

## **PARTNERSHIPS FOR GENDER EQUITY IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

### **The Case of the Gender Equity Project of Obafemi Awolowo University**

**C. O. MUOGHALU**

**Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies,**

**Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Nigeria.**

**Email: [omuoghal@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:omuoghal@yahoo.co.uk)**

#### **ABSTRACT**

The growing salience of gender in African political and intellectual landscapes has had impacts in the education sector. Education, identified as one most important single factor, for closing the wide gender gap, has been targeted to its political and socio-economic benefits. Higher education institutions, which experience the widest gender equity gaps in education programming have drawn grave attention and various responses being developed to mitigate the situation. This paper discusses the response of one institution, the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), to bridge gender equity gaps through a partnership with the Carnegie Corporation of New York. In the process, OAU – Carnegie Gender Equity Initiative was put in place to tackle the specific problem of the under-presentation of women in OAU. This paper examines the initiative for its impact on the University and constituent communities. Secondary data was collected from Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies and Planning and Budgeting Unit of the University. Analysis of various conceptual and empirical sources reveals that the Gender Equity Project has made tremendous impact on all spheres of the University. The Project, through its fellowships to women academics, specific junior faculty to complete their Ph. Ds, and strengthened the capacities of administrative staff. The extension of scholarships to women indigent undergraduate and postgraduate students helped in the retention of the awardees and the completion of their programmes and the University Community has become more gender sensitive. Moreover, OAU now operates a Gender Policy which is expected to help institutionalize gender issues into all facets of the University. In conclusion, OAU is making progress in institutionalizing gender into all aspects of the University life thus moving towards achieving gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender Equality, Institutional Partnerships, Gender Mainstreaming, Higher Education, Staff Development.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It has been realized the world over that the exclusion of women from various aspects of national life has serious implications for development. This same social exclusion makes it difficult for women to participate fully in higher education and professional job market. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women remain grossly under-represented in various areas of study in

higher education (Apusigah, 2004). Only very few women are able to survive the discriminations and exclusions of the system and been able to reach up to graduate study. The situation is worse for those staying long enough to up faculty positions (Mama, 2002). An emergent picture in the form of subject segregation is depicted in the glaring inequalities in representation in the “soft” sciences compared to that of the “hard” sciences.

Persistent gender segregation has meant that women remain concentrated in education, arts and social sciences compared to the deplorable situation in the physical and applied and sciences. It is no wonder that women still comprise fewer than 6% of the African professoriate in the academy three decades after they were granted equal access (Ajayi, et al, 1996). According to Mama (2002), in the context of the intransigent institutional cultures, the slowly but increasing number of women who are able to enter the academy often find themselves targeted for the worst forms of misogyny. Young bright women scholars are subjected to ridicule, derision and even overt sexual abuse and violence.

Recently, the emphasis on gender equity and gender equality has been as a result of the over-riding importance of human rights in sustainable development. The shift from women in development to gender and development calls for increased attention to the roles, responsibilities, attitudes and behaviour of men as well as women and new and active roles for men in the promotion of equality.

Owing to the importance of gender equality in sustainable development, more efforts are being made to ensure female participation in higher education. A UNESCO (1994)/ Common Wealth report on women in higher education management showed that with hardly an exception, the global picture is of men outnumbering women at about 1 to 5 at the middle management level and at about 20 to 1 in senior management level. By the year 2000, the situation had improved only marginally (Singh, 2001a). According to World Bank (2002), one of the regions in which gender equality targets are of most concern is Sub-Saharan Africa.

The grim gender situation in African higher education, where middle and high level human resource is produced to serve commerce, industry, education, politics and administration, among others, has been directly aligned to its development challenges (World Bank, 2002). Women are almost absent from African Universities as managers, teachers and even students. It has therefore become imperative to develop interventions that address the inequalities and promote women’s inclusion.

In the specific case of Nigeria, the focus of this paper, in spite of the inestimable value placed on education, illiteracy has been reported to be relatively high and women and girls are the most disadvantaged (Fabiya, 2002). Men enjoyed early advantage in educational enrolments, inclusion and attrition. Institutional arrangements, enrolment criterion, parental preference, collective social rationality, curriculum provisions and teacher effects have all played to the favour of boys and men. This has resulted in gaps in educational access, inclusion and attainment between women and men. These gaps persist and will continue without committed and concerted strategic interventions (Apusigah, 2004; NUC, 2001; Longe, 1992; Ijere 1991).

The gender situational analysis of educational enrolments in the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), the focus of this paper, is not different from the above. The situation has been compounded by the relatively high drop-out rates for female compared to male. Similar trends obtain in staff employment and decision-making structures of the University. This situation where, females are poorly represented in student enrolment, staff

employment and decision-making structures in the university created a great need for institutionalizing gender equity in the University.

