

# ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF TRIBAL WOMEN: A PERSPECTIVE FROM NORTHERN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

Globally, women constituted a crucial part of the society but more often ignored in various aspects in our societies. These disregards for women were more pronounced in developing economies than their developed economies. Recently, there are wildly calls for gender equity due to the wide disparities in educational attainments between men and women. The notion of gender justice is central to contemporary developmental issues due to intellectual proximity to the goals of universal human rights and social justice. However, it is a fact that no nation can progress as long as half of it population remained marginalised. This study examined the main roles of tribal woman, and assessed gender-wise disparity within the Northern states of Nigeria. The study reviews the existing educational status of tribal women and also assesses the level of disparity against them in Northern region of Nigeria. The current study is a descriptive survey that has adopted mixed method (concurrently) which depends on both primary and secondary data. The secondary data has been generated from both published and unpublished documents from government as well as non-governmental sources, while the primary data are collected using designed in-depth interview tool with short semi-structured questions that stimulates discussions. Based on the mixed nature of the data involved, a descriptive statistics has been used for the analysis of data. The present study discovered that women lag behind men in the Northern region of Nigeria. The findings were on the basis various developmental indicators that measure gender justice as well as in human development. Moreover, despite the fact that recently political empowerment of women has been on the rise, most policies and governmental agenda have been slowed and largely ineffectual on the pace of progress so far.

**Keywords:** Gender disparity, Marginalized Group, Women Education, Women Empowerment, Nigeria

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a key parameter for all form of development whether formal or informal. Formal education dominates the urban economy that stimulates growth and development. Interestingly, informal education (indigenous and cultural education) has been an undisputed tool for livelihood, growth and development in rural societies and it has empowered mainly women in agricultural sector. Gender equality between women and men simply refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of men and women. Moreover, the concept of gender equality is also known as gender parity and defined as equal valuing of the roles of women and men within societies (King and Hill, 1993). Gender based discrimination is a phenomenon that go beyond the majority of the world's cultures, religions, nations, and income groups (King and Hill, 1993). In most societies, differences and inequalities between women

and men are manifest in the responsibilities each are assigned as well as their access and control over resources and decision-making in their respective communities (King and Hill, 1993).

Lately, there has been increasing recognition of gender-based discrimination within societies, which consequently deprived women from reaching their full potential (Nazmul and Maryam, 2010). The notion of gender parity within the contemporary societies simply aimed at disposition of equal responsibilities, opportunities and rights. Moreover, this concept emphasizes that opportunities and right should not depend on gender but should prioritize interests, needs, and skills of both men and women. Though lately there is increasing acceptance of gender equality as not feminine issue alone, but should concern and fully engage men as well as women, since equality between women and men is seen both as a rights (Nazmul and Maryam, 2010).

Historically, patriarchal social structure with a strong male preference provided decorum in many communities around the world. This and the likes have led to the resulting gender disparities issues in human developmental initiatives (Horie, 2003). Moreover, most discrimination against girls begins even before birth; for instance, abortion, infanticide, and neglect contribute to a skewed gender balance. Moreover, other issues such as women reproductive rights, rights to vote, women in position of power, teenage pregnancy, domestic abuse, betrayal and cheating partner, female genital mutilation, child marriage, etc. have also stimulate the rise of a number of global efforts to combat gender inequality. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, and often described as an international bill of rights for women, commits member states to preventing “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field” (Horie, 2003).

Historically, the educational sector in Nigeria inherited some gender related issues since during the colonial era. The colonial administration preferred men though not intentional but this administration has placed significant emphasis on domestic science. The understanding of women education during the colonial masters is mere monotypic and the view portrayed as prejudice of the outlook of British administration system that actually empowered women in formal educational system (Richburgh, et al., 2002).

