Why Women Do Not Benefit from Nigeria:
An Assessment of Project Implementation in a Federal Ministry

Gift Uchechi Ntiwunka
Department of Political Science and Public Administration
Babcock University, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

Abstract:
Project planning in Africa has been described as weak due to bad leadership, inability of government to achieve budget target and poor management. Despite the enormous amount of naira spent every year on numerous projects, several pitfalls have been experienced especially in the public sector. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development is not left out as it plans and implements projects for which mostly women and children are beneficiaries. This study therefore examined factors affecting project planning and implementation of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Ogun State. Through the administration of structured questionnaire to beneficiaries, interviews with directors and coordinators of projects in the Ministry, and direct observation, findings revealed that certain factors such as non-domestication of policy instruments, inadequate awareness, manpower, and a challenging environment militate against effective planning and implementation. The study concluded that these factors amongst others have affected the programmes of the Ministry and limited its impact. The study recommended among others that the leadership of the Ministry must address the afore-mentioned issues through innovative strategising and public relations tools especially at the grass root level.

Keywords: Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, National Development, Project Planning, Project Implementation

1. Introduction

The federal Government of Nigeria has through the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development planned and implemented programmes/projects aimed at fulfilling its vision which are to build a society devoid of gender discrimination, guarantee equal access to wealth creation opportunities, develop a culture that places premium on the protection of the child and focus attention of both public and private sectors on issues that promote full participation of women and children in national development.

This vision became vital upon the establishment that gender equality is a development strategy for reducing poverty level among women and men, improving health and living standards, and enhancing efficiency of public investment globally. Thus the attainment of gender equality has become a prerequisite for the attainment of sustainable development (Nigeria Vision 20: 2020, 2010).

To actualize these visions, the Ministry set goals and objectives and mapped out activities that will help achieve them. As part of its activities, the Ministry ensures effective implementation of treaties, conventions, declarations and policies approved by Nigeria for the promotion of human rights and advancement of Nigerian women such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), African Women's Protocol, Beijing Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), NEEDS/SEEDS, etc.

The projects of the Ministry include the establishment of skill acquisition centres, cassava/rice cottage industries, palm oil cottage industries, farm craft centre for the blind, youth development/civic centres, national children resource centre, rehabilitation centres, orphan and vulnerable children centres, international programme on violence against women, Child Rights Act popularization and human right protection for children programmes, women political participation, Nigerian Children Trust Fund, material assistance to old people focused NGOs and old people's homes, and Business Development Fund for Women (BUDFOW)/Women Fund for Economic Empowerment.

In carrying out its activities, it collaborates and partners with Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as other private groups and works with relevant line ministries such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Information and Ministry of Labour and Productivity. Other stakeholders include international agencies, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Department of International Development (DFID), United States Agency for International Development (USAID),

World Bank, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), IFAD, and other multilateral and bilateral organizations (Ministry SERVICOM Charter 2012).

In spite of these efforts, women still have limited access to the projects of the ministry and men still dominate key sectors of the economy. Despite economic progress, income growth in Nigeria has made insignificant progress toward gender equality in the area of female mortality and access to economic opportunities. This study therefore examined factors affecting project planning and implementation of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Ogun State. The study which is both descriptive and survey in nature relied on both primary and secondary data. While the secondary data were sourced from relevant documents such as textbooks, journals, newspapers and government publications, the primary sources included interviews, questionnaire (1500, 250 from each local government council) and direct observation carried out in six local governments' councils in Ogun State(Abeokuta South and Ifo from Ogun Central; Ijebu Ode and Sagamu from Ogun East; and Yewa North and Ado-Odo ota from Ogun West.), as well as the state's Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.

2. Conceptual Clarification

2.1. Project Planning
The process of thinking through and making explicit the objectives, goals, and strategies necessary to bring the project through its life cycle to a successful termination when the projects' products and services take their rightful place in the execution of project owner strategies. It spells out exactly to the project team what must be done, when it must be done and what resources to use in order to produce the deliverables of the project successfully (Cleland, 1999; Maredith, 2003).
Projects cannot be achieved without a plan. Through planning, government decides what projects to embark upon, how and when it wants to achieve them and in what order bearing in mind the goals and aspirations of its citizens.

2.2. Project Implementation
This is carrying out the work based on the plan that has been laid down and controlling the work to ensure that the project scope is accomplished within budget and on schedule. Implementation involves monitoring the progress of the project once it commences to ensure that everything is going according to plan (Clement and Gido 2006; Bartle, 2007). It is by implementation that citizens fill the impact of projects. Without this, the plan is a waste. Usually a schedule of activities is followed to ensure that the project is completed at a definite time. Monitoring systems are also put in place to make sure that implementers do not deviate from the plan. This stage is significant as it determines how a project will be used, operated and maintained.

