

GENDER POLICY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN MALLAM MADORI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF JIGAWA STATE: 2006-2020

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Abstract

This study examined women empowerment within the context of Jigawa State Gender Policy in Mallam Madori Local Government Area from 2006 to 2020. The policy was designed to build a just society devoid of discrimination by making women issues at the centre of government policies, planning and programmes so that cultural barriers and identities that impede social inclusion of women will be addressed. The objective of this study therefore is to examine the various programmes designed to empower women and assess their impact on the living standard of women in the study area. Using survey research method and Gender and development theory as theoretical framework, the study established that, women empowerment programmes such as entrepreneurship skills, free female education, free maternal health care services, loan/micro credit schemes among other initiatives have impacted positively on the living standard of women in the area under study. The study concluded that although political consideration in the process of selecting beneficiaries play a vital role in given women limited access to existing opportunities, the Jigawa State Gender Policy has helped in bringing into the fore, the neglected gender variable and create opportunities for women to be involved in the decision making processes. It is recommended that, monitoring and evaluation committee on women empowerment should be introduced and strengthened to always undertake a pilot study and identify the category of women in need of the empowerment programmes. The committee is to also ensure proper utilization of the empowerment programmes for future purposes.

Keywords: Gender, Gender Policy, Social Inclusion, Jigawa State, Women Empowerment

Introduction

Women constitute an indispensable group in the development of any nation. They form a significant part of the World population of about 50 percent (Bala-keffi, 2015). Apart from their numerical strength, they have potentials necessary to accelerate social, political and economic development. They are managers of home; they carry responsibility of household food security and most times work as family caretakers and producers of food.

Statistics in 2013 showed that women make up to 31-38 per cent of the world's workforce (Bala-keffi, 2015) and provide 60-80% of labour force (Lopez, Christiaensen, & Kilic, 2016). They spend close to USD20 trillion as global consumers. The figure was estimated to go up to USD28 trillion by 2014 (Bala-keffi, 2015). However, they form the category of the world poorest people due to marginalization and unequal opportunities. They are relegated to the background in almost every facet of life with fewer opportunities and lower participation in decision making processes which hindered them to benefit from political, social and economic development of the society.

Evidences abound that, among other factors: the principle of patriarchy, religion, cultural norms and wrong perception of the concept of gender by policy makers hindered the efforts of empowering women. Thus the need for a policy that will represent a paradigm shift from gender neutrality in public and private policies to a more gender sensitive one that will address the systematic inequality between women and men (National Gender Policy, NGP, 2006).

In this regard, global treaties and declarations like; the Beijing Platform for

Action (BPfA), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), NEEDS/SEEDS, The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), the Women Right Protocol, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1880 and 1890 etc. were implemented to bring into the fore, the neglected gender variable into development planning and implementation. In Nigeria, aside other women empowerment policies, programmes and projects, the erstwhile National Policy on Women was replaced with National Gender Policy in 2006 with a view to ensure social inclusion and integration of gender variables in state policies (Jigawa State Gender Policy, JSGP, 2013). Bearing in mind the varying socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and development status of the 36 states of the federation, the Policy is to be domesticated in states to eliminate the persists discrimination in national and state statutes, customary and religious laws, traditions, customs, social roles and cultural prejudice that continue to militate against women (National Gender Policy, 2006). In line with the foregone, the Jigawa state government implemented its own state gender policy in 2013 so as to give direction on how to address women issues in the design and implementation of government policies and programmes. As the policy presents, it is a people-centered development strategy, which would ensure women's development with the aim of complimenting the family's source of income, thereby breaking the circle of poverty and building a virile and cohesive family as the building block of society and the nation (JSGP, 2013).

Against this backdrop, this study tends to investigate whether the implementation of women empowerment programmes as guided by the Jigawa State Gender Policy contributed in empowering women and make them to be part of the drivers of their societal fortune by improving their standard of living and engaging them to participate in the socio-economic and political development of Mallam Madori Local Government Area.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the impact of the Jigawa State Gender Policy on the living standard of women in Mallam Madori Local Government Area, Jigawa State (2006-2020). However, the specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the various programmes designed to empower women in Mallam Madori Local Government Area.
- ii. To assess the impact of the women empowerment programmes on the living standard of women in Mallam Madori Local Government Area
- iii. To ascertain if the women empowerment programmes as guided by the state gender policy increase women participation in the socio-economic development of Mallam Madori Local Government Area

Research Questions

The following research questions arose from the above mentioned objectives:

- i. What are the programmes designed to empower women in Mallam Madori Local Government Area?
- ii. What is the impact of the women empowerment programmes on the living standard of women in Mallam Madori Local Government Area?
- iii. Have the women empowerment programmes as guided by the state gender policy lead to an increase in women participation in socio-economic development of Mallam Madori Local Government Area?

