Women empowerment in trade union movements: A strategy for national and economic development

Mustapha Alhaji Ali[1]*, Sani Garba Wakili[2], Fatima Shehu Liberty[3]

[1,2]Department of Political Science, Yobe State University, Damaturu 620212, Nigeria.
[3]Department of Political Science, University of Maiduguri, 600104, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author email: mustaphaalhajiali2@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Nigerian Trade Union (NTU) serves as a platform to safeguard and guarantee the interests and rights of workers in government organizations, regardless of gender and age. There is, however, a contrasting trend with regard to women empowerment in the trade Unionism in the Northern region. Hence, this study examines the participation of women in Nigerian trade union movements of Northern region. This study adopts a qualitative method of data collection. A total of eleven respondents from the Northern region were interviewed using unstructured questions. MAXQDA 2018 software version is used to analyze the data obtained from the field. In explaining the topic under investigation, the study has adopted the following two theories as a tool of research analysis: Empowerment and Social Constructivism theories. The key framework of these theories is largely premised on women empowerment and gender equality. These theories emphasize on the need for empowering women and gender fairness in every organization. The basis of the Social Constructivism theory is that gender inequality is socially constructed. The findings of this study demonstrate that women in the Northern region are not adequately empowered in the trade union movements this is because most of them are often subjugated to domestic activities. Therefore, the study recommends that the Nigerian government should enact national policies and strategies to encourage women participation and empowerment in the trade union movements in the region. The study adds that there is a need for women to be educated on gender discrimination by implementing the 35 percent Geneva Affirmative Action.

Keywords: *Empowerment; Economic Development; National; Strategy; Trade Union; Women*

_____

1. INTRODUCTION

The formation of Nigerian Trade Union Movements (NTUM) is generally intended to provide an avenue or platform to safeguard and guarantee the interests and rights of workers in various organizations. This led to the establishment of the Nigerian Trade Union (NTU) in 1978 with the purpose of engaging employers to ensure the welfare of employees. NTU is the largest umbrella or body covering all government workers in Nigeria, constituting 43 sub-unions under it (Wabba, 2017). NTU is comprised of males and females, it has a population of over four million members across the nation (NTU Handbook, 2017). Since its inception, NTU, which is currently in operation throughout the entire states of Nigeria, has been actively engaging the Nigerian government on a myriad of issues affecting the workers in the country, regardless of a group they belong to. NTU assumes numerous responsibilities which include, among others, to consolidate, unionize and train Nigerian

workforces, to protect and spread the economic, cultural and social rights and privileges of Nigerian employees, and to liberate and free female workers from all sorts of abuse, marginalization as well as to attain gender equality in the workplace. It also supports and expands the links and influences among Nigerian employees to struggle for changing the country into a fair, caring and independent state (Wabba, 2017; NTU Handbook, 2017).

However, in every organization, there is a tendency for clash of interest between the employers and employees which often leads to the principle of negotiating and bargaining. This is paramount and applicable in the public sectors. To balance such negotiation, the public workers settled for the formation of the Labour Unions which was created largely to defend the privileges and welfares of its memberships (Ali & Hamidu, 2016).

Constitutionally, all employees in their respective working organizations automatically belong to trade unions registered under that organization. Hence, NTU members consist of both male and female employees who are also the members of labour unions registered with the respective organization they work with. This is in line with the legal provision that all employees can join any union of their choice as stipulated under the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 1948, which also emphasizes on the women's rights and freedom in all the existing organizations (Momoh, 2008).

Under the international provisions, men and women are equal and should have equal treatment worldwide, particularly to take part in all levels of political movements. Universally, womenfolk constitute approximately more than half of the global populace. Besides, they contribute positively to the development of the society. Everywhere in the world, women undertake some important functions. These include being home-keepers, mothers, producers, community planners, political activists, cultural and societal campaigners (Oluyemi, 2015). Yet, they are marginalized to subordinated positions in all the social activities because of the patriarchal nature of the societies that gave much power to the men than the women (Momoh, 2008).

Gender equality policy is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which includes many indicators that are women-friendly. This makes it very significant to examine gender fairness or equity policies mainly from a different standpoint (Ertan, 2016). The United Nations (UN) effort in bridging gender parity is as important as the initial efforts to achieve gender equality in the world (Ertan, 2016).