In Nigeria, the issue of gender disparity is not evenly distributed throughout the country. The eastern and southern part of Nigeria have meagre disparity rate than their Northern counterpart (Richburgh et al., 2002; Hassan and Varshney, 2019). The gender disparity in the Northern margin is more amplified more than any region of the country due to the region cultural as well as religious connotation and misinterpretation. This view is supported by Fafunwa’s conceptual clarification of Traditional African Education as that all-encompassing and a lifelong learning system not really gender specific (Kumolalo, 1997). Recently, the 2012 Gender parity report have ranked Nigeria as

number 118th out of 134th countries in the Gender Equality Index (Oladejo, 2017). Therefore, the present study attempts to investigate the contemporary educational status of tribal women in Northern Nigeria through critically analyzing the state-wise level of disparity.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The main conceptual framework adopted by the present study is to investigate the conceptual disconnection between boys and girls proportion in modern educational platforms within the Northern region of Nigeria. This framework ascribed to the fact that Feminist Education Theory is attributed to that of oppressive and suppressive scenarios that facilitate gender-based disadvantages in receiving relevant education and professional trainings. The feminist education theory profile the way women's education creates power and powerlessness when not received (Oladejo, 2017). This framework investigated the discourse that aimed to review the contemporary educational status of tribal women and also assess the level of gender-based disparity against women in the Northern Nigeria.

## **3. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study analyses roles as well as levels of disparity against women in Northern Nigeria. The Northern region of Nigeria comprises of Nineteen States Government and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. However, the study depends on the secondary sources of data obtained from 2006 National Census of Nigeria, peer reviewed literature, government reports and statistics, and supplemented with primary data collected using a short interview questions with semi-structured questions. A total of 102 people were randomly sampled across all age group with aid of stratified-random sampling in three states of Northern region of Nigeria (explicitly, Kano, Kwara and Yobe State). Based on the mixed nature of the data involved in this study, the data has been analyzed both qualitatively as well as quantitatively with aid of descriptive statistical.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Based on the primary survey conducted for the present study, the table 1 below entails about demographic details of the sampled respondents.

**Table 1:** Marital status, age and highest educational attainment of the women

	Variable	n=102	
		Freq.	%
<b>Marital Status</b>	Unmarried	41	40.1
	Married	61	59.9
<b>Age</b>	Under 19	07	06.9
	20-39	57	61.1
	40-59	32	30.4
	60 and above	06	05.9
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	Illiterate	18	17.6
	Primary	11	10.8
	Secondary	38	37.3
	Post-Secondary	25	24.5
	Post Graduate	08	07.8
	Others	02	02.0
<b>Religion</b>	Muslims	87	85.3
	Christians	15	14.7
	Others	00	00

*Source: Based on Primary Survey (July, 2018)*

The women education has been characterized by both inclusion and exclusion profound in the postcolonial realities of development in Third World countries. Various assorted factors have accumulated to the contemporary imbalances in gender equality and parity. However, even with requisite qualification, gender discrimination to an extent reduces the chances of employment in certain jobs, political participation and so on. Furthermore, various class connotations associated with marriage, ethnicity, and religion has created a defensive perspective to differentiate and perceive women’s education.

### 5.1 Women in Contemporary Developmental Theory

According to a study conducted by Oladejo (2017) reported that women became center of developmental approach in the 1970s framed by the notion that education leads to consequential employment and empowerment. Throughout the post-colonial Nigeria, there is an increasing enrollment of girl’s education. However, this increasing enrollment does not correspond with their respective counterparts (boys) enrollments. Regional-wise distribution also shows distinctive statistics between the Northern Nigeria and the Southern and Eastern part of the country. Other studies such as (Hassan and Varshney, 2019; Oladejo, 2017; Richburgh et al., 2002; Osokoya, 1987) have reported that religious affiliations have played a key role towards neglecting the girl’s child education in Nigeria. However, these

studies are contrary to the view cited that within the region of Nigeria, explicitly the southern region of Nigeria was largely among the forefront in girl's child's education in the country.

Moreover, the Eastern part of Nigeria largely dominated by Christians is lagging behind the southern part of the country. The southern Nigeria has for long prioritized education more than any other region of the country. The Northern part of the country is least in terms of girl's enrollment as well as the women educational attainment. Throughout Nigeria, increasing establishment of educational facilities was valued as desired developmental initiatives, since then, parental interest to educate female children increased exponentially (King and Hill, 1993; Horie, 2003). Modern developmental theories considered this kind of empowerment as a social change, and has created a generation of women in various professions, for instance, Politics, Medical, Technology, Teaching, etc. (Nazmul and Maryam, 2010; Horie, 2003; Annan-Yao, 2004).