The OAU Gender Equity Project (GEP) was developed as a response to the need to bridge gender gaps. It developed as a collaborative effort between OAU and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, USA. Under the initiative various strategies were adopted to mainstream gender in the University. This paper examines the Project's strategies and impacts. It draws from documented and empirical studies on gender and education in Nigeria in order to analysis the case of OAU with specific reference to the GEP. Secondary data were collected from literary and statistical sources. There were collected from existing studies such as that by Pereira (2007), Afonja et al (2002) and UNICEF (2001) among others as well as from the Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies and the Planning and Budgeting Unit of OAU. The data on strategies and impacts of gender equity was collected from the Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies while the data on staff employment and student enrolment was collected from the Planning and Budgeting unit of the University. Primary data was also collected from OAU using interviews and questionnaire. These data are used to first examine the gender situation in Nigeria and the OAU and second, the GEP and gender mainstreaming programme in OAU.

## **GENDER AND EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

Currently, women in higher education in Africa have been topical due to the importance of education in transforming individual lives and societies. Kwesiga (2002) documents the long trek Ugandan women have had to make before having access to Ugandan universities. According to Pereira (2007), Kwesiga's review of theory on the meaning of educational access and her analysis of barriers to women access address a number of interlocking sites including family, society, culture, unequal development and educational institution itself. She explained that early marriage, cultural image of the female and poverty all militate against female access to higher education. Kwesiga pointed out that the education of women had implications that go beyond education specific issues.

Kwesiga's (2002) findings are similar to the findings of a Nigerian study supported by UNICEF in 2001 which indicated that the number of pupils decline from one class to the next. The gender disparity in education in Nigeria exists at all levels but it is especially glaring at the tertiary level. At the teaching level, the proportion of male teachers was consistently higher than that of female teachers for all levels of education but the gap increased more widely from primary school to universities. In primary school teaching, the male/female gap was about 5% and over 80% for colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. Among professors and associate professors, males constituted 94% while females constituted 6%. There were 88.1% males and 11.9% females among senior lecturers and research fellows as at 2001.

An emerging trend appears to be that the higher the level of education and professional cadre, the less the proportion of females. Historically, women have not been given the opportunity to pursue higher education; a prerequisite to becoming a professional. In fact, the first female doctors in Nigeria were seen as a threat both to the society and their male colleagues. The UNICEF study identifies societal norms as important inhibiting factor to female education. In Nigerian society, women and girls are still largely considered as domestics whose should take up roles as mothers and wives and not scholarly professions. In some communities, women's and girls' education is frowned on. This situation creates further inequalities which those tolerant recording better female enrolment rates.

A number of studies examine the disparities in the already grim national situation. Ohiri Anichie (2001) discusses important regional and gender disparities in school enrolments in Nigeria. The study reveals that northern compared to states tend to have lower enrolment rates for both males and females. In addition, northern compared to southern states have lower female enrolment rates. Also, Ekhaguere's (2003) study points to glaring disparities in enrolment by region, gender and economic status as well as between rural and urban households in Nigeria.

Lamenting over the nature and analysis of educational disparities, Pereira (2007) cautions against the tendency to focus on enrolment levels to the neglect of other equally compelling factors and employment of deep analyses. Pereira explains that student enrolments can be misleading in the sense that many students, especially females, drop out even at the university level. Dropout rates for women in 1999/2000 academic year in the University of Ife are 87.2% for Law, 54.6% for Education and 61.8% for Social Sciences. For the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, the dropout rate for Arts was 11.3% and Education was 62.5% (NUC, 2001).

Women's low representation in the university system is also glaring in at the staffing level. Many universities in Nigeria have few female academic staff, the percentage of which is not up to 20%. As at 1997/8, Federal university of Technology, Akure had 9.1%, Minna 9.6%, Yola 6.7%, Nsukka 18.1%, Lagos 21.3%, Benin 15.6% (NUC 2001). The low representation of females on staff in Nigerian universities is accompanied by the problem of low women's participation in decision making. The percentage of female professors in Nigerian universities is even more disturbing. In the Universities of Ibadan, Lagos, Nsukka and Maiduguri, female professors constitute 13.1%, 12.0%, 9.3% and 2.1% respectively. In some faculties and even universities in Nigeria, there are no female professors (Okebukola, 2002). Decision making positions in the educational bureaucracy are almost overwhelmingly held by men. No woman has ever held the position of visitor, vested in the President. The Ministers of Education have been virtually all men. The post of Executive Secretary of National Universities Commission has also never been occupied by a woman and of all the Vice Chancellors, only three have ever been women (Pereira, 2007).

