyzed using frequency, percentage, logistic regression using a model specification as well as content analysis. The finding of the study indicated that technology adoption among women is still low in rural areas, technology adoption contributed significantly to business performance, family interference hindered the performance of businesses owned by the traders and the cost of digital technology hindered its adoption. The strategies to improve technological adoption include creating awareness and training of female traders in the informal sector. This study implies that female traders' performance and contribution to the national economy can be enhanced through adequate technological adoption. The study concludes that technological adoption has significant influences on businesses owned by female traders in the informal sector. The study recommended that more women should be engaged in technology-related occupations while those already in trade should be trained in the use of digital technologies in business.

Keywords: Business, Female Traders, Informal Sector, Performance, Technology.

Creating A Path for the Future of Adolescent Girls by Ensuring Access to Improve Well-being, Economic Opportunities and Social Inclusion, One Bridge at a Time - #LEAVENOGIRLBEHIND

Presenting Author: Gloria Edukere

Organization: Baobab Consulting

Summit Track: The Future is Now: Prioritizing Education, Learning, and Empowerment

Abstract

This research addresses a pressing issue: the marginalization of adolescent girls in the spheres of education, empowerment, and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) rights. Despite considerable progress in gender and inclusion efforts in Nigeria, a significant gap still exists in ensuring the holistic development of adolescent girls. This research aims to fill this gap by examining the intersections of education, empowerment, and SRH rights, with a focus on transforming the lives of adolescent girls by highlighting the available data gap, ensuring access to quality education and healthcare, advocating for inclusive policies and economic opportunities, and championing the activities of girl's rights, empowerment and leadership. The rationale for this study lies in the understanding that adolescent girls are often left behind in global development agendas, without the agency to advocate their rights or be included in policy-making processes and the creation of opportunities, thereby necessitating a comprehensive approach to address their multifaceted needs. The research adopts a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews, surveys, and a review of existing literature and data. The findings underscore the critical importance of quality education, empowerment programs, and the fulfilment of SRH rights for adolescent girls and boys to create a sustainable and inclusive system. Access to education enhances girls' self-esteem and agency, while comprehensive SRH services enable them to make informed decisions about their bodies and lives. The major results indicate that empowering adolescent girls through education and SRH services leads to improved well-being, increased economic opportunities, and greater social inclusion. This research makes a significant contribution to the fields of gender and inclusion by highlighting the imperative of prioritizing the needs of adolescent girls. In conclusion, this research underscores the importance of advancing gender and inclusion through education, empowerment, and SRH rights, particularly for adolescent girls. By addressing this issue comprehensively, we can create pathways through bridging existing gaps, transforming the lives of adolescent girls and contributing to the broader goals of gender equality and social inclusion.

Keywords: Gender, Equality, Education, Health.

Transforming Gender Norms to Empower Women and Advance Health and Livelihoods in Gombe State, Nigeria

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Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes

Abstract

Gombe State, Nigeria, faces entrenched gender norms that result in disparities in women's agency, particularly in reproductive and maternal health decisions. These norms perpetuate unequal power dynamics, limiting women's access to essential healthcare services. Utilizing qualitative research methods, we engaged diverse stakeholders, including community members, religious and traditional leaders, state-level representatives, and local organizations in Gombe State. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to explore the intricate gender dynamics that influence healthcare access and decision-making. Our research reveals that traditional gender roles wield significant influence over healthcare decisions. Women are primarily designated as caregivers and homemakers, while men are perceived as primary breadwinners and decision-makers. Women often require male consent to access healthcare, leading to delayed care. Empowerment initiatives have begun to challenge these norms but require expansion for comprehensive change. Furthermore, we found that efforts to transform traditional gender norms, especially those aimed at engaging men in reproductive health discussions, are essential to improving women's agency and fostering more equitable decision-making within households. The study highlights the urgent need to challenge and transform traditional gender norms, particularly in the context of healthcare access. More comprehensive empowerment programs are necessary to reshape these deeply ingrained roles. Policies should actively engage men in reproductive health discussions to facilitate shared decision-making and promote gender-equitable access to healthcare services. Empowering women in healthcare decisions will enhance their access to essential services and improve reproductive and maternal health outcomes. Gender norms in Gombe State play a significant role in limiting women's agency, affecting their reproductive and maternal health decisions. Transforming these norms, particularly by engaging men in reproductive health discussions, is essential to advancing health and livelihoods in the region. Our findings emphasize the ongoing journey to reshape traditional gender roles, challenge harmful norms, and promote women's active participation in healthcare decisions, offering hope for a more equitable and healthier future.