3. National Development
National development is the overall development of a country. It entails social-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a nation which can be achieved through development planning (Lawal and Oluwatoyin, 2011). Development planning implies deliberate control and direction of the economy by government for the purpose of achieving definite target and objectives within a specified period of time (Jhingan, 2005; Ikeanyibe, 2009).

4. Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
All over the world, an agency is usually set aside to handle issues relating to the well- being of women. In most countries of the world it is referred to as the Ministry of Women Affairs. In Ghana it is known as the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs while in Nigeria it is called the Ministry of Women affairs and Social Development. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development established in 1995 came to be as a result of the upgrading of the National Commission for Women established under the National Commission for Women Act 1989 which was later repealed by the National Commission for Women Decree 1992. In 1999, due to restructuring, the name was changed to Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development. The Youth Department was separated in 2004 to be a ministry of its own. The ministry was established in the states in 1997 with multiple mandates. Apart from women affairs, it is responsible for child development, social welfare and rehabilitation. Presently, the Minister for Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development is Hajiya Zainab Maina (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Nigeria, 2009).
The Ministry whose mission statement is to "serve as the national vehicle to bring about speedy and healthy development of Nigerian women, children, the socially disadvantaged and physically challenged, and the mainstreaming of their rights and privileges in national development processes" has so many objectives. The objectives include to formulate policies, develop strategic frameworks and provide appropriate social and economic safety nets that will foster sustainable livelihood for women, children, elderly, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups; strengthen national capacity for the development and implementation of viable social development policy issues; support participatory development policies and programmes of action through research and data development; ensure the domestication and implementation of international treaties on gender based violence and involvement of women in peacekeeping operations by integrating them into the plans and policies of relevant sectors. To achieve its goals, the Ministry has a structure that is similar to that of other Ministries (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Nigeria, 2009).

Presently the Ministry has an Office of the Honourable Minister; Office of the Permanent Secretary; three Service Departments: Finance and Account, Human Resource Management and Planning, Research and Statistics; and four Operational Departments: Women Affairs, Child Development, Rehabilitation and Social Welfare. These departments are found at the Federal and State levels. There exist nine units in the Ministry- Legal, Press and Publicity, Federal Audit, Internal Audit, Stock Verification, Servicom, Orphan and Vulnerable Children, and Bola Ige Information Technological Centre (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Nigeria, 2009).

The Ministry also has only one parastatal- The National Centre for Women Development (NCWD) responsible for the implementation of policies, operational decisions, and the management of its programmes. The Centre is patterned after the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The Centre which is also established at the state level aims at empowering Nigerian women socially, economically and politically for sustainable national development.

5. Theoretical Framework

The work was anchored on the New Institutionalism approach. New institutionalism emerged in the 1980s, as a reaction to the under-socialised character of dominant approaches (behaviourism and rational choice) that dismissed institutions as mere aggregation of individual preferences (March and Olsen, 1984). This approach deals with the informal conception of institutions, formal constitutions, organizational structure, the way institutions 'embody values and power relationships, and the obstacles as well as opportunities that confront institutional design'. New institutionalists are concerned with the impact of institution upon individuals and the interaction between institutions and the individuals (Marsh and Stoker, 2002:103).

New institutionalists, rather than focus on the institutions, are interested in studying the decision-making, budgeting and procurement procedures within it. Institutional rules are important because they provide information on others' likely future behaviour and on sanctions for non-compliance (Knight 1992:17; Marsh and Stoker, 2002).

Three areas of disagreement exist among self-styled new institutionalists and between institutionalists and sceptics in other parts of the discipline (Marsh and Stoker, 2002). The first being that there is no concrete definition for institution as it is said to include everything that guides individual behaviour including tradition, custom, culture and habit as informal institution (Marsh and Stoker, 2002. The second disagreement is that new institutionalism is at its weakest when trying to explain the genesis and transformation of institutions (Peters, 1999; John, 1998). While the third area of disagreement is that 'normative and rational choice approaches are built upon different theoretical assumptions about the impact of institutions upon political behaviour, and about the interaction between individual actors and institutions' (Marsh and Stoker, 2002: 106).

Even though political institutions play more autonomous role in shaping political outcomes, the organization of political life makes the difference and as such

the bureaucratic agency, the legislative committee, the appellate court are arena for contending social forces, but they are also collection of standard operating procedures and structures that define and defend interests. They are political actors in their own right (March and Olsen 1984: 738).

Ministries are institutions (structures) established both at the Federal and State levels to implement their decisions and policies. Although their roles are differentiated, they all work towards achieving the collective goals for which they are established which include meeting the needs of the populace, providing infrastructure, mobilizing people and resources to meet ends amongst others. The performance of these roles depends on the realities on ground both locally and internationally. How well these decisions and policies are implemented will be determined by how effective the structures are.

