

# **USE OF DATA IN THE EFFECTIVE MONITORING OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT POLICIES**

**By**

**MRS PATRICIA EWEAMA**

**National Bureau of Statistics**

**Abuja. Nigeria**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Lack of effective monitoring is believed to be a major cause of many policy failures.<sup>1</sup> This partly accounts for the public concern about availability of data for monitoring of gender equality and empowerment policies following the adoption of Beijing Platform for Action on 15 September 1995 by 189 signatory states.

2. The platform had identified 12 pioneering areas for assessing the development and advancement of women namely, Women and poverty, Education and training of women, Violence against women, women and armed conflict and women and the economy. Others are women in power and decision making, Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women, Human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment and the Girl child.<sup>2</sup>

3. The platform implicitly and explicitly recognised the significance of mainstreaming a gender perspective to national policies in all areas of society. One strategic objective that was given particular emphasis during the Conference was the generation and dissemination of gender disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluating progress. The question many had asked was how the agreement would be monitored to ensure successful implementation in countries. It is in this context that the Secretary General's Notes on the Declaration submitted to the Fourth world Conference on Women advocated for ' generation and dissemination of gender disaggregated data.'<sup>3</sup>

Thus *ab initio* it had been recognised that lack of gender statistics could be a major constraint to gender responsive policy formulation, programme targeting and monitoring of progress towards equality and empowerment of women.

4. Since the Beijing Conference, concern for monitoring of the arising policies has further grown among key stakeholders including Civil Society, Governments, Citizenry and the international community.

5. Monitoring is the periodic checking of policies, programmes and projects to ensure that they meet expectation. Monitoring is an integral strategy in the delivery of many gender policies. Appropriate tools, templates and modalities are developed to facilitate gender policy performance review. The monitoring components usually aim at assisting stakeholders to operationalise the policies as they relate to specific sectors and generate gender sensitive indicators for assessing performance and progress towards policy goals. They also help to facilitate coordination and regular system wide assessment of impact of gender mainstreaming initiatives and activities. In addition, monitoring facilitates the ascertainment of levels of efficient and judicious use of resources, behavioural and value changes. In other words, effective monitoring of policy implementation would involve the tracking of inputs, processes, outputs and outcome of policies. Some of the benefits of doing so are ensuring that targets are met, resolving problems as they arise, ensuring efficiency of use of inputs and controlling quality of outputs.

6. Monitoring of effectiveness of gender policies has assumed greater importance as Governments spend more on gender issues arising from the globalisation of gender empowerment. More women are becoming aware of their rights and there is greater demand for accountability and transparency among the citizens.

7. This paper focuses on the Nigerian situation to illustrate how data has been useful in the effective monitoring of gender equality and empowerment policies. The paper highlights some of the challenges that constraint the availability of quality gender sensitive data and proffers some strategies for improving the situation.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

8. For a better understanding of the subject under discussion, it is germane to clarify the relevant concepts of data, gender equality and empowerment policies, gender indicators as well as to establish the relationship between data, monitoring and gender policies.

9. **Data** . Data has been described as pieces of information that are collected from primary and secondary sources. Data and Indicators are related but different in the sense that Indicators are compiled from data and are interpreted through comparison with standard or context specific thresholds.<sup>4</sup> Indicators are determined at the beginning of relevant processes while data is collected during or at the end of the process. Data integrity and credibility, timeliness, relevance, cost effectiveness and coverage are qualities that are sought after in the use of data.

Data and monitoring are related in the sense that without data, effective monitoring is difficult. The outcome of monitoring is usually an input into policy review and formulation.

10. **Gender Equality and Empowerment policies.** These are policies that seek to equip stakeholders with strategic skills for engineering the levels of social change required for achieving the desired empowerment of all citizens. The policies are usually aligned with relevant regional and international protocols and instruments such as the Beijing Platform for action (BPfA), New partnership for African development (NEPAD), AU solemn declaration for

Gender Equality, African Protocol on Peoples Rights and the Rights of Women (APRRRW), the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, International Conference on Population Development Plan of Action (ICPD PoA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and a wide range of sectors.