2. WOMEN IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS

Several academic documents were used in discussing women in NTU. Document reviewed include (Otobo, 1996a; Anyim et al., 2012 ; Wabba, 2017; Tufts, 2009; Ali et al., 2018; Imhonop and Urim, 2011; Cobble, 2012; NTU Handbook, 2017; NTU Report, 2017; NTU Report,2018; NTU Handbook, 2017). Similarly, Wabba (2017) observed that NTU is a group of workers designed to deliberate on the issues affecting the employees with the employer. It has also been explained as a group of employees designed to keep the rights and promote the interests of its memberships regarding salaries promotion and welfares Tufts (2009) further clarified NTU as a collection of workers into a professional union, that are formed to promote their common interests in relation to wages, time, working environment and some important

issues related to the workers. According to Otobo (1996b), trade union is formed to carry out many different activities. These include direct benefit dialogues, protests, handling community services, and uncertain trades, job search or referral. He added that trade union plays a great role especially in the internal politics of the unions.

Similarly, Otobo (1996a) then explains that trade unions occupy a special position because they are organization of workers, wage earners, and they are the only group in the society that has as it duty to react to the industrial and socioeconomic policies of the government and private employees and it also tries to protect the rights and interests of its members within the individual enterprises.

In addition Imhonop and Urim (2011) further simplified the Labour Congress as a group of employers that work in an organization, who come together as a group to protect the rights and privileges of their members in the organization. However, the labour union serves as a mediator between the employers and the employees. More so, Cobble, (2012) disclosed that trade union generally refers to any workers organization formed mainly and planned to increase the political, social, and economic position and privileges of employees. In a related development, a study by Anyim et al, (2012) showcased that women participation in trade union movements is a healthy development and should be supported in all its difficulties. They added that women should be allowed to hold managerial positions, and that it is a common belief that behind every successful man there are women at the background. They all agree that it would not be out of place to allow women to take part alongside men, in the trade union movements in order to motivate men and complement their contribution toward the overall benefit and welfare of the working group.

However, considering the strength of both genders in the labour force, it is clearly stated in the NTU (NTU Report, 2018) that 64.5percent of the members are male civil servants and 35.5percent are women at the senior cadres. Equally, the trend is the same as the junior cadre. The percentage of men working is reliably advanced than women at both junior and senior levels (NTU Report, 2017). For instance, in 2017, the percentage of females workers in Nigerian context was 42.4 percent and men 57.6 percent (ILO Report, 2016).

Nevertheless, the NTU has over 4 million members in both private and public establishment across the nation. It also has 43 associate unions and 37 councils in the states. The members also have a consistent assembly in all the states of the federation (Wabba, 2017). He then disclosed that in 2007, women membership in the Nigerian labour force was 28.5 percent and men were 71.5 percent. While the membership of women improved to 28.7 percent the number of men decreases to 71.3 in the year 2012. In 2015, the population of women advanced to 30.7 percent, while the number of men decreases to 69.3 percent yet, women in higher positions in the public service is at minimal, unlike their male counterpart that has the highest number in every sector. According to (NTU Report, 2018) women in the higher cadre of the civil service are 35.5 percent only.

Still, it is understood that many factors played an important part in defining women status in Nigerian society, which confined women to domestic activities. Moreover, Makama (2013); Imhonop and Urim (2011) revealed that the marginalization of women in trade union

movements in Nigerian societies was due to the influence of the colonial ideology that subjugated women to domestic responsibilities and favour men.

However, a study by Ali and Hamidu (2016) exposed that there are several political, social and economic factors influencing the participation of women in trade union movements. These include but not limited to educational background, economic status, traditional taboos and political perception/status of women in the regions, religions and ideological mindsets related to patriarchal orientation system and the influence of dogmatic traditional system related to women and decision-making policy in Nigerian trade movements. All the above-mentioned factors have an important influence on women participation in the national politics and decision-making process in Nigeria. Compared to any African nation.

Some other studies by Agu (2007); Asaju and Adagba (2013); Ali et al., (2018) reveals that women population in public sector is like a drop of water in a sea in relation to their proportion that is supposed to be absorbed in private-public sectors. Similarly, Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2009) explore that the figure for women working in the non-agricultural secluded organization was 32.5 percent. However, from the available information obtained in the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2009); (Ali et al., 2018), it is noted that even in the governmental organizations that are more liberal in terms of direct public policy interference, the percentage of women is minimal.

In a related development, reports of Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2009) show that there is a serious gap that exists between women and men in term of sources of income and employment opportunities in almost every aspect of the Nigerian economy. Ali et al., (2018) also reveals that women in the manufacturing sector were projected at 11 percent and men at 30 percent, while women that partake in income generating undertakings are mainly branded by strong physical work such as mining and extracting because of the gender disparity, the social structure of work and manufacturers actions. Nevertheless, in the Federal Civil Service, which is the major proprietor of the workforce in Nigeria, 76 percent of employers are men and 24 percent are women. Still, females comprise not fewer than 14 percent of the administrative places, and about 17.5 percent are involved in the medical profession and 82.5percent men (Lalarukh, 2009; Oluyemi, 2015).