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development has been established for that purpose. The Ministry through its many departments, each with its specified function, strives to ensure gender balance in all affairs of the state. They ensure that women are educationally, economically, politically, and socially empowered. The performance of these roles depends on the realities on ground and the removal of obstacles that may hinder the achievement of their stated objectives. How well these decisions and policies are implemented are determined by how effective the structures are.

6. Assessing the Projects of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

The Ministry has quite a number of projects/programmes that it is executing. Assessment of some of these programmes reveals that there are challenges facing their implementation.

6.1. National Gender Policy

In its effort to ensure that women contribute to development by participating in national activities like their male counterparts, government made policies and established institutions that will see to their implementation (Ekong, 2008; Federal Ministry of Information Nigeria, 2011). The National Gender policy is one of such. The bill which is in support of CEDAW and the African Protocol on the Right of Women in Africa is a document approved by the Federal Government of Nigeria containing its plan towards the equal fair treatment of men and women, its reasons for the plan and what it hopes to achieve (Voice of America, 2008; Duke and Effiong, 2009).

Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society where men dominate all spheres of women's lives. Women's rights are violated much more often than those of men despite the principles of non-discrimination enshrined in Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution. Many of these rights are associated with the traditional norms and practices such as widowhood rites, inheritance rights, the land tenure system, female genital mutilation/female genital circumcision, early marriage as well as diverse ethnic groups. About 87 per cent of women

are engaged in the informal and unregulated forms of employment. Women are responsible for carrying out 70 per cent of agricultural labour, 50 per cent of animal husbandry related activities and 60 per cent of food processing activities. They suffer domestic violence and rape which increases their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. In times of conflict, they face issues like violence, rape, hunger and disease, and displacement. They do not enjoy equal opportunities to advance socially, physically, educationally, politically and economically like their male counterpart (National Coalition on Affirmative Action, 2006).

Based on these situations faced by women, the National Gender policy adopted in 2006, set out to build a just society devoid of discrimination, harness the full potentials of all social groups regardless of sex or circumstance, promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and protect the health, social, economic and political wellbeing of all citizens in order to achieve equitable rapid economic growth; evolve an evidence based planning and governance system where human, social, financial and technological resources are efficiently and effectively deployed for sustainable development (National Coalition on Affirmative Action, 2006).

Even though there are guiding principles, policy delivery strategies and institutional framework provided by Government through the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, these objectives are yet to be achieved. Social, economic, traditional, cultural, and religious factors are still the forces militating against gender equality in Nigeria.

These, for instance, still affect the enrolment of girls in school as the number of girls enrolled in school is on the decline especially in the tertiary level and more especially in the North. Judging from figure 1 below, school enrolment for girls 5 – 19 years in Nigeria are equivalent to those in the United States around 1860 (*World Development Report on Gender and Development,* 2012).
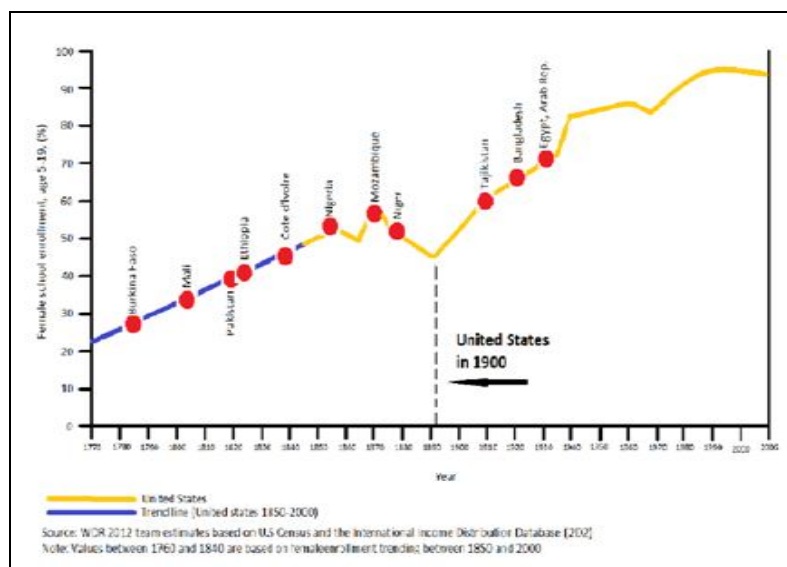

Figure 1: Female Enrolments Remain Strikingly Low in some Countries

About 10.5 million Nigerian children are out of school. These constitute the largest number in the world. 78 per cent of young women aged 20 to 29 in the North-West cannot read or write due to early marriage, early child birth, poor sanitation, and the shortage of female teachers (*British Council Nigeria*, 2012). According to the Minister for Women Affairs and Social Development in Nigeria, early marriages as well as economic factor have been identified as reasons for poor enrolment of the girl child into various educational institutions in the country (Otaru and Oloruntoba, 2014)

Some discriminatory laws obviously in contravention of Article 16 of CEDAW which enjoins states to 'take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations still exist in the statute books. According to Section 55(1) (d) of the Penal Code for the Northern states, a man is permitted to beat his wife for corrective purposes. Girls are still married off by their parents at a very tender age without their consent (Ogundipe, 2002; Lawal and Ojo, 2006).