Concept of Gender

Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context. Just like race, class and ethnic identities, it is an all-encompassing socio-cultural variable that defines and differentiates the roles, rights, responsibilities and obligations of women and men (Zobnina, 2009; Grown, Gupta, & Khan, 2003). By way of conceptualisation, Kemi & Jenyo (2016); Ogu, Ezeonwuka, & Sule, (2016) define gender as the set of rules, norms, customs and practices by which biological differences between males and females are translated into socially constructed differences between men and women and boys and girls. From the part of Ekpe, Omenka & Bisong (2016), gender has to do with the social roles allocated respectively to men and women in particular societies and at particular times. They further added that, such roles allocated based on the sex difference are conditioned by a variety of political, economic, ideological and cultural factors.

In view of the above, it can be deduced that, the social construction of the term gender is geared towards justifying men domination over women. Based on this reason, it can be argued that inequality between men and women or boys and girls that continue to perpetuate our society is an invented phenomenon. This makes gender situation differ from place to place, from time to time, depending on how different societies define them. But, despite the variation across societies, gender system defines the standard of what is allowed and valued in a woman or man (John, 2011).

Although the forgone explanations differ in focus and wording, they all tend to emphasize that gender is a socially constructed concept that is complex, multi-dimensional and changes overtime.

Concept of Women Empowerment

The concept of women empowerment seems to have been used in the 1980s by third world feminists to address the issue of gender differences that exist in the control and distribution of resources (Egwurube, 2016). The term has commonly been used to describe the provision of adequate opportunities for women to develop their potentials and contribute to the development of the nation in particular and the world in general (Ovute, Dibia & Obasi, 2015). It is a process through which women gain the ability to take ownership and control of their lives. This can be facilitated through education, capacity building, training and other measures (Uzoamaka, Gerald & Eze, 2016).

From the standpoint Isah & Nafiu (2013), women empowerment is synonymous to gender empowerment which means giving total official authority or freedom or status that men folks enjoy to women in a manner that safeguard discrimination against them or their under-representation in all sectors of the economy. To achieve this in our society, Danjuma, Muhammad & Alkali (2013) stated that there is the need to develop the mental and physical capacity, power and skills in women for them to operate meaningfully in their social milieu, thereby experiencing a more favourable level of social recognition and subsequently enhance their status in the society. In this context, empowering women is conceived as awareness and capacity building and developing skills necessary to ensure that women effectively participate in present and future decision-making.

What runs through the foregone explanations is that, women empowerment has to do with ways women acquire new skills and the appropriate institutional/legal changes and supports put in place to transmute the economic, social, psychology, political and legal circumstances of women with a view to improve their access to education, landed property, political positions, involvement in money-making activities and decision-making processes.

Review of Empirical Studies

Studies have been conducted on policies of women empowerment and how they can lead to increase in women participation and improvement of standard of living.

A study by Waziri (2002) on the impact of the Beijing Conference on women emancipation in Nigeria found that there is an improvement in the way women enjoy their rights in the country. Adanu (2006) studied the Beijing Declaration and women political empowerment in Nigeria. It was established that, despite progress in women acquiring position in the country, Nigeria's societal values still hampers progress in women political empowerment. The argument supports the findings of Jina (2000). Jina studied the Beijing Agenda and women in Kaduna State. His findings show majority of women are yet to be impacted by the Beijing Agenda in the study area. Also, Kuvie (2007) assess the impact of the 1995 Beijing conference on gender equality from political point of view. The study revealed that Nigerian government has not performed its obligation after ratifying the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discriminations Against Women (CEDAW) agreement. In a related development, Odeh (2014) studied the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and women empowerment in Nigeria and found that despite the huge resources put into the implementation of the goals, the actual change in the status of women in the Nigerian society is far from the targeted standard.