Keywords: Gender Norms, Women's Agency, Reproductive Health, Healthcare Access, Empowerment Initiatives.

Using gender as a benchmark to build sustainable businesses: The case of Nigerian women.

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Summit Track: It's all about power: How gender norms shape women's agency and livelihood.

Abstract

In many countries, women remain the primary caregivers in their homes, combining this with household chores. The need to provide opportunities/support for females to contribute to the economic development of their countries by engaging in productive activities, whether in the formal or informal sector has been generally regarded as gender equity. However, many times, gender equity has been interpreted through the Western eyes, thus making the Western environment a standard even though people, culture, structures, and institutions differ amongst countries. On the flip side, this portrays women working in non-Western countries like Nigeria, as a group of people always struggling in navigating the work and family spheres. Historically, many women work in the informal sector where flexibility in time, venue, and structure is a feature of work, and work & family responsibilities can be combined. In recent times, increased female participation in the formal work environment, where work is structured has created a boundary between work and family and as such more work-life conflict is being documented in the literature. This paper is aimed at using gender as a filter to recommend how Nigerian workplace structures can be more sustainable. The data from this study was gathered using information from libraries and archives, on work and women in historical Nigeria. This study helped in understanding how decades ago, women were able to navigate work and family and how these findings can be adapted in today's workplace. Preliminary findings suggest that historically in Nigeria, work was flexible, allowing women to combine work and family. There were also informal support systems supporting families with caring responsibilities. If Nigerian workplaces are to be sustainable, embracing work flexibility will be useful and providing support to working families with childcare responsibilities will enhance employee productivity, and Organizational performance and reduce workplace stress.

Keywords: Gender equity, inclusion, Nigeria, work, workplace flexibility.

Catalyzing Economic Growth and Alleviating Poverty: Strategies for Effectively Addressing Gender Disparities in Trade Unionism in Nigeria.

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Summit Track: The Role of Trade in Promoting Gender Equality and the SDGs

Abstract

Gender Inequality cuts across various sectors of Nigeria, ranging from governance, health and to Trade and its union. This disparity embedded within the Nigerian society has continued to manifest in trade practices and relations in Nigeria. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, trade has been acknowledged as a powerful driver of inclusive economic growth and the alleviation of poverty. The publication from 2015, a collaboration between the WTO and the World Bank titled “The Role of Trade in Ending Poverty,” provided compelling evidence that trade has been a pivotal factor in reducing poverty. As a result, the Trade Union movement since its inception, has greatly contributed to the political and economic development of the Nigerian economy. Women constitute a significant number of the population, hence the importance of their inclusion in trade unionism as a critical tool for economic development cannot be underestimated. However, women in Nigeria are not as actively involved in trade unions as men. The foregoing disparity exists as a result of some challenges experienced by women. Some of these challenges include patriarchal cultural norms, discrimination within trade unions, lack of awareness, lack of interest, and limited resources/financial constraints among others. Specifically, the paper aims to provide reliable strategies for addressing the issues of gender inequality as regards trade and trade unionism. Some of the strategies provided are education and training, access to finance, supportive policies, market access, raising awareness about the importance of trade unions, and promoting gender equality within these organizations, among others. The paper also discusses the advantages of gender inclusion in trade and its union as a necessary tool for catalyzing economic growth and alleviating poverty. A qualitative research method was used. Data was sourced from secondary sources mainly from published and unpublished journal articles, the newspapers, the internet, books and reports from government archives.

Keywords: Trade Union, Nigeria, Women, Inclusion, Economic growth.

Gender Inclusion at The Workplace: An Antidote to Women's Participation in National Development

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Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes

Abstract

There has been a growing interest in gender inclusion worldwide to ensure an increase in women's participation in national development. In Nigeria, literature has shown that the female gender has been excluded from active participation in national development. Not only in the political arena, women, have not been fully given the necessary platform to participate in national development despite the 35% affirmative. Even at the workplace, males have dominated virtually every stratum of the decision-making arms. The negative impact of this is dwindling women's participation in national development. However, while more emphasis has been placed on women's exclusion from politics, less has been done to reduce the workplace gender divide that excludes women. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the level and expose the need for gender inclusion in the workplace in Nigeria to attain rapid national development. Specifically, the study examined the extent of women's inclusion in the workplace, examined the different forms of women's exclusion at the workplace, identified precipitating factors contributing to women's exclusion, and advanced ways to improve women's inclusion in the workplace. The study relied on primary data collected from a sample of 470 women in 6 (six) federal ministries using a structured questionnaire. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics of percentages, tables, and charts. Findings indicate that gender inclusion is still an issue as there is a great extent of women exclusion in the ministries studied. Of the forms of women exclusion, job division leading to the denial of appointment of women into some key positions was prominent. Attachments to beliefs and customs, ego, and disparity in educational level are among the factors against gender inclusion in the workplace. Ensuring equal access to education, empowering women in the workplace, and strengthening legal protections for women are among the recommendations for gender inclusion for national development. This study will further highlight the urgency of the need to utilise women's potential for improved national development.

Keywords: Gender inclusion, women participation, national development, workplace.

The Imperative of Peace Education and Behavioural Modification in Curbing Violence Against Men and Women in Nigeria

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Summit Track: Shifting harmful social norms to advance livelihoods and better health outcomes

Sub-Track: Gender norms in transition

Abstract

The gender divide manifests in various sectors of Nigeria's economy namely information technology, education, politics, trade and investment, social protection and wellbeing, security sector, among others. Violence against men and women remains a major threat to sustainable livelihoods and peacefulness of the society. Many homes have become places of negative peace because of behavioural factors that often make the peacefulness of the environment decline. This makes it crucial for peace education and behavioural modification at all levels to change the mindsets of men and women who have a high inclination to exhibit violent attitudes towards the opposite gender. Using qualitative sources and data from the Nigeria Watch database, with a combination of the theory of intersectionality and integrative peace theory, the paper responds to the following questions: Why is the nexus of peace education and behavioural modification crucial for discouraging gender-based violence in the home settings and Nigerian society? What are the patterns of violence and fatalities associated with men and women in Nigeria? What are the consequences of ignoring the strategic significance of peace education and behavioural modification in discouraging gender-based violence? The paper also interrogates how education for peace and behavioural assessment can enhance behaviour change, promote tolerance and curb gender-based violence which can be addressed through tolerance and non-violence by individuals who feel offended and abused by the actions of their partners, neighbours or rivals. Findings reveal that gender-based violence is intractable due to behavioural crises that increase the frustration and aggression of individuals. The paper stresses that people need to change their behaviour towards others and themselves by embracing peaceful responses to make them control their emotions and actions when provoked. The paper recommends that traditional values are significant for enforcing peace-focused gender norms for preventing violence against men and women. Because the female gender has remained instrumental to the sustenance of social relations, family building and societal transformation at community, national and international levels, the issue of gender-based violence requires the active involvement of women to sustain the impact of peace education.

Keywords: Behavioural modification, gender-based violence, peace education.

An Appraisal of Empowering Adolescent Girls and Women to Break the Cycle of Addressing Drug-Related Issues and Leaving No Girl Behind

Presenting Author: Amb. Kenneth Anetor

Organization: A New Thing International Foundation

Summit Track: The Future is Now: Prioritizing Education, Learning, and Empowerment

Abstract

The study seeks to evaluate the efficacy of empowerment initiatives designed for adolescent girls and women in addressing drug-related challenges while upholding the “leave no girl behind” principle. Employing a qualitative research methodology, including literature review, interviews, and thematic analysis, the research aims to uncover the multifaceted dynamics at play in this critical intersection. Findings from this study underscore the pivotal role of education, mentorship, community support, and targeted policies in enhancing awareness and resilience among adolescent girls and women, thereby reducing their susceptibility to drug-related pressures. The research highlights that comprehensive empowerment strategies possess the potential to break the cycle of drug-related issues and emphasize the necessity of adopting holistic approaches. This study emphasizes the urgency of implementing robust, gender-sensitive empowerment programs to foster resilient communities where all girls and women can thrive. It also stresses the importance of continued research and collaboration to ensure the well-being and empowerment of this demographic, providing a solid foundation for policy recommendations and future initiatives.

Keywords: Empowerment, Girls, Adolescent.

Making a Case for Gender Equality in Trade Agreements and Policies

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Summit Track: The Role of Trade in Promoting Gender Equality and the SDGs.