The wide gaps in educational enrolments in Nigerian Universities remain grim and present grave concerns. Data dating back to the 1960s reveal significant progress in general enrolments but also unchanging trends in gender inequality. There have been tremendous increases in enrolments and the rates of growth for both women and men have been astronomical, yet the gaps remain wide. Arguably, the gaps have been narrowing but not close enough to make any significant change. Table 1 below, which traces the growth rates by decades reveal incremental growth for both men and women and narrowing between them but still wide gaps.

**Table 1: Student Enrolment in Nigerian Universities by sex**

Year	Male	Female
1960	2349 (92.3%)	196 (7.7%)
1970	12, 394 (85.7%)	2074 (14.3%)
1980	60, 692 (77.8%)	17099 (22.2%)
1990	132, 016 (73.0%)	48, 855 ( 27%)

**Source: Longe Report 1992:147-8**

Table 2 provides year by year enrolment rates by sex. Like shown in Table 1 there has been phenomenal growth for both males and females between the 10-year period between 1992 and 2002 with the most growth in 2001/2002 for both. However female rates have been consistent while that for males fell in 1995/96 before rising again. Also, female rates have more than doubled while that of male has less than doubled. Yet, as at 2001/02 female rates remains at less than half male enrolment rate.

**Table 2: Student Enrolment in Nigerian Universities by sex**

Year	Male	Female
1992/93	158,481 73.2%	57, 926 26.8%
1993/94	174,198 75.9%	55,212 24.1%
1994/95	189,429 74.4%	65,032 25.6%
1995/96	181, 213 69.7%	78, 087 30.3%
1997/98	181,724 66.9%	89, 984 33.1%
2001/2002	248,781 67.4%	120,782 32.6%

**Source: National Universities Commission (NUC) 2001.**

Taken together, the data in Tables 1 and 2 have shown the trend in student enrolment in Nigerian Universities over the years. The two tables have shown that female enrolment is rising gradually; but it is still below expectation considering the fact that females are almost 50% of the Nigerian population.

#### **THE GENDER SITUATION AT OAU**

A gender situational analysis of OAU was carried out in 2002 using qualitative and quantitative data to assess the gender gaps in enrolment, employment and decision-making. Attitudes to gender issues and to institutionalizing gender were also assessed. All the data sets provided clear evidence of gender disparities in the system and of fluctuations over the years. It reveals that female enrolment at OAU has never exceeded 30.0% of total enrolment and some decreases. For instance, of the total enrolment of 18,389 in 1999/2000, 27.3% were females. However in 2001/2002 academic year, of the 16,980 enrolled, 24.2% were females (Afonja, Soetan, Amole and Odeyemi, 2002). This reflects a decrease in female enrolment rate. See Table 3.

**Table 3: Total Enrolment of Undergraduate Students by Faculty in OAU (1997/98-2001/2002).**

FACULTY	1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		2001/2002	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Administration	1,043	322	1,539	476	1,277	322	1,306	333
Agriculture	913	195	597	277	1,119	273	1,003	290
Arts	981	473	1,181	599	1,222	287	1,273	298
Basic Medical Sciences	161	105	479	259	567	273	592	290
Clinical Sciences	597	219	318	117	428	89	406	84
Education	1,163	791	41	21	123	18	127	18
Environmental Design and Management	1,175	406	1,465	552	1,627	670	1,592	366
Law	596	430	848	611	608	449	668	494
Pharmacy	364	263	317	229	613	107	524	91
Science	2,157	745	1,084	437	1,467	537	1,306	483
Social Sciences	992	566	1,444	823	1,372	528	1,463	563
Technology	2,819	636	2,570	718	2,825	887	2,604	806
Dentistry	184	95	41	21	123	18	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,145</b>	<b>5,246</b>	<b>11,924</b>	<b>5,140</b>	<b>13,371</b>	<b>5,018</b>	<b>12,864</b>	<b>4,116</b>

Source: Afonja, Soetan, Amole and Odeyemi, 2002

Afonja et al (2002) further explain that the proportion of women enrolled in postgraduate degrees has been about the same as those in undergraduate programs although there is evidence that only about 10% actually graduate. See Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Post Graduate Enrolment in OAU (1996/97-1998/99)**

FACULTIES	1996/97				1997/98				1998/99			
	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%
Administration	104	21.8	373	78.2	104	22.5	359	77.5	481	43.4	627	56.6
Agriculture	26	22.8	88	77.2	26	22.8	88	77.2	12	19.7	49	72.9
Arts	28	22.4	97	77.6	28	22.4	97	77.6	26	27.1	70	72.9
Education	41	22.7	140	77.3	44	23.0	147	77.0	26	25.7	75	74.3
Technology	47	27.8	122	72.2	53	27.9	137	72.1	62	21.5	227	78.5
Social Sciences	56	32.0	119	68.0	73	41.7	102	58.3	41	26.5	114	73.5
Clinical Science	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	35.3	11	64.7
Law	15	30.0	35	70.0	15	30.0	35	70.0	30	30.0	70	70.0
Science	30	17.6	140	82.4	32	18.6	140	81.4	70	24.6	215	75.4
Environmental Design and Management	19	21.6	69	78.4	16	18.8	69	81.2	29	19.3	121	80.7
Basic Medical Sciences	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	34.3	23	65.7
Dentistry	6	33.3	11	64.7	6	35.3	11	64.7	-	-	-	-
Pharmacy	14	33.3	28	66.7	14	33.3	28	66.6	19	31.7	41	68.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>1,222</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>1,213</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>1,643</b>	<b>66.9</b>