Additionally Kanu (2012) reveals that the social condition of women in Britain may be slightly different with that of women in the Nigeria context because gender disparity is common in Nigerian political system and administration. When Mill wrote on equality of men and women, he stated that both should be treated equally as a human beings.

Furthermore, Ali et al., (2018) showcases that women in Nigerian are not a bench-warmers because even in the professional bodies that are dominated by men such as Nigerian Medical Association, Nigerian Bar Association, Nigerian Union of Teachers, the Institute of Chartered Accountants and Nigerian Union of journalist, they play vital roles and some of these establishments have been led by female presidents. Similarly, Ali et al., (2018) argue that the management attribute is not hereditarily developed and has no relationship with gender. They added that women can efficiently contribute to policy and decision making if

given the strategy. They can perform their responsibilities through hard and traumatic conditions and can do better.

Nevertheless, women are an important segment in the development process, they should, therefore, be given every opportunity to develop their potential so that they can take their rightful place in nation building. A country cannot hope to develop if half of its human resources (women) are neglected and or ignored. By preferences Development officials now recognize this and continue to adopt them (Afigbo, 1991; Anugwom, 2009).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is simply defined as the procedures of collecting relevant information for a research purpose to answer unanswered questions (Qureshi et al., 2020, Parveen et al., 2015). Relatively, it is about answering unanswered questions or to generate that which does not occur. It is also defined as the process of increasing the limits of unawareness (Melville & Goddard, 1996; Ali et al., 2021).

Under the research methodology, the researcher specified the methods used in obtaining the relevant data. The researcher adopted a qualitative method to acquire available data. Qualitative research can simply be defined as or refers to both the methods of data collection or data analysis and to a broader framework for conducting research. Qualitative research is very important in conducting research. This is because it allows the researcher to retain a focus on people's own framing of issues and their terms of reference. It also allows for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This is the framework that brought out the approaches and procedures for carrying out the interview. Among the approaches include the following.

4. EMPOWERMENT THEORY

Empowerment theory was propounded by Longwe in 1990, she hailed from Lusaka, Zambia, an advisor on gender and women development. Essentially, the assumption of the theory dwells on gender equality and women's empowerment. This theory aims to critically assess the level of women empowerment and development. According to Longwe (1990),women's empowerment simply means allowing women to participate equally and actively in every organization like their male counterparts through empowerment process, and to take part in the process of development like their male counterparts, and to have influence on the production process in the society.

The centrality of Empowerment theory is to ensure equal opportunities and means for both men and women to achieve gender equality. Given this, the disparity within the NTU can be reduced by encouraging equal access to socio-economic development among all members of the polity. For instance, empowerment of women ranging from education and employment opportunities could bridge the gap of men dominance, which invariably results in giving a sense of belonging to all. Development means allowing individuals to control their lives in any given organization, and to protect themselves from the shackle of poverty. Longwe's framework is concerned with the process of empowerment which covers the five levels of empowerment. These include welfare, access, conscientization,

participation, and control. These five stages mark one to see the stages of how a group experienced empowerment. The first level, which is access to basic necessities and facilities are not the sign of empowerment, it is a welfare phase where one has his or her basic needs. The third level, which is conscientization is the stage the group aware that they are being denied due to their gender and not due to the merit. This stage is important to mark an understanding and awareness that they are being discriminated due to their biological factor. The full stage of empowerment is the last one when the group mobilize themselves, to lobby or pressure for changes and put in their demands.

4.1. WELFARE:

The first level shows access or enjoyment to basic social amenities, which has to do with the social welfare of women to men, e.g., equal access to education, power income, and medical facilities.

4.2. ACCESS:

The second level deals with equality to access the factors of production between men and women. For instance, equal access to labour, training land, credit, marketing services, and all public benefit and available services.

4.3. CONSCIENTIZATION:

This level marks the beginning of empowerment because women realize that they are at the disadvantage not due to their inability, but for their gender attributes. The theory is concerned with the discrepancy between both genders, and the consciousness that gender characters are traditions that can easily be reformed. Conscientization believes that division of labour among all genders should be free and fair.

4.4. PARTICIPATION:

The fourth level refers to women participation in the policy-making process, administration, and planning. To be precise, it means involving women in decision making in an organization, gender fairness in the process of decision making.