However, CEDAW and Beijing Agenda from which most of the studies drew their conclusion placed more emphasis on women rights rather than real empowerment. Here arose the need for a research of this nature that studies women empowerment from the context of Jigawa State Gender Policy which centres more on women empowerment. Amadi (2017) make an appraisal on the implementation of National Gender Policy in relation to empowerment and gender equality programmes and projects in Rivers State from 2006-2015. His findings revealed that the focus on women over the years has not brought any significant change in their condition and position. In the same vein, Ekpe, Omenka & Bisong (2016) provided a critical analysis on the strategies for achieving National Gender Policy in Nigeria and found that the National Gender Policy has failed to challenge the structures which reproduce gender inequality and overall disempowerment of women hence; development opportunities continue to elude women. In a related study, Kura & Yero (2013) analyse continues gender inequality in relation to Nigeria's National Gender Policy and found that, the rights of women and girls are grossly violated and devalued in Nigeria. However, the foregone studies focused majorly on the impact of the gender policy at the national level. The implementation of the policy at the national level may not necessarily trickle down to state level because the approaches to address women issue differ across the federation. Hence, the need for a study of this nature that study women empowerment from the context of a policy that recognised the diverse nature of the Nigerian state in an attempt to proper a systematic explanation to the phenomenon of women empowerment that continue to draw global attention.

A study by Ejumudo (2013) on the desirability and inevitability of a pragmatic approach toward ensuring gender equality and women empowerment in Nigeria revealed that the problem of gender disparity in Nigeria is associated with the action dilemma by the Nigerian government. Fatile, Ejalaribu & Aliu (2017), investigated how women empowerment at the grass root level will be a panacea to end dependency culture in Nigeria and found that the challenges of women dependency is social and culturally constructed due to multiple roles assign to women by family and other cultural expectations. Egwurube (2016) studied the challenges facing women empowerment in contemporary Nigeria. Findings revealed that patriarchal nature of Nigerian society and mind resistant to changes as main challenges against women empowerment. In a related development, Ogu, Ezeonwuka & Sule (2016) studied gender equality and poverty reduction in the post 2015 agenda as the foundation for sustainable development in Nigeria. Their findings revealed that realising the human rights, dignity and capabilities of women is a central requirement in the fight against a just and sustainable world. In addition, Alonge (2014) corroborate this finding. In his study on the determinant of women

empowerment among the Ijesa of South Western Nigeria, he found that husband income, professional occupations and higher education among women as some of the factors enhancing women empowerment among the Ijesa of South Western Nigeria.

From the above studies, it can be deduced that, for women to be part of the drivers of their societal fortune, they need to be empowered. Their empowerment will reduce subordination, poverty level and improvement of standard of living. It is in line with these perspectives that this study investigates the phenomenon of women empowerment within the context of Jigawa State Gender Policy in Mallam Madori Local Government Area with a view to ascertain whether the impact of the policy will improve the living standard of women and open doors for their participation in the socio-economic development of the study area.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored around Gender and Development Theory (GAD). The theory emerged in the 1970s through the writings of academic scholars such as Oakley (1972), Rubin (1975), Moser (1993) and Shazavi & Miller (1995).

GAD theory focused primarily on the issue of inequality between men and women and advocates for empowerment of women as means to achieve equality (Moser, 1993). According to the theory, women are untapped resource who can provide contribution to development. Their neglect in development plans has left potentially large contribution (Moser, 1993). Therefore, development goals cannot be fully reached without their participation (Reddock, 2000). The theory also calls for the formulation of more gender-aware policies to address subordination in a society (Connelly et al., 2000).

In Nigeria, different roles, responsibilities, and activities are allocated to women and men according to what is considered appropriate to different gender as defined by the societal culture. According to GAD theory, this is referred to as “the gender division of labour” (Razavi & Muller, 1995). An examination of the gender division of labour in Nigeria usually shows that although both women and men work to maintain themselves and their household, there tend to be differences in the nature of their work. Small-scale trading is majorly dominated by women while men have access to better jobs. This situation create inequality and limit women’s access to social, economic and political benefits that led to the wide spread of poverty and low standard of living.

The theory advocates for the need to challenge the cultural values and social institutions that give men power over women through new legislation or the enforcement of existing once to ensure zero tolerance to women subordination (Connelly et al., 2000). In line with this, several national, state and international laws and policies were ratified like the CEDAW, African Women’s protocol, Beijing platform for Action, National Gender Policy, MDGs and SDGs among other gender specific programmes and initiatives aimed at challenging the encumbrances that militate against efforts toward women empowerment.