## 5.2 Development of Nigeria's Institutional Policies Towards Women Education

The MDGs in sub-Saharan Africa is highly influenced by the Nigeria's achievements and its sheer size since almost every one in four women in Sub-Saharan Africa is a Nigerian. This situation played a key role in determining the progress of the whole region. Hence, on the positive performance on gender parity, Nigeria has unfortunately performed poor. According to 2012 Gender in Nigeria Report, Nigeria ranks 118 out of 134 countries in the Gender Equality Index. On the basis of educational attainment at all level in Nigeria, women earn less than their male counterparts, and even some cases men with less education earned more money than the educated female peers (Gender Statistics, 2010). Moreover, even the Nigerian girls' stages of dropping out of schools are earlier than their male counterparts (Osokoya, 1987). Evidence further shows that more than two third of 15-19 year old girls in Northern Nigeria are unable to read a sentence. However, the efforts of the Nigerian government over the past 20 years in tackling gender disparity in education did not yield sufficient result so far and did not had any significant impact (Osokoya, 1987). With regard to women's education, Nigeria's education policy has evolved since the 1980s towards a gender focus.

**Table 2:** Gender related policies and development in Nigeria

S/N	Policy Initiatives	Year
1	Nomadic Education Program	1986
2	Blueprint on Women's Education	1986
3	National Commission for Mass Literacy and Non-formal Education	1991
4	Family support basic Education Program	1994
5	Universal Basic Education	1999
6	National Policy on Women	2001
7	Education For All-Fast track Initiative	2002
8	Strategy for Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria	2003
9	Universal Basic Education Act	2004
10	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)	2004

*Source: Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012*

Gender based policy initiatives started receiving attention during the last three decades, with the initiation of Nomadic Education Program clearly aimed to poster the nomadic girl child low level of school enrolment. From there henceforth, most of the policies initiatives have a dedicated attempts to encourage girl child education.

### 5.1 Modern Nexus Between Tribal Women Educational Attainment, Family Size and Health

The gender based inequality has direct linkages with women health, family size and also with the level of education. This inequality has impact on both economic and social conditions of women through possible amplification of poverty level, degrading social status and isolation in terms of appointments and employments. In Northern Nigeria, a tribal woman usually assigned some key designated roles and responsibilities within the family, such as collection of water and firewood in addition to their respective daily house routine. Various studies are in agreement with (Annan-Yao, 2004) report that emphasis on the balancing of work and family activities as easier said than done task to most of these tribal women. Hence, this study is in line with other studies like Horie (2003) that emphasizes on the provisional family responsibilities which are the key factors that determine women educational and career choices, Northern tribal women are not the exceptional case.

Socio-cultural values, customs, traditions, ethics and motherhood instinct are some of the major factors leading gender inequality in education in the Northern region of Nigeria. Numerous cultural and social beliefs, attitudes and practices prevent girl-child from educational opportunities. Fear of losing cultural identity and moving towards the unknown or unwanted scenarios for woman lead to the contemporary apprehension for woman education in most societies of Northern Nigeria.

**Table 3:** Nigeria’s gender-wise distribution of educational attainment (in millions)

	Not Educated	Total Educated	Overall Educated		Educational Attainment					
			Freq.	%	Pri. and below	Sec.	OND/ NCE	HND/ Bach. Deg.	PG above	Other
<b>Both</b>	40.7	113.3	72.6	64	28.9	32.5	5.3	4.3	0.9	0.8
<b>Males</b>	18.3	57.4	39.1	68	15.1	17.3	2.9	2.7	0.6	0.4
<b>Females</b>	22.3	55.9	33.6	60	13.8	15.2	2.3	1.6	0.3	0.3

*Source: Computed by Authors from NPC Report, 2010*

- Note:** Pri. - Primary,  
 Sec. - Secondary,  
 OND - Ordinary National Diploma,  
 NCE - Nigeria Certificate in Education,  
 HND - Higher National Diploma,  
 Bach. Deg. - Bachelor Degree, and  
 PG - Postgraduates Studies.