4.5. CONTROL:

This is the final level of empowerment, relating to gender parity in the process of decision-making. This can be done through mobilization, conscientization and to attain gender fairness and control on all the production factors and the delivery of welfare services (Longwe, 1990).

Table 1. Depicting Women's Empowerment Framework

Levels	Explanation	Examples
Welfare	This has to do with the material welfare of women to men	Equal access to food supply, income, and medical facilities – necessities.
Access	This must do with accessibility to the factors of production on gender equality between men and women	Equal access to land, labour, credit, training, marketing facilities all publicly available services and benefits- factors of production.
Conscientisation	Both men and women understand gender matters and are aware of the detrimental impact of such matters	Understanding that the barriers or less opportunities are due to gender-biased and not due to merit. Gender role and culturally determined and can be changed. The belief that the sexual division of labour should be fair and agreeable to both sexes.
Participation	Involving the women in the decision-making process, involving women in the equal number in making a decision in the organization.	Women involvement in the need assessment project formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Women participation in the process of policy-making, planning, and administration.
Control	Utilization of women participation through Conscientisation and mobilization, to achieve equality of control over the factors of production and equality of control over the distribution of benefits	Mobilize others to seek for equal control, to have a balance of control between both genders so that neither side is dominated.

Source: (Longwe, 1990).

5. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM THEORY

The evolution of Social Constructivism theory could be traced to the work of (Berger & Luckmann, 1976; Bohan, 1993; Gergen, 1992; Unger, 1983). Social constructivists hold assumptions that individuals seek under- standing of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meanings directed toward certain groups of people, element, objects or things. These meanings are diverse and numerous, leading the researcher to look for the complication of views rather than lessening the meanings into a few groups or concepts.

Again Berger and Luckman (1976) explains that gender inequality is socially constructed by the society, they all stressed that gender inequality are not natural. Basically, the assumption of the theory revolves around gender that is manmade and is not just a statement of the environmental origin of gender traits. Somewhat, the central argument of this theory is that gender is not naturally made but are socially built by the individual in a society. It is simply a societal concept that classifies influences that are understood to be suitable to one gender. The theory is certain that the social creation of gender is frequently disordered with the gender socialization. Social Constructivism theory explains that all the gender differences are socially constructed. As such, the theory aims to remove women from the bondage of discrimination and acts as a rescuing influence. It works to make a world which contents the needs and powers of the people. This is because the theory explains and tries to change the situations that dominate individuals in any given society, and to disclose that gender disparity is not natural but rather constructed by individuals in the society; it is not biologically made (Berger & Luckmann 1976; Bohan, 1993; Gergen, 1992; Unger, 1983).

Having discussed the assumptions of the two theories, Social Constructivism and empowerment theories, it can be observed that both the theories are interwoven. The Empowerment theory placed emphases on five key levels of women empowerment. Social Constructivism belief that all gender differences that marginalized women from social activities are socially consructed. Nevertheless, both theories reflect that gender disparity can be reduced if women are sufficiently empowered to ensure equality for all.

This section presents the profile of the participants as well as thematic analysis of the participants regarding the mechanisms, policies, and strategies in empowering women in NTU in the Northern region.

6. PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This section explains the profile of the participants of NTU in the Northern region of the Fourth Republic.

Table 2. Demographic Data of the Participants

Demographic	Features	Number	Total
Age	20-29	7	
	30-39	5	
	40-49	7	
	50 and above	3	22
Qualification	Secondary School Certificate	2	
	Diploma	5	
	Advance Diploma	1	
	Higher National Diploma	3	
	Nigeria Certification in Education (NCE)	4	
	BSc	5	
	Masters/ PhD	2	22
Gender	Male	16	
	Female	6	
Occupation	Civil Servants	22	
Male Marital Status	Married	14	
Female Marital Status	Married	6	
	Unmarried	2	22
Religion	Muslims	13	
	Christians	9	22
Total			22

Source: *(Field Study, 2021).*

Table 2: shows the demographic details of the participants including age, level of education, gender and occupation. The ages of the key participant range from 20 to 29 years. (7) While 30 to 39 years (5), 40 to 49 years (7) to 50 and above (3). Furthermore, the highest qualification among the participants is Ph.D. (1), Masters (1) bachelor's degree (5), Nigeria Certification in Education (4) Higher National Diploma (3) Advance Diploma (1) Diploma (5) and Secondary School Certificate (2). The Table also shows that the participants consist of males and females. For the occupation of the participants, the study shows that are civil servants from a different organization (NTU Executives and Members). Out of the 16 male participants 14 are married and two are not married. And all the female participants are married.