Methodology

The study employs survey research method. In collecting data for the research, both primary and secondary sources were utilised. The secondary sources comprise of journals, books, thesis/dissertations, government publications and reports. Internet was also extensively utilised. The primary sources used are questionnaire, interview and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Target population were the residents of Mallam Madori Local Government Area comprising of 164,791 populations (NPC, 2006). The sample size for the study is 400 which is considered to be representative enough of the entire population of the study area as it conforms to the Morgan and Kreiche’s criterion that a sample of 384 and above can represent the total population of 1,000, 000 (Morgan & Kreijcie, 1970). Based on the fact that population census was not counted and graded based on ward population (Omojorabi, 2016), the study makes use

of polling units to determine the sample size of each of the selected ward. In other words, the number of polling units in each of the wards across the study area determines the number of questionnaires to be distributed in such area. Thus, to arrive at the sample size of each of the wards across the local government, the formula below is applied:

$$\text{Ward sample size} = \frac{\text{number of polling units}}{\text{total number of polling units}} \times \frac{400}{1}$$

Table 1: Distribution of the Selected Wards and their Sample Size

S/N	Wards	No. of Polling Units	Sample Size $\frac{N}{TN} \times \frac{400}{1}$
1.	Arki	10	34
2.	Dunari	14	47
3.	Fateka Akurya	12	40
4.	Garin Gabas	09	31
5.	MairakumiBara-Musa	10	34
6.	Makaddari	11	37
7.	Mallam Madori	16	54
8.	Shayya	09	31
9.	Tagwaro	10	34
10.	Tashena	07	24
11.	Tonikutara	10	34
	Total	118	400

Table 1 shows distribution of sample size across the eleven (11) wards in the study area. Individual respondents from each of the sample wards were selected using simple random sampling technique.

In the process of selecting informants for an interview, simple random sampling technique was also applied to select ten key stakeholders and beneficiaries of the policy who are willing to provide information by virtue of knowledge or experience. Additionally, sixteen women engaged in formal and informal sectors were also involved in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Two groups were formed each comprising eight beneficiaries.

The data collected was analysed quantitatively using statistical method of data analysis. In other words, the data was presented in tabular form using simple percentage distribution and are immediately followed by interpretation and analysis of the tables. While the qualitative data that was generated through interviews and FGDs were recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically. Simply put, the study closely examined the data and identifies common themes in relation to the research objectives.

Presentation of Data and Discussion of Findings

A total of four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered to the respondents across the eleven wards in the study area. Three hundred and seventy three (373) were retrieved and only three hundred and sixty two (362) representing ninety one per cent (91%) were considered valid for the analysis as presented in the table below:

Table 2: Administration and Retrieval of Questionnaires

S/N	Sampled Wards	Questionnaires Administered	Questionnaires Retrieved	Valid Questionnaires
1	Arki	34	33	30
2	Dunari	47	44	44
3	Fateka	40	34	33
4	Garin Gabas	31	31	31
5	Mairakumi	34	31	31
6	Makkadari	37	36	34
7	M/Madori	54	51	51
8	Shayya	31	29	27
9	Tagwaro	34	33	30
10	Tashena	24	21	21
11	Tonikutara	34	30	30
	Total	400	373	362

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3: Sex, Age and Occupational Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	%	Age	Frequency	%	Occupation	Frequency	%
Males	173	47.8	18 – 27	110	30.4	Civil Servants	88	24.3
Females	189	52.2	28 – 37	143	39.5	Business	56	15.5
			38 – 47	64	17.7	Students	63	17.4
			48 and above	45	12.4	Housewives	96	26.5
						Farmers	59	16.3
Total	362	100		362	100		362	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3 indicates sex, age and occupational distribution of respondents. Out of the 362 respondents, 173 representing 47.8% are males while 189 representing 52.2% are females. Thus, the table is a clear indication that, in most of the sampled households, women filled the questionnaires more than their male counterpart.

In terms of age distribution of respondents, 110 of them representing 30.4% were between 18-27 years. 143 representing 39.5% of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 28-37. Only 64 of the respondents representing 17.7% were within the age limit of 38-47 while 45 of the respondent representing 12.4% were 48 years and above.