Abstract

Trade agreements and policies are shaped by gender inequalities. Trade agreements and policies influence both genders as they affect how they benefit from international trade and access decent and secured employment. Gender inequality in trade agreements and policies can produce devastating ripple effects that may affect macroeconomic components of an economy such as growth, trade, employment, and inflation. As such, if the much-needed consideration is not given to pursuing the objective of gender equality in the formulation of trade agreements and policies, its purpose may never be achieved. This research seeks to advocate for more gender-sensitive and inclusive trade agreements and policies. The primary objective is to critically examine the extent to which trade agreements address gender disparities and to recommend the inclusion of gender-sensitive policies that place both genders not only on equal but equitable footing in future trade agreements. This research adopts the doctrinal research method by analysing existing trade agreements and academic literature, to establish a foundation for understanding the historical and current trends of gender considerations in trade agreements and to provide in-depth insights into the practical implications of these policies on gender equality. Various theoretical underpinnings of gender and trade, like the feminist economic theory, and international trade theories are considered. The findings of this research contribute to the ongoing global discourse on gender equality and sustainable development by advocating for the integration of gender perspectives in trade agreements. This research seeks to make policy recommendations that will inform future trade negotiations in ensuring that gender equality is not just paid lip service, but actively promoted in trade agreements so that economic development and better labour relations, which are key to the achievement of sustainable development goals, are achieved. By shedding light on the current practices of gender equality in trade agreements and policies, this research seeks to influence both academic scholarship and policy decisions on the importance of having gender-sensitive trade agreements that foster a more inclusive and equitable approach to international trade which stimulates economic growth and advance gender equality on a global scale.

Keywords: Economic development, feminist economic theory, gender equality, trade agreements.

Improving uptake of MNCH+N services through the creation of safe spaces for Women Empowerment Groups in Kebbi state

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Organization: : United States Agency for International Development/Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria

Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes

Abstract

With a maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of 890 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, Kebbi State has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in Nigeria and almost twice the national average. This is in part due to complex socio-cultural factors that limit agency for women and negatively impact healthcare access for women. To mitigate this effect, the USAID/Breakthrough ACTION Nigeria (BA-N) project implemented a safe space intervention designed to improve the agency of women of reproductive age in Kebbi State. The aim of this review is therefore to demonstrate the outcome of the intervention. In May 2022 and September 2023, BA-N established and supported 40 women's empowerment groups. They comprise 15 to 20 women in two wards of Kebbi State and they provide safe spaces for women to support each other, learn about Maternal Newborn Child Health +Nutrition, and work towards economic empowerment. The overall goal of these groups is to mitigate gender and social norms limiting access to healthcare services for women. During the implementation period, women in each group participated in weekly meetings and received training on MNCH key messages, skills acquisition, financial management, and food demonstration. The routine quarterly assessment findings from May 2022 to September 2023 revealed that all 138 of 931 Women Empowerment Group members who were pregnant attended Antenatal Care at the health facility near them. Furthermore, 56 of the 138 members (40%) opted for facility-based deliveries within the same period. The groups also actively advocated for MNCH+N services through peer-to-peer discussions with family members, friends, neighbours, and community sensitization, issuing 173 referrals, of which 94 were completed at healthcare facilities. This intervention demonstrates that creating safe spaces for women beyond their homes enhances awareness and adoption of critical MNCH+N behaviours, effectively addressing barriers to healthcare access. This approach holds potential for application in other domains such as education and agriculture. While the Women Empowerment Group intervention predominantly targets women of childbearing age, exploring similar groups for older women, particularly mothers-in-law, who exert considerable influence over household behaviours, could help further the practice and adoption of MNCH behaviours.

Keywords: Maternal Health, Child Health, Access to Healthcare, Socio-Cultural Factors, Women Empowerment.

Level of Women's Involvement and Participation in Managerial Roles in The Faculty of Medical Sciences in Universities within South Western, Nigeria

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Summit Track: Why So Few? Exploring Pathway for Inclusive Leadership in Trade and Health