Despite all efforts made by government to give women a voice through the establishment of gender focal points and desks in various ministries, departments, government agencies and inter-ministerial taskforces for particular programmes, and the adoption of National Policy on Women (2000), Child Rights Acts (2003), National Gender Policy (2006) and National Gender Strategic Implementation Framework (2008), gender mainstreaming has been faced by a lot of challenges.

Notwithstanding the various efforts made for women to run for public office, the number of women holding parliamentary seats is not encouraging. Gender gap in politics is pronounced and below global average. As at 2011, the total percentage of women in political offices is about 8 per cent. This is just 6 per cent increase since democracy kicked off in 1999. Of the over ten thousand candidates that contested from the various political parties in the general elections, 9.1 per cent were women (Oladoye, 2011). Of the 360 members of the Nigerian House of Assembly, only 25 are women. Only about 4 per cent of the Local government Councillors are women *(*British Council Nigeria, 2012).

The lack of women in decision-making position is one of the reasons given for the low investment in the health and education sectors of the Nigerian economy which are crucial to human development (British Council Nigeria, 2012). If more women are in key positions where they can influence decision making in the country, it will ensure that policies and provisions that will enable children

especially girls go to school and remain in school till they graduate are made; ensure that the budget is gender neutral by giving equal preference to the rights and needs of men, women and children; and enable women who are more in the agricultural sector especially in the areas of labour and food processing benefit equally from the provisions in that sector like their male counterpart.

Apart from social and cultural factors, several factors such as godfatherism, male dominated party executives, labelling, violence, lack of confidence to run elections, perception of politics as a dirty game, and money politics limit the aspiration of women and impede their access to leadership positions (Agbalajobi, 2010; Akinyede-Afolabi, 2011; Oladoye, 2011).

In the words of Ogundipe, "women cannot take their rightful place in the power structure of Nigeria until the cultural attitudes and socialization practices are overcome by women themselves". This he believes could be overcome through "a broader informal and formal education system (Ogundipe, 2002: 42).

According to the 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development, four important areas have been identified in order to improve policies pertaining to women. They include reducing excess female mortality and closing education gaps, where they remain; improving access to economic opportunities for women; increasing women's voice and agency in the household and in society, and limiting the reproduction of gender inequality across generations (*World Development Report on Gender and Development,* 2012*)*.

These four areas identified by the 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development are crucial if Nigeria must achieve gender equality. Two major strategies that will ensure that these four areas are properly addressed are gender mainstreaming which ensures that the rights and needs of men and women are given equal attention at every level, and gender budgeting which guarantees the consideration of gender in every level of the budget.

Gender Mainstreaming, established in 1995 during the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, is an accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. It ensures that gender perspective and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to activities such as policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects (*United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*, n.d; Quinn, 2009).

Gender mainstreaming ensures that every single Nigerian for instance contributes to national development regardless of their gender. To guarantee gender equality, government established gender focal points and desks in various ministries, departments, government agencies and inter-ministerial taskforces for particular programmes. Government also adopted National Policy on Women (2000), Child Right Acts (2003), National Gender Policy (2006) and National Gender Strategy Implementation Framework (2008).

Efforts made by government to involve both men and women including people with disabilities in its policies and systems have faced a lot of challenges. These include inadequate budgetary allocation for achieving gender equality initiatives, poor perception and trivialization of gender issues by policy makers and the general public, poor mainstreaming of gender policies arising often from inadequate funding, inadequate number of gender experts, absence of political will, late release of appropriated funds and poor funding for social mobilization and advocacy (*United Nations Economic Commission for Africa*, 2012).

Other challenges are poor funding for the implementation framework, low awareness of the public on the contents of the National Gender Policy, increasing numbers of women and the disadvantaged groups needing support, inability to domesticate CEDAW, the African Union Protocol of Women's Rights by the National Assembly by passing the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, absence of a national functional portal for the dissemination of the Ministry's activities and achievements (*United Nations Economic Commission for Africa*, 2012).

On the other hand, Gender Budgeting "is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budget, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenue and expenditure in order to promote gender equality" (Quinn, 2009).

The need for mainstreaming gender into budgets arose based on the premise that budgets were gender neutral and involved little participation by the people. Gender budgeting is a way of linking policy with macroeconomic policy, recognizing the different needs, privileges, rights and obligation of men, women and children in the society, and recognizing the different contribution of men and human labour in mobilizing and distributing resources. It ensures that budgets are people-oriented and that gender is integrated into budget planning (Quinn, 2009; Adeyeye, 2010).