**Table 4:** Nigeria’s educational status and level of disparity against women

	Educational Attainment				Level of Disparity (%)
	Total	None	Overall Educated		
			N	n%	
<b>Both Sexes (α)</b>	113.3	40.7	72.6	64	4
<b>Females (f)</b>	55.9	22.3	33.6	60	

*Source: Computed by Authors from NPC Report, 2010*

Formula: The level of disparity against women was calculated as:

$$D = \Sigma\alpha(n\%) - \Sigma f(n\%)$$

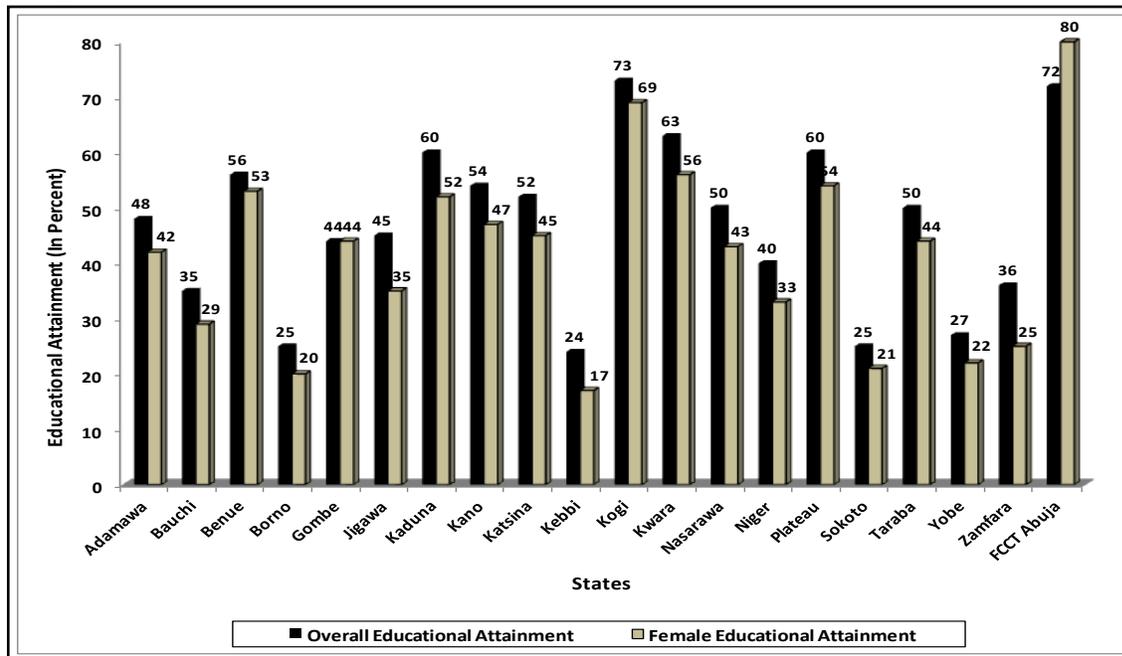
Where D stands for value of level of disparity against women (in per cent)

Σ stands for summation

$\alpha$  stands for the value of both sexes

f stands for the value of female

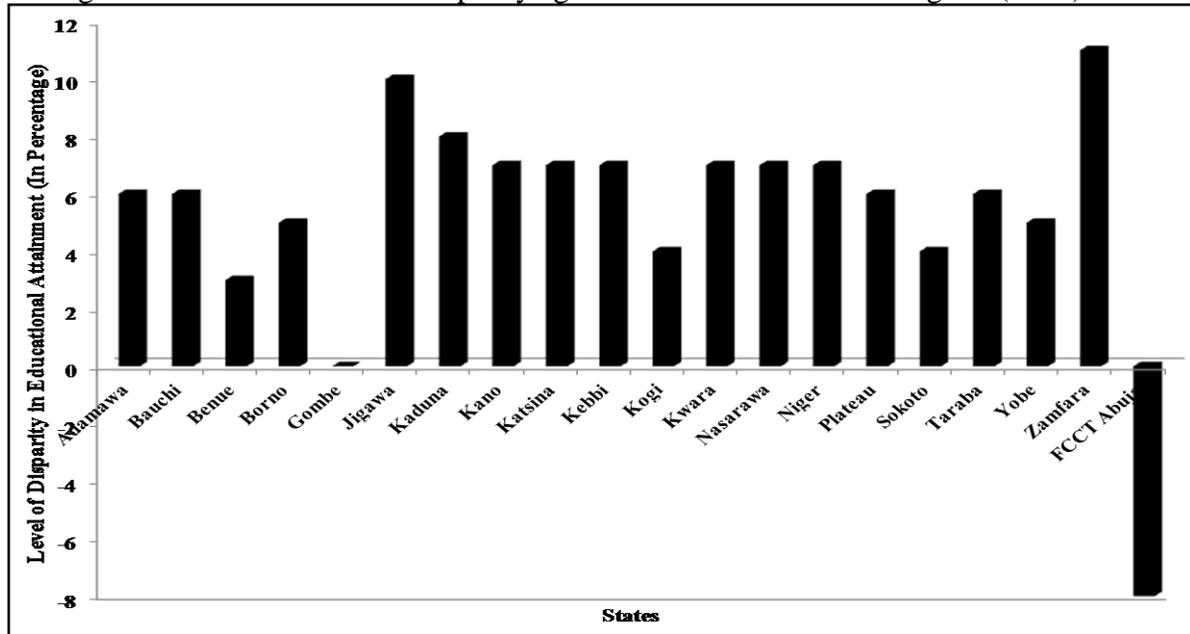
**Figure1.** State-wise distribution of overall and female educational attainment (2006)