Table 3. The In-depth Interview Participants and Coding

S/NO	Participant	Data	Code
1	NTU Executive	Male 26 years SSCE	P N1
2	NTU Executive	Male, 37 years, BSc	P N2
3	NTU Executive	Male, 41 years, SSCE	P N3
4	NTU Executive	Male, 55 years, MSc	P N4
5	NTU Executive	Female, 51 years, BSc	P N5
6	NTU Executive	Male, 46 years, NCE	P N6
7	NTU Executive	Male, 46 years, Diploma	P N7
8	NTU Member	Male 47 years MSc	P N8
9	NTU Member	Male 36 years HND	PN9
10	NTU Member	Female 25 NCE	PN10
11	NTU Member	Female 27 Diploma	PN11
12	NTU Executive	Male, 50 years, PhD	P N12
13	NTU Executive	Female, 30 years, BSc	P N13
14	NTU Executive	Male, 29 years, Diploma	P N14
15	NTU Executive	Male, 55 years, BSc,	P N15
16	NTU Executive	Female, 33 years, NCE	P N16
17	NTU Executive	Male, 40 years, NCE	P N17
18	NTU Member	Male, 46 years, Diploma	P N18
19	NTU Member	Male 45 years PhD	P N19
20	NTU Member	Male 36 years Advance Diploma	P N20
21	NTU Member	Male 22 Diploma	P N21
22	NTU Member	Female 29 year HND	P N22

Source: *(Field work, 2021).*

Table 3 shows twenty-two (22) participants were interviewed during the data collection; all are from the Northern region. Out of the 22 participants 11 are the NTU executives from each region, and eight (8) are NTU members four (4) from each region. Out of the 22 participants, 16 are males and 6 are females. The justification for using the views of the males and females NTU executive and members is to obtain reliable and truthful information that is free from bias. This increases reliability of the research findings and improves the soundness of the research outcome and can add to the list of themes or to the detail for the existing themes. The members interviewed are from different organisation this to enable the researcher to triangulate the data and to minimize the level of biasness. And in addition, the researcher was able to obtain different opinions from this participants.

Table 4. Summary of the Themes and Sub-themes

Topics	Themes	Sub-themes	Participants
Mechanisms Put in Place by NTU to Empower women to participate in trade unionism of both regions.	Internal Strategies to Empower Women in Trade Union Movements	Women Empowerment Programmes Equal Access to Education NTU Programmes Seminars and Workshops Rain School Harmattan School Labour Law Management Relation Capacity building Train Women Against Violence Enlightenment Campaign	The Union Executives and some Members
	Government Policies on Gender		

Topics	Themes	Sub-themes	Participants
	External Strategies	Geneva Affirmative Action	
		International Labour Organization (ILO)	
		International Convention	
		International Gender Policy	

Sources: (Field work, 2021).

Table 4 illustrates the themes and sub-themes which emerged from the interviews with 11 participants. The themes include the mechanisms and strategies toward women empowerment in the NTU of the two regions under examination. These strategies include internal and external strategies that are meant to empower women in the trade union of the Northern region. From the table above it is observed that several themes and sub-themes emerged from the various participants toward women empowerment. These mechanisms are explained according to region to enable the researcher to see the differences and similarities between the regions.

7. MECHANISMS TO EMPOWER WOMEN IN NTU OF THE NORTHERN REGION

From the data examined, many themes and sub-themes emerged relating to mechanisms for empowering women in NTU of the Northern region.

Table 5. Showing the summary of Themes and Sub-themes of the Mechanisms to Empower Women in the NTU of the Northern region

Topics	Themes	Sub-themes	Participants
Mechanisms Put in Place by NTU to Empower women to participate in trade unionism of the Northern region.	Internal Strategies to Empower Women in Trade Union Movements	Women Education	The Union Executives and some Members
		NTU Programmes	
		Government Policies	
		Women Commission	
		Women Committee	
		Gender policies	
	External Strategies	Geneva Affirmative Action	
		International Labour Organization (ILO)	
		International Convention	
		International Gender Policy	

Sources: (Field work, 2021).

Table 5. Above depicts the themes and sub-themes that explain the mechanisms to empower women in the NTU of the Northern region. There are two major themes, namely "internal strategies" and "external strategies" as disclosed by participants N2, N4 N9 and N9. These major themes emerged from the interview that was conducted among the 11 NTU participants from the Northern region. Under this topic, the study found that women in the trade union are empowered through internal and external strategies as outlined by participants N14, N4 N7 and N22. These mechanisms are being arranged based on hierarchy.