Source: Afonja, Soetan, Amole and Odeyemi, 2002

Table 4 above shows that between 1996/97 and 1998/99, the proportion of females increased from 24.0% to 33.1%. During the 1999/2000 academic year, 25.6% of those enrolled in postgraduate courses were females and the proportion increased to 28.3% in 2000/2001. There are interesting gender differences between the faculties. The gender inequality situation is worse for the physical sciences. Females were made up of less than 25% of the 1999/2000 graduating students but only 5.0% were from the Faculty of Technology whereas 70.6% were from the Faculty of Education.

The gender analysis of employment situation in OAU reflects that at the national level before the oil boom. It fluctuated around 13.0%. However, over a period of about three decades, OAU has made some progress in reducing the gap. At inception, very few women were employed. In a provincial town that is characteristically patriarchal, paid employment during the early years was defined as the preserve of men. The women who were employed were support staff and worked as typists, cleaners, cooks, nurses and auxiliary staff at the hospitals and clinics attached to the University (Afonja et al 2002).

Throughout the 1960s and until the early 1970s there was no conscious attempt to increase the number of women and to include them among the senior categories. However, the expansion of the female labour force during the era of the oil boom also reflected in Nigerian universities including OAU, which experiences tremendous increases in recruitments. As OAU expanded its programs and increased intakes, its staff development policy included training a large pool of its own graduates and recruiting Nigerians who had been trained abroad as well as non-Nigerians. Faced with the responsibility of creating a stable labour force in a semi rural area with few employment opportunities, OAU encouraged the employment of the wives of such staff at senior, intermediate and junior levels. Because there are no regular gender disaggregated data on staff employment, it was difficult to estimate the percentage rate of increase in female employment over the period. However, the data for the 2001/2002 academic session (Table 5) show that females constituted 18.8% of the OAU staff and female academic staff constituted only 13.6% of the academic staff total (Afonja et al. (2002).

**Table 5: University Staff Strength 2001/2002 Academic Session.**

	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Academic staff	951	86.4	150	13.6	1101
Administrative staff	1012	72.7	402	28.3	1414
Junior staff	1812	85.0	320	15.0	2132
Total	3775	81.2	872	18.8	4647

Source: Afonja et al, 2002.

There were also differences within and between faculties. Data on the Faculty of Law for example, showed that there was only one female academic staff out of a total of 27. In the Faculties of Science and Technology, female academic staff made up only 7.0% of the total. The Faculty of Education had the highest proportion (27.0%) of the female academic staff in OAU, a pattern that was consistent with that of female enrolment.

The situation analysis also showed that female participation in decision-making structures at the moment was very limited. Of the 19 statutory committees, male representation was approximately 10 times that of females on 6 committees and 5 times on 5 committees (Afonja et al 2002). The gender gap was widest in Senate where the ratio was 19 males to 1 female. This is a direct consequence of the fact that less than 5% of the academic staff was in the professorial ranks. Of the 206 professors at OAU, only 9 (4.3%) were females.

The gender issues addressed in the situation analysis were not limited to gaps in enrolment and employment but included attitudinal and behavioural issues. Consultations with 10 different staff categories revealed that there was a lack of understanding of the concept "gender". One of the consequences was the neglect of gender analysis in personnel, organizational and community life. However, the consultations provided participants the opportunity to understand the concept and appreciate the need for gender equity. The need to improve women's social and economic status as well as their self-esteem was emphasized repeatedly.

According to Afonja et al (2002), the consensus is that gender roles as constructed in Nigerian but also African societies enhance and foster women's subordination. The gender

gap in enrolment in higher education is thus perceived as a consequence of this subordination. However, the participants at the consultative meetings at OAU also revealed that culture is not static and a change in cultural attitudes and in the supporting religious beliefs is desirable for change to be mitigated. The OAU process which also looked on the need for change (i.e., intervention) received affirmation. Many of the participants were of the view that a gender equity policy was desirable and suggested that there should be widespread sensitization programs within the University and in the larger community in support of the policy. Participants were of the view that both men and women were the custodians of culture and should be major targets of future sensitization programs.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework for this paper is the feminist theory. Feminist analysis of social structures and gender relations is useful for engaging with questions of educational inequalities and the structural basis as well as politics on higher education in Nigeria.