Source: Computed by Authors from NPC Report 2010

Based on above Figure 1, only the FCT Abuja and Kogi State found to be performing on excellent level in terms of cumulative educational attainment by females with 80 per cent and 69 percent respectively, whereas Kebbi, Borno, Sokoto and Yobe States are discovered to be least in female educational attainment.

Figure 2. State-wise level of disparity against women in Northern Nigeria (2006)



Source: Computed by Authors based on figure 1

This study identified that only three of the entire Northern states found to be having a value below the national average per cent (i.e. FCT (-8%), Gombe (0%) and Benue (3%). With Kogi and Sokoto both having a value of (4%) which is equal to the national average. The other fifteen states in this region tend to be having a value greater than the national average.

Generally, this study uncovered that state-wise level of disparity against women in Northern Nigeria is frightening, with only exception of Gombe state with no disparity and FCT Abuja with disparity level of (-8%), the remaining 18 States of the Northern region tend to be having a disparity level that ranges from (3%) to (11%). However, States like Zamfara and Jigawa are having higher level of disparity of (11%) and (10%) respectively.

Though the linkages of health and family size is direct, and it is proven that basic education provides girls and women with a clear understanding of their basic health, required nutrition as well as family planning. It is only through education a girl-child can understand their possible choices and the power of decisions over their own lives and bodies.

**Table 5:** Status of Nigeria’s mothers’ education and family size

SN	Mother’s Education	Family Size
1	No Education	6.9
2	Primary and Below	6.3
3	Secondary	5.9
4	Higher Education	4.9

*Source: Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012*

**Table 6:** Distribution of Awareness of contraceptive methods among Northern married women (Aged 15-49)

	Awareness about any contraceptive method	Awareness about modern contraceptive methods
<b>National</b>	68.4%	67.0%
<b>Northern Region</b>	56.0%	54.5%

*Source: Computed by Authors from Reinarz, 2002.*

**Table 7:** Distribution of contraceptive usage among Northern married women (aged 15-49)

	Using any contraceptive method	Using modern contraceptive method
<b>National</b>	14.6 %	9.7 %
<b>Northern region</b>	6.6 %	5.5 %

*Source: Computed by Authors from Reinarz, 2002.*

Women's education leads directly to better reproductive health, improved family health, economic growth for family and the society, as well as lower rates of child mortality and malnutrition. As women education increases, fertility, population growth, infant and child mortality fall and family planning as well as health tend to improve significantly.

## 5.2 Tribal Woman and Modern Educational Professionalisms (Trainings)

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, Northern tribal women received a neocolonialism form of educational trainings. Hence, the general opinion regarding Nigeria's educational system and the integration of girl's child professional training still aimed and remained at gender integration and nation building. Within the Northern Nigeria, a common axiom still exists that profession can be regarded as either feminine or masculine. A great example of a feminine profession as ordained by the neocolonialism includes nursing, matron, secretary, etc., while a masculine profession may include engineering, politics, security operatives, etc. Until recently, these common believe towards women a career choice is popular among people of this region, and also contributed greatly to a notion of political economy that de-prioritized educational needs for national development. These perceptions lend credence to the way the society tend to define the career path for tribal women and even by women (Oladejo, 2017). This study is in line the Oladejo (2017) affirmation that relevant education for women is the type of educational training a woman had access to. Hence, women's educational training was still mostly entangled and limited to certain professions within the Northern region. However, based on primary survey conducted, the respondents were asked on girl-child preferences of professional trainings.