11. **Gender Indicators** .—The concept of data can become clearer in the context of gender indicators. Indicators are criteria or measures against which changes can be assessed (IMP- Act 2005). They may be pointers or facts, numbers, opinions or perceptions used to signify changes in specific conditions or progress towards particular objective (CIDA, 1995) . Gender indicators are measures of gender related changes over time and are integral to gender policies. They can refer to quantitative indicators based on sex-disaggregated statistical data which provides separate measures for men and women on literacy, for example.. Gender indicators can also capture qualitative changes- for example increase in women’s level of empowerment or attitude changes about gender equality. .

12. **Use of Data in Monitoring**. Data is a core requirement for monitoring whether of policies, programmes or projects. Data provides the baseline required to monitor developments in the implementation of such policies. Without data it would be difficult to know the situation before the introduction of policies with a view to determining what progress has been made. It would also be difficult to track milestones. Thus measurement of progress and making comparisons depend on the availability and credibility of data. In the assessment of the level of cost , efficiency and economy in the use of resources, as well as measuring of outcomes and evaluation of impact of policy, data is a prerequisite. Accountability, targets and key Performance Indicators cannot be effectively measured without data.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFFECTIVE MONITORING AND GENDER EMPOWERMENT POLICIES.**

13. There is a direct relationship between effective monitoring and result oriented policy implementation. In the case of gender policy, it is the relevant Policy document ( and the ensuing gender strategies) that provide a basis for better assessment of their implementation. In accordance with the Paris Declaration, on Aid effectiveness, every policy should be verifiable by means of results-based indicators. These indicators (self-devised or taken over from others) are a component of the programming and are based on gender-specific data used for monitoring. Preference is given to participative methods of assessment with data that is as gender sensitive as possible.<sup>5</sup>

## **GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT POLICIES IN NIGERIA**

14. A Discussion of the Nigerian scenario with respect to gender equality and empowerment could better illustrate this paper. The Bedrock of gender Equality and empowerment policies in Nigeria is the National Gender policy which aims at building ‘ a just society devoid of discriminations, harnessing 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 well being 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 effectively deployed for sustainable development.’<sup>6</sup>

15. The current policy which came into existence in 2006 replaced the erstwhile Women Policy. The key principles upon which the policy is promised include commitment to gender mainstreaming as a development approach, recognition of gender issues as central and critical to the achievement of

national development goals, realisation that effective and results focused policy implementation demands a cooperative interaction of all stakeholders, promotion and protection of human rights and social justice and equity. Thus the policy covers a wide range of concerns including health, Education, employment and labour, political participation and decision making, legal and human rights, and entrepreneurship.

16. In articulating the policy, a delivery framework was developed which identified Research, Data and evidence based planning as well as monitoring and Evaluation as key strategies. The Government expects that reliable sex disaggregated data and indicators coupled with effective gender equality tracking and benchmarking of progress should be the outcomes of the framework.

17. In response to the Gender policy and the outcomes of the Beijing Platform of Action, the National Bureau of Statistics as the apex statistical agency in Nigeria has taken a number of actions to ensure availability of gender sensitive data for policy monitoring. These include the setting up of a gender statistics branch, mainstreaming of gender concerns into its core survey instruments, establishment of the National Gender Statistics Working Group, turning out of a number of issues of the statistical report on Women and Men in Nigeria and the Gender statistics newsletter.

### **RELEVANCE OF DATA TO THE MONITORING OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT POLICIES IN NIGERIA.**

18. Data of various kinds have been relevant in providing considerable insight into the status of women and Men in Nigeria to a wide range of stakeholders in Nigeria and beyond. Some of the relevant data have been published in reports by National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Commission, British Council, Ministry of Education and other data producers .

19. **National Demographic and Health Survey 2013.**<sup>7</sup> Implemented by the National Population Commission (NpopC) with the assistance of other partners the survey provides data for monitoring of the status of women in Nigeria. It provides insights into education, Employment and earnings, Marriage and Sexual activity, Ownership of Assets, Participation in Household Decision making, Fertility, HIV Knowledge attitudes and behaviour Violence and Genital mutilation among others.

20. On education for example data from the survey has shown that nearly half of women (45%) and 62% of men age 15-49 have a secondary or higher level of education . However, more than one-third of Nigerian women (38%) and 21% of men have no education. It also shows that the percentage of women with no education increases with age.