In Nigeria, budgeting is still conventional in nature. Apart from the budget of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, all other budgets are not gender sensitive and are not people oriented. For instance, in agriculture where women are responsible for carrying out 70 per cent of agricultural labour, 50 per cent of animal husbandry related activities and 60 per cent of food processing activities, gender is not put into consideration. The failure to integrate gender into budgets is due to the fact that few women occupy key political positions at all levels. And even the few involved contribute little or nothing to the budget.

6.2. Women Empowerment

According to Care International one of the world's largest private international relief and development organizations that fights global poverty by empowering women and girls, 70 per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty around the globe are women. They are poor because they have been denied their rights, opportunities and voice. Women all over the world work two-third of the world's working hour with low status and no pay; earn only 10 per cent of the world's income; own less than 1 per cent of the world's property and make up two-third of the estimated 876 million adults worldwide who can neither read nor write (CARE, 2005: UNDP, 2009).

Since women form the majority of the vulnerable, especially in the developing world, Nigeria inclusive, they need attention, encouragement and empowerment. This does not only guarantee their rights as human beings but also ensures that the millennium development goals and sustainable development are achieved (Akosile, 2007; UNDP, 2012). Empowerment which could be educational, economic, political and social ensures that women create employment for themselves and others, have a say in all government institutions as well as in the private sector and civil society, have equal access to health care, participate equally with men in public dialogue and decision-making and influence the decisions that will determine the future of their families and country (Akinsanya, 2011; Osalor, 2012; UNDP, 2012).

Empowerment is made possible through the Centre for Women Development were women are thought a lot of skills like sewing, knitting, catering, bead making among others. Women especially those in the rural areas are empowered through micro credit initiatives. The credit facilities which are the initiative of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and Financial Institutions include the Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFEE) launched in 2005 and the Business Development Fund for Women (BUDFOW). These are soft loans given to women to increase their business at low interest rate to facilitate easy repayment.

In order to promote a 35 per cent affirmative action for women in political space, as reflected in the National Gender Policy adopted in 2007, the Ministry both at the Federal and State level encourage and support women interested in politics. In the just concluded elections, the Federal Government made available one million naira seed money to support women in politics. Generally women empowerment programmes have been supported and sponsored by the Federal and State Governments, Department for International Development, Banks, Women's Political Trust Fund, United Nations Women Agencies, and International Labour Organization among others (Chukwu, 2011; Federal Ministry of Information, 2012).

The programmes on empowerment are not popular as many; especially those in the rural areas are yet to benefit from them. In Ogun State for instance, even though 66.8 per cent of the respondents from the six local governments sampled agree that the programmes on women empowerment exist, many are not aware of such programmes.

Programme	Abe-okuta South	Ifo	Ijebu Ode	Ado-Odo Ota	Saga-mu	Yewa North	Total	
							A*	N*
1.Women development training centre	119 (50.0%)	158 (69.3%)	136 (56.4%)	117 (53.7%)	111 (70.3%)	107 (61.5%)	748 (59.5%)	509 (40.5%)
2. Business development fund for women	92 (38.8%)	145 (63.0%)	109 (45.2%)	98 (43.9%)	93 (58.9%)	72 (42.9%)	609 (48.4%)	648 (51.6%)
3.Women fund for economic empowerment	105 (44.5%)	132 (57.9%)	109 (45.2%)	94 (42.7%)	87 (54.7%)	81 (46.8%)	608 (48.4%)	649 (51.6%)
4.Sensitization of women in politics	130 (54.6%)	156 (67.5%)	184 (74.2%)	132 (59.7%)	87 (55.1%)	108 (63.2%)	797 (62.9%)	470 (37.1%)
5.Gender mainstreaming	134 (56.3%)	147 (64.2%)	117 (48.8%)	101 (45.9%)	47 (30.1%)	67 (40.1%)	613 (49.0%)	637 (51.0%)
6.Sustenance of gender equality through total elimination of various forms of discrimination and violence against women and children	118 (49.8%)	157 (68.0%)	127 (52.5%)	131 (59.0%)	68 (42.8%)	81 (47.1%)	682 (54.0%)	581 (46.0%)

Table 1: Level of Citizens Awareness of the Ministry's Activities
Source: Field Survey, 2012; Ntiwunka, 2013
*Note: A= Aware and N= Not Aware

According to the data on Table 1, gender mainstreaming (613; 49.0%), business development fund (609; 48.4%), and funds for economic empowerment of women (608; 48.4%), were the least popular in the State. This simply implies that there are a lot of women out there in the State who would have loved to be empowered but are denied access. This is in line with the argument that many projects have failed to put the people first resulting into deepening poverty and inequality (Manjengwa, 2007; Nwachukwu, Ibeawuchi, Okoli, 2010). It means also that the Ministry should intensify effort to see that more women in the state are empowered.