Abstract

As Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) continues to advocate for the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, some countries still struggle to allow women's involvement and full participation in leadership roles. These managerial or leadership roles in the Universities include Vice Chancellors, Deputy vice Chancellors, Registrars, Deputy Registrars, Head of Departments and Units, Directors, etc. In 2017, only 18% of the top universities were led by women, globally. According to a report by the American Council of Education, in 2016, only 30% of women were college presidents in the United States, while only 21% of women in the United Kingdom, and 15% of women in South African universities. However, in Nigeria, only a few statistics can show the level of women's involvement and participation in managerial roles that can enable and enhance the performance and productivity of Universities. Thus, this study embarked on investigating the level of women's involvement and participation in leadership/Managerial roles in the faculty of Medical Sciences in universities in southwestern Nigeria, as part of the Nation's ongoing commitment to advancing knowledge in Gender and Inclusion. In addition, challenges that hindered the female Lecturers' inclusion into the Leadership or Managerial roles in the faculty of Medical sciences were deduced from the study. The Role Congruity theory by Eagly and Karau (2002) served as a guide to the study while the mixed method design was adopted. Female lecturers in managerial roles in the Faculty of Medical Sciences were purposively selected from the selected Universities in the south western, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were obtained from the respondents. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean, frequencies, percentages, graphs, etc. Findings revealed that female lecturers effectively contributed to the production of health care services in the faculties of medical sciences, however, they were not equally numbered as the men in the managerial roles. Thus, the study recommends that women should be involved in the managerial roles of the faculty to enable the inclusion of women into trade and health professions.

Keywords: Involvement, Managerial Roles, Female Lecturers, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Universities.

From Farmlands to Housing Estates: A Critical Analysis of Land Speculations by Real Estate Industry and the Marginalization of Women Smallholder Farmers in Rural Communities in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Summit Track: Gender and Inclusion in the Agricultural Value Chain: Addressing Missed Opportunities for Sustainability

Abstract

The unprecedented increase in the demand for housing in urban centres is forcing real estate developers and land speculators to move into rural communities in search of new areas to develop new housing units and towns; this usually comes at the expense of smallholder farmers, especially women in rural communities. On the background of the challenges faced by women smallholder farmers in rural communities on access to farmlands, this paper examines the dynamics and impacts of land speculations in rural communities in Ibadan, Nigeria, with a specific focus on the Real Estate industry's role in the marginalization of women smallholder farmers in accessing lands for use in rural communities in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study utilized both primary and secondary data, which were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Ten smallholder farmers, five real estate agents and three government officials were interviewed for primary data. Secondary data were collected from an archival review of documents on land acquisition and usage in Ibadan, Nigeria. Court documents relating to litigations on land disputes were also reviewed. Results show that land acquisition in rural communities in Ibadan majorly involves the acquisition of land by large corporate interests for the production of low-cost housing units with smallholder farmers at the receiving end. The study also indicates that the state government in Oyo state has played a significant role in this process by granting lease documents to land speculators at the expense of smallholder farmers. The impacts of land speculations are multifaceted, significant, and long-lasting effects on the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of local communities. Women smallholder farmers have lost their only source of livelihood, with many becoming impoverished and unable to sustain their families. Real estate companies turn agrarian lands into housing units, degrading the biodiversity in the process and rendering many smallholder farmers unemployed. The paper recommended increased awareness and advocacy to help women smallholder farmers claim their rights to land; a more transparent land acquisition and management process by government agencies, and the protection of small-scale farming.

Keywords: Smallholder Farmers, Land, Speculations, Rural, Communities, Ibadan, Real Estate.

Beyond Policy: Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment in Nigeria Through Innovative Approaches to Unpaid Care Work

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Summit Track: Why Should We Care? Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment through Innovations in the Care Economy?

Abstract

Unpaid care work in Nigeria, primarily performed by women, presents a significant obstacle to gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Despite the National Gender Policy's existence, envisioning equal rights and participation, this study highlights the enduring burden of care work on women's lives. The study aims to evaluate the impact of the National Gender Policy on recognising and redistributing unpaid care work in Nigeria. Also, it seeks to identify innovative interventions beyond policy measures to alleviate this burden and enhance women's economic participation. Qualitative research methods were employed, utilising secondary sources like textbooks, journals, policy documents, and the internet. The data were subjected to thematic analysis, which exposed deeply ingrained gender norms and stereotypes that maintain women's predominance in caring for others. Women can receive training, resources, and income prospects through creative interventions that centre on economic empowerment programmes, reducing their reliance on unpaid caregiving. This study emphasises the importance of integrating workable solutions for identifying and dispersing unpaid care work into the National Gender Policy. In addition to advocating for gender-responsive policymaking and highlighting the policy-implementation gap, it provides workable solutions for fair allocation. A comprehensive approach that includes effective policy execution, changing gender norms, and creative interventions is necessary to increase women's economic participation. To address women's particular difficulties juggling caring duties with career aspirations, multi-stakeholder collaboration, thorough data gathering, and gender-sensitive policy initiatives are essential. In conclusion, this study highlights the need for real changes in women's lives by highlighting the policy-implementation gap regarding unpaid care work. It emphasises the value of gender-responsive policymaking by offering doable fixes for fair redistribution. By addressing the important issue of unpaid care work, providing insights into policy enhancements, and calling for a fairer distribution of care responsibilities, this study makes contributions to gender studies and public policy.