21. Regarding Marriage and Sexual Activity, the survey shows that Nigerian women age 25-49 get married at about 18 years of age, nine years earlier than men age 30-40. Almost half of women age 25-49 were married by age 18. Age at first marriage has been increasing over time among women. The median age at first marriage among women age 20-24 is 19 versus 17.3 years among women age 45-49. Among women, age at first marriage increases with education level.

22. In terms of ownership of assets, the survey discloses that only 18% of women own a house either alone or jointly, and only 15% own land. Eight in ten women do not own a house (82%) or land (85%).

23. **Gender in Nigeria Report 2012** .<sup>8</sup> The report compiled by the British Council provides a comprehensive view of gender in Nigeria using data. It assesses progress in key areas including employment , livelihoods, education and health, political representation and violence.

24. **Women and Men in Nigeria.**<sup>9</sup> The report is published by National Bureau of Statistics and highlights the statistical situation of men and women in the country with respect to the gender concerns in population, education, health, employment, political participation and ICT among others.

25. **How monitoring with available data shaped Government reaction to gender policy** The published gender data showing baselines and trend have helped to shape Government reaction to issues of gender policy positively. A particular success story is in the area of representation in leadership, particularly political participation. In 1999, women representation in the National Assembly was 3.2%. In 2003, the figure improved to 5.5% and rose to 7.5% in 2007 due to outcry arising from published data and the subsequent introduction of women supportive electoral guidelines. In the state Houses of Assembly, the story is the same. 2.2% of women held seats in the houses in 1999, 3.6% in 2003 and 5.9% in 2007. At the local Government level, 1.1% of women held seats in that tier of government in 1999, 2.9 in 2003 and 3.5 in 2007.

26. At the inception of the current Government Transformation Agenda in 2011, the issue of representation of women was used as a major campaign strategy with data showing the need to meet the Beijing agreement to reserve 35% of appointive posts for women. As a result, the Government now prides itself as the administration that appointed the largest number of women as Ministers. Indeed today many posts that were hitherto reserved for men such as that of Chief Justice of the Federation are now occupied by women. Many women are also being promoted to command posts in security and defence establishments such as the the army and police. These became possible mainly because gender disaggregated data was available in the public domain to show the gaps in those areas. Concerned stakeholders effectively monitored and tracked developments and trends, and highlighted areas that needed to be addressed.

## **CHALLENGES TO GENDER SENSITIVE DATA PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA**

27. Notwithstanding the successes recorded , a number of challenges constrain the production of adequate and reliable gender data to influence gender policies especially in Nigeria. These include poor responses to questions, dissemination limitations, data user/producer capacity problems, inadequate funding and consequent limited scope, inadequate synergy between data producing agencies and institutions, and lack of access to some segments of the women population due to cultural factors.

## **STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING DATA PRODUCTION**

28. The way out is to pay more attention to Gender based budgeting. Greater sensitisation and awareness on the use of data for policy monitoring among the citizenry and stakeholders as well as proactive enlightenment programmes to mitigate the issue of user capacity. The National Bureau of statistics is strengthening its production and dissemination machinery and the National Working Group on Gender Statistics as a means of improving dissemination, coordination and collaboration in the production of relevant data for the effective monitoring of gender equality and empowerment policies in the country.

## **CONCLUSION**

29. This paper has shown, illustrating with the case of Nigeria that data is very useful in the effective monitoring of Gender equality and empowerment policies. Without quality, credible and relevant data it would be difficult to understand and compare the status and trend of development and progress in the implementation of gender concerns which is of utmost interest to any party involved in the monitoring of gender equality and empowerment policies.

30. In the Nigerian situation, a number of challenges constrain the production of adequate and reliable gender data. These include poor responses to questions, data user/producer capacity problems, inadequate funding and consequent limited scope, inadequate synergy between data producing agencies and institutions and lack of access to some segments of the women population due to cultural factors.

31. The proposed way out is to pay more attention to Gender based budgeting ,greater sensitisation and awareness on the use of data for policy monitoring among the citizenry and stakeholders as well as proactive enlightenment programme to mitigate the issue of user capacity.

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