Although on the average, the citizens are aware of political empowerment in the State, the level of involvement and participation is not encouraging. Under the present dispensation, only 5(27.8%) out of the 18 Commissioners in the State are women. These are the Commissioner for Budget and Planning, Mrs Oluwande Muoyo; the Commissioner for Finance, Mrs Kemi Adeosun; the Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs Elizabeth Sonubi; the Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Mrs Yewande Amusan, and the Commissioner for Agriculture, Mrs Ibironke Sokefun. At the Local Government level, one (5%) out of the 20 Local Government Chairmen is a woman. This is far from the 35 per cent affirmative action for women in politics as reflected in the National Gender Policy adopted in 2007.

6.3. Child Right Act

Concerned on the state of millions of children across the world who are suffering, treated with impunity, abandoned and sold into child slavery, the United Nations General Assembly in November 1989 adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Nigerian National Assembly in its bid to domesticate the conventions of the rights of the child as stipulated by the United Nations and African Union enacted the Child Rights Act in 2003.

According to the Act, a child is a person below the age of 18 years. The Act which contains 287 sections with II schedules makes some basic provisions for the survival, protection, participation and development of the child. It also specifies the responsibilities of the child. (Ikhilae, 2010; Ketefe, 2011; UNICEF, 2011).

Although the Act has been enacted at the national level, states are expected to adopt and adapt it for domestication as state laws bearing in mind the specific situations of their state. So far, only 24 states have passed the Child Rights Act 2003 into law. They are Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Anambra, Benue, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Imo, Jigawa, Kwara, Lagos, Nassarawa, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Rivers, Niger, Bayelsa, Kogi, and Taraba. Despite the fact that the bill has been passed in Niger, Kogi and Ebony, it is yet to receive gubernatorial assent (UNICEF, 2011).

Sixteen out of these 24 states are from the South. Apart from Jigawa and Taraba from the North West and North East, all other Northern States are from the North Central. Thus majority of the North Western and North Eastern States have not passed the Act. Majority of their children are *Almajiris.*

Despite the instruments provided both nationally and internationally on the rights of the child, there seems to be a wild gap between the law and its implementation. Many children still suffer cruelty, abuses, inhuman treatment and child labour. On the extreme, some are forced into marriage and prostitution while some are still branded witches and wizards (Amalu, 2010; Uzondu, 2011; Amagiya, 2011).

Even though the department of Child Development handles child abuse cases, cases of child abuse still abound across the country. The department only handles cases reported to it. With the passage of the bill prohibiting children of school age from roaming the streets during school hours in Ogun State, it was observed that the number of children roaming the streets during school hours has reduced. This is a commendable effort as it ensures that children are educated.

Child labour which is any work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and deprives them of opportunities for schooling and development remain a major source of concern in Nigeria. Report from the International Labour Organization indicates that the number of children under the age of 14 in Nigeria is estimated at 14 million. Many of these children engage in risky jobs such as street vendors, beggars, car washers/watchers, scavengers, shoe shiners, apprentice, mechanics, and bus conductors. Others perform hazardous works in mines, fishing and agriculture where they come in contact with pesticides and dangerous tools. Yet others, most especially girls are involved in domestic labour and prostitution (UNICEF, 2007; Adebayo, 2011; Dosumu and Abidogun, 2011).

Widespread poverty, rapid urbanization, lack of awareness by parents/guardian and children of the provision of the bill, high school dropout rates, lack of enforcement of legal instruments meant to protect children, traditions and culture where girls are given in marriage at ages below 18 years, fear of children becoming wild, have affected the adoption and implementation of these law.

Other challenges that limited the successful implementation of the Ministry's plans across the country are insufficient manpower and funding. The Ministry depends solely on the allocation from the Federal/State government. The little revenue generated by the Ministry are from Probation Officer cost on adoption, registration of Day Care, registration of Home/NGO, and sales of standard measure "Kongo."

Lack of adequate personnel is a major factor militating against the effective implementation of the Ministry's projects. For instance, one of the Social Welfare Centres had only eight workers including the cleaner to cater for four Local Government Areas. Project vehicles are not sufficient to extend the services of the Ministry within the State. Other limitations are that some of the policies have not been domesticated in the State. The only remand home in the state is congested. People who are supposed to use these policies do not know what to do with them. The rehabilitation centre is only temporal. Harmful traditional practices, little support from partner agencies are also factors militating against the effective implementation of the projects. Observations made on the environment under which some of the services are rendered show that the environment is not conducive for both workers and clients (Ntiwunka, 2013).

