

A FRACTURED EXISTENCE: GENDER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND THE CULTURE OF PATRIARCHY IN NIGERIA'S TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

In response to the call for the attainment of a gender sensitive and responsive society for sustainable development, tertiary institutions have embarked on a drive to bridge existing gender gaps in knowledge production and consumption. With the active involvement of feminist scholars and gender experts, the tertiary institution's traditional structure which was male-centered and had women at a disadvantage is being continually and consciously questioned. The Nigerian tertiary education system has undergone several modifications as numerous reforms are made to ensure the reduction of gender disparities in the institutions. Prominent among these reforms is the ongoing formulation and implementation of institutional gender policies with specific reference to the adoption of the National Gender Policy in 2006 by the Nigerian government. While it is commendable that these institutional policies have opened up opportunities for gender equality among the students and faculty, it has also been argued that the tertiary system is yet to achieve a full transformation because of the continuing presence of the conjoined twins; culture and patriarchy. The disparities still present in gender roles in these institutions stem from patriarchal structures and cultural traditions that emphasize male dominance in all facets of the society. This has led to a clear disregard of women's rights, abilities, and entitlements. This paper critiques the actual implementation of the institutional gender policy and the specific cultural and patriarchal legacies embedded in the Nigerian environment. Through the extant review of literature, the study deploys radical feminist theorizing in exploring the stalled implementation of gender equality policies in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. It argues that despite the numerical strength of female students and faculty, they remain subject to various forms of violence and silencing due to the invidious interplay of culture and patriarchy within the society.

Keywords: Culture, Gender Policy, Implementation, Patriarchy, Tertiary Institutions

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