In the *Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir argues that the division of sexes is an irreducible, contingent fact of biology. Woman is a biological not an historical category who suffers from a singular oppression with no historical precedence. Without a different past, how can one have a concept of a different future? (Mitchell and Oakley, 1986). Globally, even throughout an history, women have been regarded as inferior human beings. This image of women is apparent in everything about women especially in their relations with men.

Feminism emerged as a reaction against the subordination of women. It is political activism to change women's subordinated position in society. Feminists have always believed that social change is needed to achieve the full rights for women. Feminist movement have often combined demand for specific and immediate reforms with more revolutionary aspirations (Carter, 1988). In spite of the many strands of feminist thoughts and writings, feminists generally agree on women's subordination and the need for change. According to Delmar (1986), what unites feminists is greater than what divides them. Women share the same identity which rests on the idea that they share the similar experiences of economic oppression, commercial exploitation, legal discrimination and other forms of discrimination. This general subordination has brought about women's poverty, lack of access to higher education and low life chances. It is within this context that the necessity and importance of gender equity in Universities will be examined.

The significance of applying feminist analysis to gender equity in OAU stems from the fact that women in Nigeria have lived a long history of subordination and inequality in all facets of life especially in higher education. There are also deprivations that women suffer in our environment just because they are women. For instance, a father abandoning his children because they are all girls and the issue of a man marrying more than one wife simultaneously which makes it impossible for him to be fair to all his children. There is therefore the need to address this problem of inequality if real and sustainable development is to be achieved.

Feminist analysis of women's subordination as an analytical framework is therefore useful in this case in comparing the levels and forms of discrimination and how women are subordinated. It is being used to also examine the factors and forces of discriminations; their histories, trends, forms and effects. Such analysis allows for understandings that are critical for mitigating change.

## **GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND THE GENDER EQUITY PROJECT OF OAU**

The Afonja and associates' study of 2002 on gender in the OAU was revealing. The gender situational analysis opened our eyes to the fact that there are glaring gender gaps in student enrolment, staff employment and decision making in the University. The need for gender mainstreaming therefore came to the fore. Consequently, the University made gender equity and gender mainstreaming one of its key strategic development plans. The University made efforts to carry out this plan and the Carnegie Corporation of New York agreed to partner with the University in this noble course of achieving a gender compliant organization. This led to the establishment of the OAU-Carnegie Gender Equity Project in 2003 (Gender Equity Newsletter, July, 2004). Ever since 2003, there has been a conscious effort in the OAU to mainstream gender into all aspects of University life.

The mission of Gender Mainstreaming at the OAU is to excel in providing a gender responsive organizational environment and to integrate gender into teaching, learning, research, student and staff welfare (OAU- Carnegie Gender Equity Bulletin, April, 2006). The main goal of the Gender Equity Project at OAU is to reduce gender gaps in student enrolment, employment and decision-making.

The specific objectives of GEP are to:

- Reduce gender gap in students' enrolment and staff employment.
- Create gender awareness and sensitivity in the University and its environs
- Produce a gender policy for the University
- Promote the integration of gender perspectives in every aspect of the University's life and promote gender-friendly environment in the University
- Support female indigent students
- Support female staff to improve their skills and competencies so as to participate actively in decision making.
- Draft anti-sexual harassment policy for the University

**Source: OAU- Carnegie Gender Equity Bulletin, April, 2006).**

It is important to note that OAU's Gender Mainstreaming as part of OAU-Carnegie GEP has been sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) since 2003. The Gender Equity Project which is being implemented by the Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies employs the following strategies for mainstreaming gender at OAU:

- **Community Outreach which consist of the Gender Web Forum and Gender Forum on NTA Ile- Ife.**

The Gender Web Forum in which gender issues are posted on the OAU net and people react and contribute to the discussion to enlighten one another. The forum has featured issues such as education and the girl child, inheritance, widowhood practices in Nigeria, next of kin and others.

The Gender Forum on NTA Ile- Ife is a weekly programme which features panel discussions and play lets on gender issues, which are aimed at sensitizing the university community and the general public.

- **Workshops and Seminars for staff and students on gender sensitization.**

Several workshops and seminars have been organized by the Centre for staff especially those in key positions in the university administration. There have also been several workshops for the Gender Focal Points and their deputies (faculty representatives). A workshop on gender mainstreaming in organizations which was anchored by Simmons School of Management, USA was also organized for people in strategic positions in the University. Students have been exposed to gender issues and gender sensitization through workshops and during their orientation programmes.

- **Gender Desegregation of Data.**

Data on student enrolment, staff employment and even in decision making is now done according to sex for easy analysis and policy formulation. Workshops on gender desegregation of data have been carried out and the participants were staff of the University who are in positions of data/information preparation and presentation.