Going by the view of the respondents, 88 of them representing 24.3% are civil servants. 56 of the respondent representing 15.5% are engaged in one business or the other. 63 of the respondents representing 17.4% claimed to be students. 96 of the respondents representing 26.5% said they are full housewives. Only 59 of the respondents representing 16.3% are farmers. This might be due to the fact that, women in the study area are majorly restricted to be household keepers while men engage in other activities that will earn the family a means of livelihood.

Table 4: Respondents response on the type of women empowerment programmes available in the study area

Empowerment Programmes	Frequency	Percentage
Entrepreneurship Skill	52	14.4

Free Female Education	119	32.9
Free Maternal Health Care	44	12.1
Loan/Micro Credit Scheme	65	18.0
Political Appointment	33	9.1
All of the above	36	9.9
None of the above	13	3.6
Total	362	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

As can be seen from table 4, out of the 362 respondents, 52 of them representing 14.4% are aware of the existence of entrepreneurship skill as an empowerment programme in the study area. 119 of the sampled population representing 32.9% are aware of the existence of free female education program. 44 of the respondents representing 12.1% are aware of free maternal health care. 65 of the respondent representing 18.0% were aware of loan/micro credit scheme as an empowerment initiative. 33 of the respondents representing 9.1% are aware of appointment into political office as women empowerment programme in the area under study. Only 36 of the respondent representing 9.9% were aware of all the listed empowerment programmes while the remaining 13, representing 3.6% of the respondents are not aware of any of the women empowerment initiatives.

In view of the data presented, it can be deduced that, majority of the respondents (32.9%) are more familiar with free female education as an empowerment initiative in the area under study. As rightly captured by an informant; “in Jigawa state, when it comes to issue of free female education, there is high political commitment” (Interview, 2020). Another FGD respondent further reiterated that; of all the women empowerment programmes in the state... the mostly widely benefited programme is that of free female education (Respondent, FGD, 2020).

Table 5: Respondents’ view on whether the women empowerment programmes contributed to improvement on their standard of living

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	283	78.2
No	79	21.8
Total	362	100

Source: Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents representing 283 (78.2%) agreed that the women empowerment programmes implemented in the study area contributed to the improvement of their standard of living. While the remaining 79 (21.8%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the women empowerment programmes did not contributed to the improvement of standard of living of people in the area under study. A justification to these responses can be found in the position of an informant who argued that;

...from the inception of the policy to date, we trained women on businesses and skill acquisitions while others were given loan with which they sustain themselves and provide assistance to their family members (Interview, 2020).

This argument was justified by another informant who believed that;

...most of the women empowered are widows. They use the little they earn to sustain themselves and shoulder the responsibility of their children who are mostly orphans. For example, those who were empowered with poultry

farming, they sell the eggs to provide for their daily needs (Interview, 2020).

In one of the FGDs, a member of the group narrated that; ...the tailoring skills I acquired after our training at the skill acquisition centre help me to earn a living...especially during *sallah* period, I save a lot of money for some of my needs after sewing cloth that are used for the festivities (Respondent, FGD, 2020). Another member stated that; I have capital with which I sell maggi, matches, detergent etc. and at the end of every week, I use to save five hundred naira (Respondent, FGD, 2020). To further corroborate this viewpoint, an interviewee explained that; "...the Life Skill Forum (LSF) programme initiated which teaches girl child on career development, has helped in boosting their desires to attend schools so as to realize their dreams (Interview, 2020)". Additionally, the state team leader, Women for Health (W4H) reiterated that, "the Foundation Year Program (FYP) that was design to train the female child to become skilled birth attendants, has helped in making the state to have its own midwives that work in various health centres across the state. This has helped in reducing maternal and child mortality rate (Interview, 2020)".

Table 6: Respondents' view on the likely factors that may hinder the effective implementation of women empowerment programme

Factors that may hinder empowerment	Frequency	Percentage
Religion	34	9.4
Societal values	11	3.0
Politicization of the program	186	51.4
Lack of proper involvement of beneficiaries	115	31.8
Lack of public awareness	16	4.4
Total	362	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 6 indicates that 34 (9.4%) of the respondents are of the opinion that, religion is a factor that will hinder the effective implementation of programmes that will empower women in the study area. 11 (3.0%) attributed the likely limitation of women empowerment to societal values. 16(4.4%) of the respondents agreed that lack of public awareness will hinder effective implementation of women empowerment programmes. While 186(51.4%) and 115(31.8%) of the respondents attributed the likely limitation of women empowerment to politicisation of the programs and lack of proper involvement of the beneficiaries respectively. Therefore, this is an indication that, the most likely handicap to women empowerment programmes in the study area is the politicisation of the programmes. As rightly argued by an interviewee;

Sometimes, we are not allowed to pick the right women to benefit from the programmes. Politicians use to influence the process of selecting the beneficiaries. They make sure that those who are to benefit from the programmes, are women who belong to their political fold (Interview 2020).