7. Conclusion

It is an established fact that the understudied Ministry actually plans and implements programmes but these programmes have limited impact and need more publicity in order to meet their stated objectives. The level of awareness of these programmes were barely average Although 62.9 per cent of the citizens are aware of political empowerment in the Ogun State, the level of involvement and participation is not encouraging as women are still under represented in the State. On economic empowerment, intensified effort should be made to see that more women gain access to the micro-credit facilities provided by the Ministry. It is also a fact that not much has been done to economically and politically empower persons with disabilities in the society since the services provided by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Disabled People's Organization (DPOs) as well as some NGOs (local and International) are based mainly on charity/welfare approach. As Osalor rightly puts it, empowerment is important for women as it will create employment for them, enable them have a say in both public and private sectors, and take part in decision-making that will determine the future of their families and country (Osalor, 2012). It is only when the differences in the status of women and men in the key areas are taken into consideration, that poverty can be reduced (Lin, 2011).

Projects mapped out to ensure that the society is devoid of gender discrimination, guarantee equal access to wealth creation opportunities, and promote the participation of women and children in national development should be implemented to their fullest. These can only be possible through public enlightenment, adequate manpower and mobility, close monitoring, and the provision of an enabling environment.

The leadership of the Ministry must therefore create awareness of its programmes among the citizens. This can be done through publicity, organization of lectures at the grassroots level to educate women and children on the importance of these programmes. The Ministry from time to time should survey the opinions of the citizens about proposed and implemented programmes so as to improve citizens' perception of the programmes and the ministry that creates them.

On women empowerment, efforts should be made by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to ensure that more women especially those in the rural areas are empowered. Women should be enlightened on the need/benefit of education, social, political and economic empowerment as it will alleviate the poverty level in the nation. Women need to be encouraged to stand up for their right and believe in themselves.

Government through the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development must improve the standard of the environment under which these services are rendered. The buildings should be renovated, furniture should also be replaced. Welfare offices must be established in all the Local Government Areas and adequate staff employed to manage them. Vehicles should be provided for close monitoring of projects and awareness purpose

8. References

1. Adebayo, I. (2011, June 28). '15 Million Nigerian Children are Child Labourers'. http://234next.com/csp/cms/Next/News/Metro/Crime/5723360-146/story.csp 29/1/2012.
2. Agbalajobi, D. T. (2010, February). A woman's Participation and the Political Process in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects. African Journal of Political Science and International Relations. 4 (2), 75 – 82.
3. Akinsanya, A. O. (2011). Empowerment of Women in Wage Employment in Nigeria: The Relevance of Workers Education. Journal of Social Sciences 27(1), 59-65.
4. Akinyele-Afolabi, A (2011) Nigeria's Electoral Reform and the Prospect for Women's Participation in the 2011 Elections. http://www.ng.boell.org/web/112-223html 3/10/2012.
5. Akosile, A. (2007). "Skill Acquisition, Key to Grassroots Empowerment" http://www.awlprojet.org
6. Amagiya, F. (2011, June 4). Witch Craft: Govt Should Sign the Child Act. Vanguard
7. Amalu, C. (2010, June 29). Child and the Child Rights Act Vanguard. Retrieved from http://allafrica.com/stories/201006300063.html 28/1/2012.
8. British Council Nigeria (2012). Gender in Nigeria Report 2012. Improving the Lives of Girl and Women in Nigeria: Issues, Policies, Action. 2nd Edition.
9. CARE (2005.) Women's Empowerment http://www.care.org/.../women_and_empowerment.pdf 6/7/2012.
10. Cleland, D. I. (1999). Project Management: Strategic Design and Implementation. 3rd Edition New York: McGraw-Hill
11. Chukwu, N. (2011). ILO Partners Women Affairs Ministry to Boast Financial Autonomy. http://nationalaccordnewspaper.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2841:ilo-partners-women-affairs-ministry-to-boast-financial-autonomy-&catid=69:community-development&itemid=99 Accessed March 1, 2012.
12. Dosumu, A.G. and Abidogun, B. G. (2011). Child Labour among Working Children in Ogun State Nigeria. European Journal of Social Science ISSN 1450-2267 25(3), 411-417.
13. Ekong, F. (2008). Contributions of Women to National Development: Example from Akwa Ibom State. Stud Home Comm Sci, 2(2), 113-119
14. Federal Ministry of Information Nigeria (2011, December 1). FG to Review 2006 National Gender Policy-Women Ministry. (Press Releases) http://fmi.gov.ng/fg-to-review-2006-national-gender-policy-%E2%80%93-women%E2%80%99s-ministry/
15. Federal Ministry of Information (2012, February 8). Minister Seeks Waivers for Nigerian Women to Access Credit Facilities. Press Releases http://fmi.gov.ng/minister-seeks-waiver-for-nigerian-women-to-access-credit-facilities/
16. Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Nigeria (2009). Retrieved from http://www.pastquestions.com/wministry/organ.php 2/1/2012.
17. Ikhilae, E. (2010, April 27). Child Rights and Underage Marriage. The Nation. Retrieved From http://thenationonlineng.net/web2/articles/44418/1/Child-rights-and-underage-marriage/Page1.html 29/1/2012.
18. International Labour Organization 2012 Gender and Development http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/economic-and-social-development/gender-and- development/lang-en/index.htm
19. John, P. (1998). Analysing Public Policy. London: Pinter.
20. Ketefe, K. (2011, January 17). "Child's Rights and Responsibilities in Nigeria". National Mirror http://nationalmirroronline.net/features/3933.html 29/1/2012.
21. Knight, J. (1992). Institutions and Social Conflict. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
22. Lawal, E. E. and Ojo, R. C. Politics of Gender Inequality in Nigeria in "Ojo, E. (Ed.) (2006). Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria Ibadan: John Archers Limited.