For instance, the internal strategies include women education, NTU Programmes, government policies, Women Committees, Women Commissions, electoral policy, gender policy. Under the external factors, there are Geneva Affirmative Action, International Labour

Organization, and International Conventions. All these emerged from the interview session with the 11 participants in the Northern region. Based on the interviews conducted with the above participants, they all agreed that these mechanisms are meant to empower women in the NTU of the region. Participants N2, N7 and N11disclosed that unfortunately these mechanisms were less implemented and under-utilized or benefiting women in the region. Participants N11 articulated that only few of these mechanisms are properly implemented in the region under examination.

Women education emerged from participants N5 and N6. They revealed that women in the NTU of the Northern region are empowered through women education. But participant N4 lamented that only few women are empowered through this mechanism because not every parent or spouse allow their female ones to undergo formal education. Participants N20 mourned that these mechanisms are not adequately effective in the region.

From the interview conducted on the mechanisms to empower women in the Northern region participant N5 exposed that there are some mechanisms that are not established in the northern region. According to him, this makes the differences in terms of women empowerment and participation in the NTU of the region. Participants N6 and N11 mentioned the two institutions that are meant to empower women but were not instituted in the Northern region. These include Rain School Harmattan School, and labour law management relation participants.

Participant N21 disclosed that NTU have some programmes that are put in place to empower women in the NTU of the Northern region. He gave some examples of the NTU programmes that are being put in place to empower women in the region among which are skills acquisition programmes and industrial relation practice. Participant N20 explains that it is therefore expedient for all members to acquire the techniques and the necessary skills particularly in the trade union to meet up with the modern industrial relation practice. For instance, participant N15 explained that skills acquisition programmes and capacity building are technical ways of empowering women in the NTU of the region. In addition to the above, participants N1 and N3 expressed that NTU initiated these programmes to empower both genders, but participant N4 observed that women in the region are not adequately attending the programmes, and these programmes are gendered in structure. But still they are absent of skills, knowledge. He then added that this makes the NTU programmes of the region ineffective.

However, participants N6 and N8 disclosed that women in the NTU of the Northern region are empowered through government policies. They then explained that the continuous struggle for women empowerment by women, civil society organizations and other advocacy groups has compelled the NTU to adopt some gender policies towards mainstreaming women into the core economic and political sectors. Participant N8 pointed out that these policies include Aid programmes like: Family Support Programmes. Women advancement programmes and women empowerment programmes for the betterment of women.

Women Commission emerged as one of the major mechanism or strategies for women empowerment as disclosed by participant N6 during the interview session. Participants N1 started that women commission was formed to empower its female members in the NTU of the region. He then emphasised that the commission is managed by NTU female members. Participant N7 explains that the commission conducted an election but only women are to contest for the existing post; and when they win, they become automatic executive members of the NTU. Participants N4 and N16 observed that women commission plays an important role in empowering women in the region. Participant N1 defined women commission as a body formed by the NTU to empower women through several training and workshops. But participants N6 and N9 lamented that the commission is not well pronounced in the region.

Women committee is another mechanism for empowering women in the NTU of the Northern region as revealed by participant N8. Similarly, Participants N17 defined women committee as an organized body that NTU established to empower women in the region, by training and retraining of the female members on women capacity building. In a related opinion, participant N1 explained women committee is a committee that is formed to manage and as well to empower women. Participant N6 grieved that the women committee is not effective in the Northern region because of the religious, cultural and patriarchal nature of the region.

In addition to the above participant N8 explains that NTU of the Northern region do organize seminars and workshops through the women commission and the women committee to empower women, but he mourned that only few women attend these programmes. Participant N7 showcased that woman in the north believe that union activities are meant for men not women, and he added that only few men can allow their spouses to attend these kinds of NTU programmes organized by the commissions. Participants N1 and N8 explain that the women commission is not well pronounced in the Northern region because of the patriarchal nature of the region that gave much power to men over women.

Gender policies is another strategy that emerged from participant N6 as one of the policies to empower women in the Northern region. Participant N7 added that since men and women are involved in the NTU they should equally participate in its decision making and implementation of policies in the region as stated in the gender policy of the region. Participant N11 expressed that these polices are formed to empower women in the region through training programmes on the research findings and bargaining skills for women staff, organizers, campaigners and women and men negotiators Gender awareness workshops for union leaders to encourage mainstreaming of gender issues in union programmes. Participant N4 revealed that gender policies of the region have to do with mass production and popularization of NTU Gender Policy Networking with women NGOs to establish areas of mutual interest.