*"There are clear feminine and masculine profession, and nobody will marry a lady with masculine profession"*  
Anonymous Father and Husband, Primary Survey, 2018

*"The contemporary educational training is diverse, she (girl-child) knows her capabilities, when she decides which way to take, I'll assist and also pray for her to succeed"* Anonymous Father, Primary Survey, 2018

*"I'll never allow my girl-child to be in some masculine profession like mechanical engineer... (laughter)... and a soldier"* Anonymous Mother, Primary Survey, 2018

*"There are religiously accepted professions for a woman, such as Nursing and Gynecologist, and I'll be very happy to have a daughter in these professions"* Anonymous Mother, Primary Survey, 2018

*"I preferred teaching job because it will allow me to take care of my husband and my children"* Anonymous Student, Primary Survey, 2018

*"As you know, there are limited jobs for us the ladies, even within the limited choice, I'll prefer the one that will allow me to settle in my marriage"* Anonymous Students, Primary Survey, 2018

Based on the primary data analysis, it can be said that the popular notion of feminine and masculine is another very important aspect of determining girl-child professional trainings in this region of Nigeria. In general context, the socio-economic realities of the postcolonial era necessitated schooling, yet it was encapsulated in the realm of survival and sustainability (Reinarz, 2002; Oladunni, 1999).

### 5.3 Benefits of Girl-Child Education

The girl-child education is a broad overall form of investment for national growth and development. Likewise, there are other immediate benefits of girl-child education through the development of essential skills such as self-confidence, effective societal participation, protection from sexual exploitation, and protection from various communicable diseases (e.g. HIV/AIDS, Cholera, TB, etc.). Moreover, with girl-child education, other forms of unnecessary mortality such as maternal and child mortality can be reduced. The respondents were asked about their perception regarding the relevance of girl-child education.

*“Educated woman is empowered women” Anonymous Father and Husband,  
Primary Survey, 2018*

*“Once a woman gets western education, she does behave like a queen and everybody like a daughter like that”  
Anonymous Mother, Primary Survey, 2018*

*“Educated woman significantly differed from uneducated woman, even in the way they behave, dress, talk, etc.”  
Anonymous Students, Primary Survey, 2018*

Interestingly, based on the analysis of primary survey, it was understood that both the parents and students have full awareness about the value of educating a girl-child in this contemporary era.

### 5.4 Tribal Women Enrolment in Northern Region

Within this region, this study uncovered that the children of the educated whether girl or boy are likely to go school. However, based on primary survey conducted, the respondents were then asked about their preferences on gender-wise school enrollment.

*“It’s a boy thing; the girl’s will stay at home to help their mother doing daily home routine”  
Anonymous Father and Husband, Primary Survey, 2018*

*“I normally engaged my girl child in education but as soon as a husband come looking for her hands in marriage, I married her up” Anonymous Father, Primary Survey, 2018*

*“It’s the duty of her (girl-child) father, because he pays the bills” Anonymous Mother,  
Primary Survey, 2018*

*“You know, our culture does not permits the modern types of recklessness exercised by most these educated women”  
Anonymous Mother, Primary Survey, 2018*

*“Right now, I finished my secondary and waited for husband but if he didn’t show up, then I enrolled in NCE program, As soon as the right choice come, I will just get married” Anonymous Student, Primary Survey, 2018*

*“You know girl-child education is for the elites and educated parents, my father cannot afford the spending”  
Anonymous Student, Primary Survey, 2018*

Hence within the Northern region, female enrolment in teacher training school was often high and regarded as the most suitable by both parents as well as the girls children. Women's education in this region mainly entangled and limited to certain professions due to poverty and other forms of economic difficulties. This finding backed the (Oladejo, 2017; Oladunni, 1999) narration that "the socio-economic realities of girl-child enrollment in the postcolonial era necessitated the schooling, yet it was encapsulated in the realm of survival and sustainability."