- **Publication of Gender Equity Bulletin.**

The *Gender Equity Bulletin* is a bi-annual newsletter for dissemination of gender information and gender sensitization. The bulletin is widely circulated.

- **A Gender Policy for the University**

The Centre has drafted a Gender Policy for the University and the University senate and Council have approved the policy. This document is a strong instrument in the implementation and institutionalization of the Gender equity in all aspects of the University life.

- **Scholarships and Fellowships for female students and staff respectively.**

Scholarship awards are given to female indigent students at the beginning of every session. This is to help to retain poor female students so that they are able to complete their programmes.

Female academic staffs pursuing their doctoral programmes are also awarded fellowships to complete their programmes and female administrative staffs in strategic positions are also awarded fellowships to build their capacities so as to improve female participation in decision making in the University.

- **Anti-sexual harassment policy for the University**

An anti sexual harassment policy has been drafted for the University and it is currently going through the necessary committees for approval. When approved, this policy will help to curb the anti social behaviour of sexual harassment in the University.

## **OUTCOMES OF THE GEP**

### **Gender Desegregation of Data**

It is important to note that before the GEP at OAU, data was not desegregated. Awareness workshops and sensitization campaigns on gender desegregation of data has empowered

the participants and enlightened the University on the importance of data desegregation. Gender desegregation of data is now done in the presentation of information in the University. It is now easier to get information of gender component of students, staff and committees.

The project has thus resulted in data desegregation thus making it easier for collecting statistical and background information for problem analysis and programming intervention.

### Reduction in gender gaps in student enrolment and staffing situation

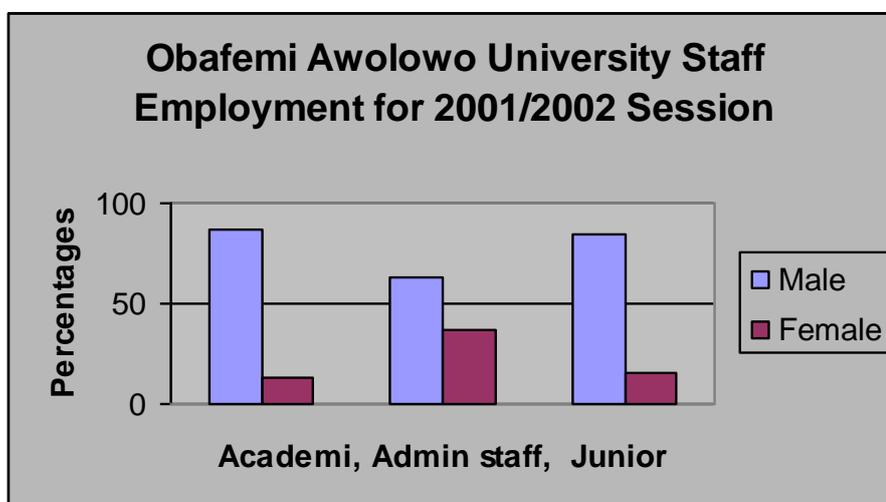
The Gender Equity Programme at OAU has reduced gender gaps in student enrolment and staff employment.

**Table 6: Staff Situation in OAU for the 2007/2008 academic session**

	Male	Female	%	Total
Academic	986	208	17.4	1,194
Administration	1243	631	33.7	1,874
Junior Staff	1483	473	24.1	1,956

Source: Planning and Budgeting Unit of OAU

Table 6 above shows a general improvement in the representation of females in staff employment of OAU compared to what obtained in 2001/2002 academic session. In 2007/2008 academic session, female academic staff represented 17.4% of the University academic staff. This was an improvement compared to 13.6% in 2001/2002 academic session. There was also improvement in the percentage of females in the University administration. In 2007/2008 academic session, the percentage of females in the University administration was 33.7% compared to the percentage of females in the University administration in 2001/2002 academic session of 28.3%. Furthermore, females constituted 24.1% of the junior staff in the University in 2007/2008 academic session, an improvement from the percentage of females (junior staff) in 2001/2002 academic session which was 15%. The Figures 1 and 2 below show Improvement Staff Employment which is attributable to the impacts of the GEP.



**Figure 1: Staffing Situation of OAU for 2001/02**

In 2001/2002 academic session, female academic staff constituted 13.6% while by 2007/2008 session, female academic staff constituted 17.5%.