In addition to the internal strategies, participants N1, N7 and N10 mentioned some external strategies that were meant to empower women but are not adequately pronounced in the

region. To them these strategies include Geneva Affirmative Action, International Labour Organization and International Conventions.

Participant N18 lamented that the region is not adequately implementing these strategies or using these policies because of the stereotypical and patriarchal nature of the region that women are to stay at home to manage the home affair but not to be involved in any kind of social activities that involved both genders. Participants N7 and N10 emphasized that these are some of the important strategies that need to be implemented in the region to empower and incorporate them into social activities such as NTU.

Participant N1 opines that these external strategies are international ideas. He further explained that women in the northern region can hardly adhere to it because of the belief that international ideas contradict their religion and culture. Participant N13 added that international initiative is not in line with their religious teachings.

8. SUMMARY

Going by the available findings, the study found that women in the NTU of the Northern region were empowered through some internal and external strategies, International Organizations, such as Geneva Affirmative Action, International Labour Organization, International Conventions, and gender policy. Though, it is observed that these strategies are more effective in empowering women in the trade union movements and it gives them the ample opportunities to get empowered through these international agencies.

In view of the above, it is understood that most of the Northern women are not aware and benefiting from the 30percent Geneva affirmative action that is emphasized to be given to women, because of lack of exposure and unequal access to education. These findings are in line with Empowerment theory which claimed that both men and women shall have equal access to social amenities such as education. Participants N8 and N9 supported that both genders shall be empowered through formal education, skills acquisition programmes, and the policies under the International Organizations, such as the ILO and International Conventions and Geneva Affirmative Action.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- In line with the research findings, researchers attributed the creation of government intervention on economic and educational empowerment in the country to the unprompted formation of policies and strategies programs mainly for women recognitions. It is, therefore, necessary or imperative for the government to subsume all the poverty alleviation programs into consideration to improve effective service delivery on the phenomenon.
- The principle of women participation in policy formulation and implementation found its relevance in the new democratic process where transparency, expressions, and accountability are the law of the game. In view of this the participation of males only in the policy formation and implementation in the NTU is not enough to represent the women needs, demand and interest.

- The government should as well engage in educating women and the stakeholders alike to avoid gender discrimination and to ensure equality and justice among men and women in the various places of work and all the unions under the NTU of both regions.
- As found in the study, women's access to education is a strategy for empowering women, NTU of the Northern region should found Harmattan and Rain schools that would help in empowering women to participate in the union activities of their region. These schools can help in teaching and training women on issues related to gender in the Northern part of the country. In addition, the government should establish a labour law management relation institute in the Northern region. This would help to educate and train the Northern women on labour matter and would encourage them to partake actively in the trade union activities. Furthermore, much attention should be given to women on capacity building and skills acquisition through proper supervision by the management of the various women organizations to help in empowering women and to encourage them to take part in the union activities.
- The study recommends that there is need to empower women because of their significance role as mothers, community organizers, political activist, home managers as well as breadwinners as well. This is because if you empower a single woman, you have empowered the society.
- The study recommends that there are needs for training and retraining of women to acquire some technical skills that will help stand on their own.

Reference:

Afigbo AE. (1991). Women as a Factor in Development, in M. O. Ijere (ed.) Women in Nigerian Economy. In Enugu: *Acena Pub*.

Agu, S. (2007). Gender equality, education and women empowerment: The Nigerian challenge. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development*, 8(2), 1-7. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Gender-Equality%2C-Education-and-Women-Empowerment%3A-Agu/018c952ce5c1b450a1cc5c9be1a122bb2ea54cd3

Ali, A. M., Zakuan, A. A. U. A., & Mohammad, B. Z. (2018). Northern Nigerian Women Participation in Trade Union Movement: Impediments and Solutions. *Journal of Humanities and Cultures Studies R&D*, 4.

Ali, M. A., & Hamidu, I. (2016). An assessement of factors affecting women participation in trade Union Activities in Yobe State, *Nigeria. Administration and Development,* 6(1), 236-252.

Ali, Q., Parveen, S., Yaacob, H., Zaini, Z., & Sarbini, N. A. (2021). COVID-19 and dynamics of environmental awareness, sustainable consumption and social responsibility in Malaysia. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 1-20. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11356-021-14612-z

Anugwom, E. E. (2009). Women, education and work in Nigeria. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 4(4), 127-134. https://academicjournals.org/article/article1379603133_Anugwom.pdf.