### 5.5 Tribal Women and Employment Likelihood

Based on the primary survey, the following responses were obtained when the respondents were asked about getting employment:

*"My daughter will definitely work after getting educated, provided she found one" Anonymous Father and Husband, Primary Survey, 2018*

*"No, that's none of my business, it is between her (my daughter) and her husband, they have to decide for themselves" Anonymous Father, Primary Survey, 2018*

*"I'll like her to work so that she can help me" Anonymous Mother, Primary Survey, 2018*

*"If her husband permits, it will be welcomed by me, I just want her to be happy, that's all" Anonymous Mother, Primary Survey, 2018*

*"You know men nowadays don't want a working woman, I prefer to live happily with my husband than all this drama" Anonymous Student, Primary Survey, 2018*

*"I would like to work, but when my husband disagree, I have to sacrifice my ambition for my marriage, that's the truth" Anonymous Student, Primary Survey, 2018*

An educated woman is an empowered woman and more marketable in terms of employment. Better employment in turn implies more earnings for the family as a whole, as well as improved children's wellbeing. All of which contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth. Education helps women in taking advantageous opportunities that can benefit them and their families, prepare women for the labor force and helping them in understanding their legal as well as their reproductive rights.

### 5.6 Visualizing the Barriers of Tribal Women's Educational Chances

In spite of the challenges of education for women and girls, a few women that had access to the general relevant educational training occupied viable professions. Though, there are various advantages and disadvantages regarding tribal woman professionalism with profound success stories of across various professions. Within the Northern region of Nigeria, this study realizes that girl-child education is largely available but was mostly determined by a number of factors, for instance:

- [a] Poverty and unfavourable economic contributions
- [b] Early marriage and teenage pregnancy
- [c] Cultural and religious misinterpretations
- [d] Inadequate school infrastructures (e.g. classroom, furniture, teachers, etc.)

UNESCO (1998; 2002) and World Bank (2014) reports, about 70% of Nigerians are living below the line of poverty for both male and female, however, the figure is frightening when men and women were analyzed differently.

### 5.7 Challenges of Tribal Women Education Progress

In spite of the manifold progress recorded, achieving standard gender equality in Northern Nigeria is still facing enormous challenges. There is remarkable progresses in achieving gender parity within the Northern region of Nigeria, these includes the increasing early girl-child enrolment rate into pre-primary schools in both private and public institutions as seen in a statistical report of 2009/10 published by SER (2013).

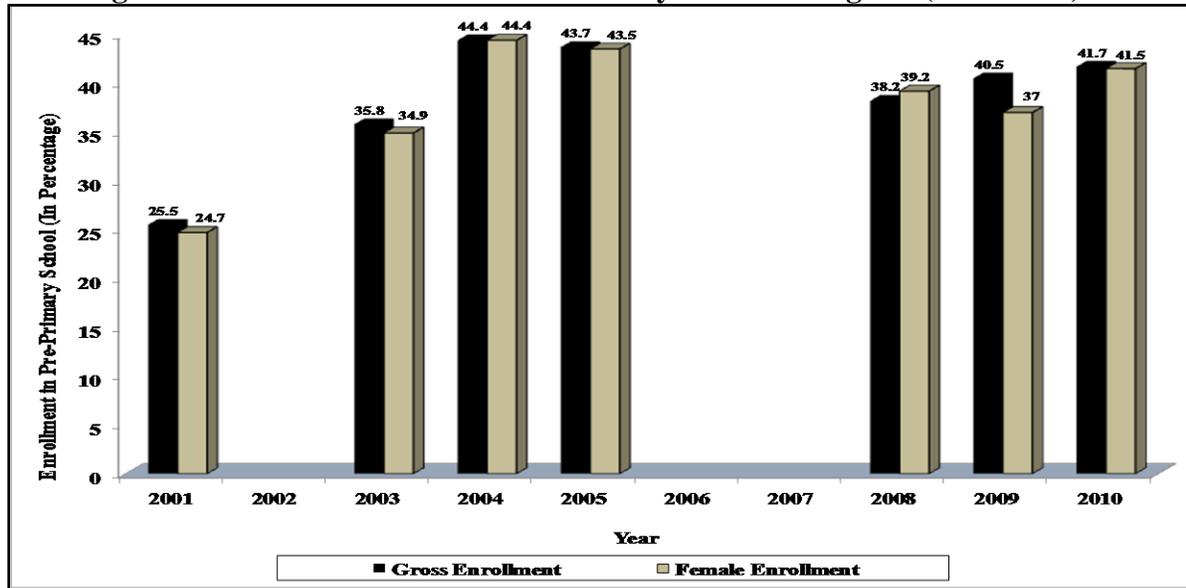
**Table 8:** Pre-Primary Enrollment by Ownership in 2009/2010