Keywords: Economic Empowerment, Gender Equality, Innovative Approaches, National Gender Policy, Unpaid Care work.

Empowering Women Petty Traders to Advance Gender Equality and SDGs in Nigeria: An Assessment of the Socioeconomic Impact of KWASSIP's Owo Isowo Programme

Presenting Author: Shakir Akorede

Organization: Global Shapers Community, Ilorin

Summit Track: The Role of Trade in Promoting Gender Equality and SDGs

Abstract

At the core of the SDGs is the concept of “leaving no one behind” having economic inclusion of persons of all genders as one of the targets of the sustainable development goals. The world over, women are disadvantaged in diverse socioeconomic landscapes by discriminatory practices. There is a consensus among economic development experts that gender inequality is a substantive driver of poverty among women. To ameliorate inequality, as a means of spurring inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa, one of the interventions increasingly in vogue is cash transfer. The scheme has been described as a vital programme for poverty reduction, most imperatively among women. Owo Isowo is a cash transfer programme by the Kwara State Government to empower female petty traders. This study assesses the interplay between women’s economic empowerment, gender equality and sustainable development by dissecting the programme’s impact on women’s inclusion in the socio-economic growth of the state, using data triangulation in the research methodology. A comparative-descriptive analysis of quantitative data is used to examine the effect of the programme on the 107 beneficiaries sampled from the Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. 34% of the beneficiaries confirmed income boost and improved livelihood as a direct impact of the empowerment scheme. 45% of those who reported income increases stated that they also experienced inclusion in economic matters and decision-making. The study recommends an upward review of the cash dividend and beneficiaries. Its submissions on improved policy implementation – selection modalities, capacity building and evaluation mechanisms – will help the state government and others to maximise state-owned cash transfer programmes for sustainable development.

Keywords: Women empowerment, cash transfer, gender equality, sustainable development.

United Agenda, Divided by Class: Confluences of Factors Impacting Female Representation in Governance in Nigeria

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Organization: ¹Policy Innovation Centre, ²Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro



Summit Track: Shifting Harmful Social Norms to Advance Livelihood and Better Health Outcomes

Abstract

Despite several legislative efforts to improve female representation in Nigerian governance, such as the failures of five gender-related bills, including those proposing special seats for women in the National Assembly, affirmative action for women in political party administration, and citizenship rights for foreign-born husbands of Nigerian women, the 2023 elections reveal a stark gender imbalance. Only 381 females out of 3,875 candidates contested various political positions. These statistics translate into underrepresentation in governance, with women constituting just 3.62 per cent of the 10th National Assembly, the lowest in recent times. Using primary data sources of qualitative interviews of female political aspirants and secondary sources of socio-economic data of electorates and voting patterns, we find that female representation of women in governance in Nigeria is affected by confounding influences. Women who participate more effectively in quotidian forms of political participation lack the agency and resources to transmute their participation into more effective representation in governance while female political aspirants with agency and social capital may lack the political capital to convert female political participation to female political representation. Key findings are that educated and formally employed women are more likely to contest elections, demonstrating their political ambition. However, this ambition often faces structural constraints that limit their access to leadership positions. Less educated and informally employed women actively participate in voting and other essential political roles. However, their engagement tends to lack the transformative impact necessary to bridge the gender gap in leadership positions. This research underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the factors affecting female representation in Nigerian politics. While legislative efforts and increased female participation have marked progress, the persistence of gender disparities reveals deeper structural and normative challenges. To enhance female representation in governance, policymakers must address these barriers, ensuring that women's participation translates into meaningful leadership roles. The study advocates for comprehensive reforms that empower women across all socio-economic strata to bridge the gender gap and contribute to more inclusive and equitable governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Female Representation, Gender Inequality, Gender Norms, Governance Inequality, Political Gender Gaps.

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