Another informant explained that; "Slots are allocated to lawmakers to provide women who will be included in most of the empowerment programmes (Interview, 2020)". In a related development, another further reiterated that;

The truth of the matter is that, there is political interest in empowerment programmes. If politicians are aware of an empowerment initiative, they present candidates who according to them, contribute to their success in the electioneering process as such, they must be compensated through the programme. (Interview, 2020)

This explanation is corroborated by an argument by a respondent in one of the FGDs; "... most times, they picked only those with whom they share the same political party (Respondent, FGD, 2020)". Another Respondent in the FGD also narrated that; "...if you have no link with the politicians, who will empower you? You only hear about it either from neighbours or radio stations (Respondent, FGD, 2020)".

Discussion of Major Findings

Three research questions and corresponding objective were proposed. They are to be verified in relation to the available findings of the study. In line with the first objective; to examine the various programmes designed to empower women in Mallam Madori Local Government Area. The findings of this study confirmed the existence of women empowerment programmes in the study area. Apart from the programmes listed in table 4, other programmes listed by an interviewee include: Goat breeding programme; poultry farming; wood and stone work; training on entrepreneurship skills like tailoring, curry, spice, soap, pomade and detergent making; leather works, and the safe motherhood initiatives that gives free maternal health care services. Other initiatives have to do with financial supports ranging from ₦100,000 to ₦10,000 and cooking stoves given to women for business purposes (Interview, 2020).

The outcome of this study also seems to substantiate the second objective on whether the women empowerment programmes impacted on the living standard of women in the study area. This is represented in table 5 where majority of the respondent (78.2%) agreed that the women empowerment programmes improve their living standard. As argued by an informant, from the inception of the programmes to date, a lot of women especially widows who lack capital to engage in businesses were given loans to engage in income generating businesses that give them a monthly-income that ranges from ₦5,000 to ₦20,000 (Interview, 2020). Others were trained on different entrepreneurship skills with which they earn a means of livelihood and sustain their lives and that of their family members (Interview, 2020). Also, the Foundation Year Programme (FYP) as women empowerment initiative has helped in improving the living standard of many women in the area under study. Women engaged in this programme have become skilled birth attendants with a monthly income ranging from ₦10,000 to ₦30,000 (interview, 2020).

The third objective of the study is to find out whether the women empowerment programmes as guided by the state gender policy increase women participation in socio-economic development of the study area. This objective was upheld to be evidently true as the programmes make women to be part of the drivers of the societal fortune. They engaged in businesses, participate in electioneering processes, attend schools to acquire formal education and participate in the decision making processes as career civil servants or political office holders. "... a woman was appointed as a supervisory councillor. Another was once appointed as a commissioner. Others were appointed as directors, principals, nurses and the number of women teachers is always on the increase (Interview, 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although factors like patriarchy, religion and societal norms play vital role in given women limited access to existing opportunities in Mallam Madori Local Government Area, the study established that political consideration in the selection of the beneficiaries of women empowerment initiatives create barriers in the selection of rightful beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Jigawa State Gender Policy open doors for the establishment of empowerment programmes that continue to bring the fore, the neglected gender variables in development planning and implementation. The empowerment programmes make women to be part of the drivers of the societal fortune. They engage in businesses, attend schools to

acquire formal education and participate in decision making process as career civil servants and political office holders.

In the light of the above, it is recommended that:

1. Considering the role politics played in the process of selecting beneficiaries, the state gender policy should be backed up by legislation to become a law. This will help the legislative and judicial arm to be fully involved to apply the principle of checks and balances in the process of implementing women empowerment projects
2. Monitoring and evaluation committee on women empowerment should be introduced and strengthened to always undertake a pilot study and identify the category of women in need of the empowerment programmes. The committee should visit the beneficiaries of the empowerment programmes on quarterly basis to ensure that the knowledge, resources and skills acquired are properly utilized for future purposes
3. Women who are the direct beneficiaries should be directly involved in the design and implementation of empowerment projects. This will help in identifying the kind of women empowerment programme each category of women desires.

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