	No. of schools	Male students		Female students		Cumulative total of both sexes
		No. of stu.	(%)	No. of stu.	(%)	
<b>Public Institutions</b>	21,629	929,089	50.9	893,693	49.1	1,822,782
<b>Private Institutions</b>	12,020	440,463	50.4	433,108	49.6	873,571
<b>Grand Total</b>						2,696,353

*Source:* Computed from UNESCO (2002)

Moreover, progress has also been noticed in decreasing girl-child drop-outs (2002). According to NBS (2009) mean for primary school enrollment of Nigeria stand at 64.1% as against the world mean of 88.8%, now the world mean stands as 89.5% in 2016. The gross enrollment is the total the ratio of total enrollment of regardless their age, to the total population of the age group that officially to the level of education shown (2002).

Figure 3. Gross Enrollment in Pre-Primary School in Nigeria (2001-2010)



Source: Computed by Authors from NPC Report, 2010

On the other, the quest for Northern region in achieving gender equality is facing serious challenges. Some of these challenges include the concentration of gender equality in urban area, hence, about half of the Northern Nigeria lives in rural area, myopic thinking about girl-child education is still common among the Northern populous of Nigeria, despite sincere interest in girl-child education. Poverty is also key obstacle toward achieving gender equality in Nigeria. Finally, there is insecurity for girl-child in Northern Nigeria, especially with incessant attacks of Boko Haram on girls secondary in Chibok and Dapchi where hundreds of girls were kidnapped and married up by the insurgency.

## 5. CONCLUSION

With over 70 per cent of its population below the line of poverty, Nigeria's growth and development is in need of effective catalyst to realize its full potentials. Based on contemporary developmental theories, gender-equality through equity was found to be suitable to bridge the existing growth and developmental gaps. The present study investigated the modern educational status of tribal women in Northern region of Nigeria. The status of tribal women has significantly improved in the Northern Nigeria. However, this improvement did not attain the modern level of gender equality as practiced in most developed regions of the world. Besides being recognized as a key issue in human development, gender equality is also an undisputed tool for ensuring human right and social justice. Though, the Nigerian constitution grants equal gender rights to both males and females to ensure political, social, as well as economic rights without bias. But within the Northern region of Nigeria, the societal prejudice and the

patriarchal nature of gender stereotypes are deeply embedded in the social structure, and backed by cultural as well as religious misinterpretations.

Hitherto, steady efforts and rise in the educational status of tribal women in Northern Nigeria must be acknowledged, but gender equality in real sense is not practiced in most of the states of the region. However, the study also underlined that only through formal education the status of Northern tribal woman can raise to a common platform with men. Since women constitute close to half of the Nigeria's population, their contribution to the national economy is very important for growth and development, therefore, they need to be empowered. There are various studies which have proved that most countries with better employment opportunities tend to have better governance (Aja-Okorie, 2013; Gayawan E. and Adebayo, 2015; Osa, 2015), less prone to corrupt practices, ranked high on human development index (Oladejo, 2017), better political freedom (Trauth, 2004), etc.

Women's education heavily gender equality is the central indicators towards the overall development of the society. Though, the study is in line with the notion that emphasized and maintained that only at formal educational trainings have failed to capture the developmental realities without the complimentary efforts in poverty alleviation and integrated regional resource management. Therefore, this study recommends the use of the media platforms to promote women's rights and gender equality. The study also suggest the suspension of traditional practices and cultural activities that advocate and support gender inequality at all level of education within this region, and on the other side promotes provision of easily accessible scholarships for girl-child by all tiers of Government and provision of gender-based quota system admission across all educational institutions in the Northern region of the country.

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