Anyim, F. C., Kuye, O. L., & Ekwoaba, J. O. (2012). Women Participation in Nigerian Trade Union Movement: A Strategic and Socio-Psychological Viewpoint. *Journal of Management Research*, 4(1), E17. http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/jmr.v4i1.1088.

Asaju, K., & Adagba, S. O. (2013). Women participation in national development in Nigeria: the imperative of education. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 3(1), 57-69.

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1976). *The social construction of reality. New York: Dou- bleday.* http://www.perflensburg.se/Berger%20social-construction-of-reality.pdf

Bohan, J. S. (1993). Regarding gender: Essentialism, constructionism, and feminist psychology. *Psychology of women quarterly*, 17(1), 5-21. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1993.tb00673.x

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners.* sage. file:///Users///MustaphaAlhajiAli/Downloads/braunclarkethematicanalysismanual.pdf

Cobble, D. S. (2012). Gender equality and labor movements: Toward a global perspective. *Commissioned Report, American Center for International Labor Solidarity*, 1-71. https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Rutgers-Gender-Equality-and-Labor-Movements.pdf

Ertan, S. (2016). How to study gender equality policy cross-nationally? Aggregate or disaggregate gender equality policy indices?. *Social Indicators Research*, 125(1), 47-76. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-014-0841-1.

Gergen, K. J. (1992). *The social constructionist movement in modern psychology.* https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/1986-00014-001

ILO Report. (2016). *Labour force female (% of total labour force).*

Imhonop, D., & Urim, U. M. (2011). The development of labor movements and state interference: The Nigerian experience. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 13(2), 236-253. http://eprints.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/4078/#.YZBQ473P3fZ.

Kanu, I. A. (2012). The equality of sexes in JS Mill vis-a-vis the participation of women in the Nigerian labour and economy. *AFRREV LALIGENS: An International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies*, 1(1), 18-29. https://www.ajol.info/index.php/laligens/article/view/107911

LalaRukh F. (2009). *Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).*

Longwe, S. (1990). *Gender link for equality and justice.* https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Guide%20to%20Gender%20Analysis%20Frameworks.pdf

Makama, G. A. (2013). Patriarchy and gender inequality in Nigeria: The way forward. *European scientific journal*, 9(17). https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/236407158.pdf

Melville, S., & Goddard, W. (1996). Research methodology: An introduction. *Juta: Kenwyn.*

Momoh, A. M. (2008). Nigeria, Gender participation in trade unionism In Southwest. *International Journal of African & African American Studies*, 7(2).

Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Profile of Women and Men in Nigeria.*

NTU Handbook. (2017). *Nigerian's Trade Union Movements Handbook.*

NTU Report. (2017). *Nigerian's Trade Union Movement Report.*

NTU Report. (2018). *Nigerian's Trade Union Movement Report.*

Oluyemi, M. O. (2015). Monitoring Participation of Women in Politics in Nigeria. *National Bureau of Statistics*, 1–14. http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/gender/Finland_Oct2016/Documents%5CNigeria_ppt.pdf

Otobo, D. (1996a). *The Theory and Practice of Industrial Relations and Trade Unionism in Nigeria: A General Theoretical Framework, Paper Presented at NBEG's 2nd National Seminar on Industrial Relations, held in Lagos.*

Otobo, D. (1996b). *The Theory and Practice of Industrial Relations and Trade Unionism in Nigeria: A General Theoretical Framework, Paper Presented at NBEG's 2nd National Seminar on Industrial Relations, held in Lagos.* 1–12.

Parveen, S., Senin, A. A., & Umar, A. (2015). Organization culture and open innovation: A quadruple helix open innovation model approach. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 5. https://www.econjournals.com/index.php/ijefi/article/view/1399

Qureshi, M. I., Parveen, S., Abdullah, I., & Dana, L. P. (2020). Reconceptualizing the interventions of open innovation systems between the nexus of quadruple organization cultural dynamics and performance. *Quality & Quantity*, 1-21. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11135-020-01078-3

Tufts, S. (2009). Hospitality unionism and labour market adjustment: Toward Schumpeterian unionism? *Geoforum,* 40(6), 980–990. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2009.08.008.

Unger, R. K. (1983). Through the looking glass: No wonderland yet!(The reciprocal relationship between methodology and models of reality). *Psychology of women quarterly*, 8(1), 9-32. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1983.tb00614.x

Wabba, A. (2017). Address of the President of Nigerian Labour Congress, to Opening Session of the 4th National Gender Conference of NLC.