23. Manjengwa, J. M. (2007). Problems Reconciling Sustainable Development Rhetoric with Reality in Zimbabwe. Journal of Southern African Studies 33(2). 307-323.

24. March, J. P. and Olsen, J. P. (1984). The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life. American Political Science Review 78 (3). 734 - 749

25. March, J. P. and Olsen, J. P. (2005). Elaborating the "New Institutionalism" Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo. Working paper. No. 11 http.//www.arena.uio.no

26. Marsh, D. and Stoker, G. (2002). Theory and Methods in Political Science. Second Edition. Palgrave Macmillan.

27. Meredith, J. R & Mantel, S. A. (2003). Project Management: A Management Approach.5th Edition. New Delhi: John Wiley and Sons Inc.

28. Ministry SERVICOMCharter (2012). Retrieved from www.servenigeria.com/charters/womenaffairs-child.doc 5/1/2012

29. Nigeria Vision 20: 2020 (2010). http://www.npc.gov.ng/vault/files/NV2020-NIP-Volume-11-Original-document-edited-version3_10_06_2010-pdf 2/1/2012.

30. Ntiwunka, G. U. (2013) Citizens' Perception of Project Planning and Implementation of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Ogun State (2007 – 2012) A PhDThesis Submitted to the Department of Political Science. Babcock Business School, Babcock University, Ilisan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.

31. Nwachukwu, C. C., Ibeawuchi, E., Okoli, M. N. (2010) Project Management Factor Indexes: a Constraint to Project implementation Success in the Construction Sector of the Developing Economy in European Journal of Scientific Research ISSN 1450-2164 43(3): 392-405.

32. Oladoye, D. (2011, May 18). "In Retrospect: 2011 April Polls and Gender Ranking in Nigeria" http://agora.nigeriaelections.org/readMore/221/in_retropect_2011_april_polls_and_gender_ranking_in_nigeria 28/1/ 2012.

33. Osalor, P. (2012, February 27) Empowering Nigerian Women: Insight, Ideas and Strategy Part 2. Vanguard.

34. Otaru, A. and Oloruntoba, O. (2014, January 28) Minister Blames Poor Child Enrolment in School. The Guardian.

35. Peters, G. (1999). Institutional Theory in Political Science: The 'New Institutionalism'. London: Pinter.

36. Quinn, S. (2009). Gender Budgeting Practical Implementation Handbook. Legal Affair Council of Europe.

37. The National Coalition on Affirmative Action (NCAA) (2006). Retrieved from http://www.aacoalition.org/National_Policy_Women.htm 10/7/2012.

38. UNICEF (2011). Child Right Legislation in Nigeria. Retrieved from http://www.unicef.org/nigeria/child_rights_legislation_in__Nigeria.pdf 19/6/2012.

39. UNICEF (2007). Child Labour. Retrieved from http://www.unicef.org/nigeria/children_1935.html 20/6/2012.

40. UNICEF (2007). Child Right and Participation. Retrieved from http://www.unicef.org/nigeria/children_1938.html 20/6/2012.

41. UNDP (2009). UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund http://www.undp.org/mdgf/index.shtml

42. UNDP (2012). Women's Empowerment. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/womenempowerment/overview.html Accessed July 6, 2012.

43. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2012). Synthesis Report of E-Discussion: Gender Mainstreaming in National Policies and Programmes, held at the African Centre for Gender and Social Development, Addis Ababa 20th June, 2012.

44. World Development Report 2012 on Gender Equality and Development. Worldbank.org

45. Uzondu, J. (2011, November 21). "Child Rights Act Should Have Peculiar Cultural Background" Nigerian News World http://www.nigeriannewsworld.com/content/child-rights-act-should-have-peculiar-cultural-background 28/1/2012.

46. Voice of America (2008, March 4). Nigerian Women Lobby for Equal Rights. http://www.voanews.com/content/a-13-2008-03-04-voa26/339914.html 28/1/2012