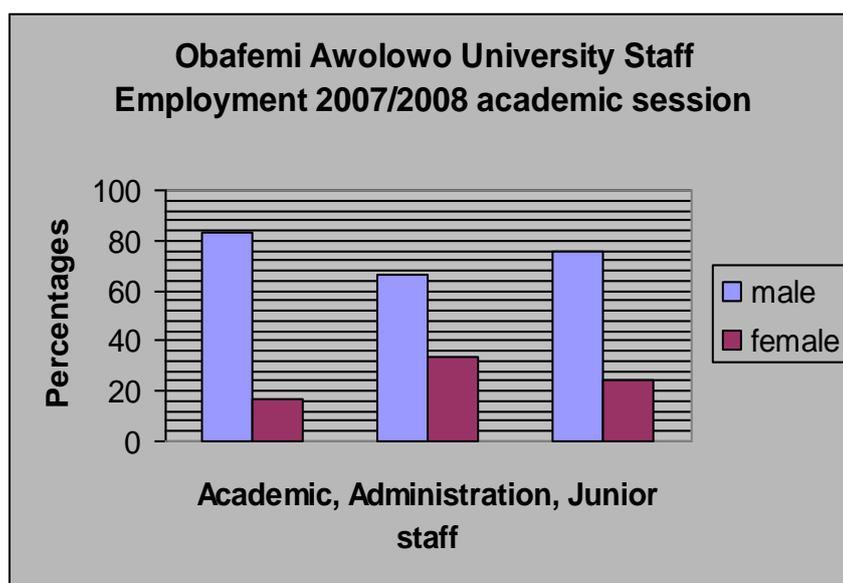


Figure 2: Staffing Situation in OAU (2007/2008)

Improvements were also experienced in student enrolments at both undergraduate and graduate levels in OAU as a result of the GEP. See Table 7 below.

Table 7: Student enrolment at OAU for the 2007/2008 academic year

Faculty	Undergraduates			Total	Postgraduates		Tot. Stud. Enrolment		Grand Total
	F	%	M		F	M	F	M	
Admin	971	46.5	1118	2089	677	522	2310	2612	4922
Agric	743	42	1017	1760	36	102	779	1119	1898
Arts	1233	54.8	1017	2250	67	154	1353	1265	2618
Basic Med	725	45.5	869	1594	42	28	767	897	1664
Clinical	410	36.5	712	1122	14	21	424	733	1157
Dentistry	139	35.5	253	392	6	9	145	262	407
Education	682	43.4	891	1573	187	269	869	1160	2029
Edm	498	28	1278	1776	70	205	572	1498	2070
Law	536	49	555	1091	58	168	594	723	1317
Pharmacy	358	48	386	744	30	59	396	457	853
Science	1103	34.4	2099	3202	111	303	1214	2402	3616
Soc. Sc.	1085	37.5	1805	2890	75	175	1180	2013	3193
Technology	599	16.2	3107	3706	178	420	794	3566	4360
Grand Total	9082	37.5	15,107	24,189	1396	2588	11,396	18,707	30,104

Source: Field Survey

Table 7 shows there was improvement in student enrolment in 2007/2008 academic session compared to 2001/2002 academic session. In the 2007/2008 academic session, female undergraduate students constituted 37.5% of total student enrolment compared to 24.2% in 2001/2002 academic session. Also, female postgraduate students constituted 35% of the

total postgraduate enrolment in 2007/2008 academic session compared to female postgraduate enrolment in 2001/2002 academic session which was 28.3%.

### **Creation of gender awareness and sensitivity**

Through community outreach programmes, members of the University and its environs were sensitized on gender issues. The Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies received several phone calls and letters as appreciation from members of the community for enlightening them on gender issues. Many of them confessed their ignorance and pledged that they now know better how to relate with their wives and daughters. One of such letters read in part: 'My wife and my daughters are now my friends and partners in progress and everybody is happier for it, thank you very much for this gift.'

The Gender Equity Initiative Bulletin enlightens the University community and beyond on gender issues and even gender news around the world. In fact, the Centre has received letters of commendation from the University community and beyond on how the Bulletin is impressing on their lives.

### **Development of a Gender Policy**

It is important to note that OAU has become the first university in Nigeria to have a gender policy. The Policy has made the University community more gender conscious during statutory meetings and in relationship with one another. It has become a document for consultation during student admission and staff recruitment.

The Gender Policy for the University is helping to institutionalize gender equity in the University. It is yielding results in access and participation in enrolments and recruitments. It is informing the composition of decision-making structures and systems such as committee. It is influencing promotions and programming.

### **Gender Integration and Gender friendly environment**

The training and sensitization workshops have also impacted on the lives of the University staff. People are now more aware and conscious of gender issues in the University. The gender sensitive language is being promoted in the University. For instance, new students are no longer called freshmen but fresh students. During employment interviews, gender component of interviewees are now put into consideration. The same principle applies during appointments into headships of Departments and so on. The University now has a female Deputy Vice Chancellor (academic), three female Vice Deans and several female Heads of Departments.

### **Support for female indigent students**

The Scholarship Scheme has helped female indigent students to complete their programmes. Since the inception of the GEP, scholarships have been awarded to 1,526 female undergraduates and 105 female postgraduate students to help them complete their programmes successfully.

### **Support for female staff**

Female staff is also supported with fellowship awards. A total of 25 fellowship awards have been awarded to the female staff of the University to enable them complete their doctoral

programmes and to build their capacities and promote exposure to overseas university communities.

### **Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy for the University**

When the anti-sexual harassment policy is eventually approved, it would help tackle and contribute to reducing sexual harassment in the University thereby making the University a more conducive working and learning environment.

### **EFFECTS OF THE GEP**

The effects of the OAU- Carnegie Gender Equity initiative on the University have been tremendous. Gender Mainstreaming at OAU as part of the OAU-Carnegie GEP has impacted on the University community. It is gladdening to note that since 2003, there has been steady improvement in female composition in staff employment and student enrolment in the University. Even in traditional male faculties like Technology and Agriculture, the number of females is increasing. In decision-making in the University, female participation is also increasing. OAU now has a female Vice Chancellor (academic), 2 female Deans and 3 female Vice Deans of the faculties. Furthermore, there are several female heads of Departments in the University now.

Also, the entire University community is now more gender sensitive; for instance, new students are now being referred to as fresh students instead of freshmen. The sensitization workshops have helped to enlighten the entire students and staff of OAU on gender issues and this has made gender equity more acceptable to the University Community.

Furthermore, the Gender Mainstreaming Programme at OAU has brought about desegregation of data according to sex. This has helped in no small measure to plan programmes and facilities thereby improving the welfare of all members of the University community. It has also helped to easily identify serious gender gaps.

The production and approval of a Gender Policy for the University is a major breakthrough in a patriarchal society like ours. With the Policy in place, it is now easier to approach gender discrimination with a more institutional backing which means that it is easier for women to participate more freely in all aspects of University life. Also, the Policy will facilitate the University's strategic plan of being a gender compliant and efficient university organization.

The GEP has also supported female students, especially indigent ones. It has helped them to complete their programmes. This has reduced the dropout rates of students. Many of the awardees were so poor that they would not have been able to pay tuition fees and feed themselves. Some of these girls were orphans, some were from polygamous homes and some were abandoned by their fathers because their mothers had only girls. The scholarship had therefore meant a life line for these poor girls.

The Fellowship Scheme for staff has helped female academics in training positions to complete their doctoral Programmes. Many of the recipients completed their programmes on time. For those in the sciences they were able to get access to chemicals and facilities, which were lacking in the University. This enabled them to conduct their laboratory analysis and to complete their research work. Also, the Fellowship Scheme afforded them the opportunity to travel out of the country where they were able to have access to such chemicals and facilities. Also, the Fellowship Scheme has helped administrative staff improve their skills and to participate more in decision making. It also exposed the recipient

University administrative staff to foreign university communities and has sharpened their practices for the benefit of the University.

The GEP as an intervention has succeeded in improving the gender situation in the University by making it possible for creating innovative spaces for engaging in gender discussions and analysis such as the Gender Equity Bulletin, Gender Web Forum and Gender Forum on Air as well as the creation of focal points and use of sensitization workshops to approach the problem of gender gaps. This multi-faceted approach has helped the programme to make more meaningful impact.

These findings corroborate Singh (2003) findings that gender equity interventions help create enabling environments for women, change the management structures of universities and enhance the capacity of women in Universities to break through the glass ceiling into top management positions. However, one of the major challenges that emerged from the OAU –Carnegie GEP initiative has been the issue of sustainability. Will OAU be able to sustain the project after the CCNY funding period has come to an end? This remains a grave concern as part of the Gender Centre's forward planning.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it is important to note that admitting women into higher education is not enough to believe that there is gender equality. There is great need to tackle the societal norms and expectations that tend to relegate females to the background. According to Beoku-Betts (1998), although efforts have been made within Africa to improve female enrolment rates in the face of declining investment in education, enrolment rates alone can be misleading indicators of the status of women's education. As Pereira (2007) corroborate Beoku-Betts assertion by arguing that gender disparities at the secondary and tertiary levels can be more appropriately understood through an analysis of educational policies, curricular, academic structures and socio-cultural gender role expectations.

The Gender mainstreaming experience at OAU has shown that the gender situation, which seemed not to have a solution, can be changed given the right atmosphere. It has shown that things can get better with time. It shows that progress can be made but it is very difficult and gradual. This is understandable considering the long history of gender inequality, which has been entrenched in our patriarchal society. Thus, there is great need to sustain the progress made and to strive for more progress. There is also the need for funds, committed staff and concerted efforts by and with all stakeholders. It is strongly believed that with time and continuous striving, OAU will eventually achieve a gender equal and efficient organization where women and men's potentials will be fully harnessed, utilized and/or realized.

However, a lot still need to be done. The journey to gender equity and equality in our universities is a long one considering the hegemonic patriarchal values entrenched in our society which is so resilient to change.

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