

# Gender Inequality in Surveying and Geoinformatics Profession and Environmental Sustainability in Osun State of Nigeria.

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## ABSTRACT

Previous campaigns and goals on the equality of gender in Nigeria have not been attained, and the gender equality and empowerment of women (Goal 3) of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is not likely to be an exception. This paper is aimed at examining equality and empowerment of women in professions in Nigeria, using the surveying and geoinformatics professions in Osun State as a case study. This was with a view of assessing the level of women's participation in surveying and geoinformatics profession and ensuring environmental sustainability of the MDGs in the state. The paper examined the total number of registered and student members of surveying and geoinformatics profession in Osun State of Nigeria. A simple questionnaire was designed to collect data on gender characteristics of the members.

An analogue map of the State was converted to a digital map and then linked with a digital database containing information on the gender of the members of the profession in the state. Spatial analyses carried out on the database are overlay operation, spatial query and statistical analysis to ascertain the veracity of the claim of gender inequality in the profession in the area. The results showed that there is gender inequality within the profession. For instance, women surveyors in private practice in the state accounted for only 1.9% of practitioners and female students that graduated into surveying and geoinformatics professions in the area represent only 2.91% per year. It was concluded that, the number of women surveyors in the area cannot likely ensure environmental sustainability, therefore, the issues of gender equality and environmental sustainability must be genuinely and vigorously pursued, if not, these goals would not be attained Nigeria.

(Keywords: gender equality, MDGs, surveying and geoinformatics profession, environmental sustainability)

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of the equality of gender has been receiving attention of world leaders over the past decades, but the impact of such attention has not been substantially felt by the people in Africa, especially in Nigeria. For instances, the United Nations Declaration of 1945 draws world attention on the equal rights of all people regardless of sex, belief, and color. Additionally, the Beijing Platform of 1995 said that an acceptable standard is equality of gender in all manners of governance and leadership and the gains of the governance and leadership must spread to all irrespective of gender. Equally, in the year 2000, the United Nations Human Settlements and Habitat Policy on Women Campaigns emphasized the needs and roles of women in social, economic, and political spheres. The later stressed that meeting the needs of women is a key to success in these spheres. Notwithstanding all these campaigns and the important roles of women in the society, the denial of women of access to education, good public health and material, as well as exposure of women to harmful traditional practices and preventable diseases among others in Nigeria continues unabated.

There is a growing fear that the Goal 3 (Promote gender equality and empower women) of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which was introduced in 2001 and expected to be attained by 2015 may fail in Nigeria, like the previous campaigns in the country. Ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women in the surveying and geoinformatics professions is a key to ensuring attainment of the environmental sustainability of the millennium development goals.

## Challenges in Environmental Sustainability and Gender Equality

Gender equality and empowerment of women and environmental sustainability appear ambitious tasks that cannot be totally accomplished by 2015, because of some facts that are emerging from various countries on the issue. For instance, the UN (2005) reports that in several developing regions, women are earning smaller wages than men, relegated to unsecured and poorly paid jobs, and are unequally represented in parliamentary seats around the world.

Although many countries had committed themselves to the principle of sustainable development, the progress made so far in this direction is not enough to reverse the loss of the world's environmental resources (UN, 2005). The United Nations recommended that, in order to ensure environmental sustainability, genuine attention should be paid to the plight of the poor who mainly depended on the resources in the environment for sustenance. Also, prevention of ozone layer loss, provision of toilets, and other basic forms of sanitation, increased access to safe water, and reduction in the number of one billion people living in urban slums (UN, 2005) are other indicators of environmental sustainability that should not be handled with levity.

Ulman (2010) said that the government of Indonesia has surrendered all hope of attaining Millennium Development Goals on maternal mortality ratio, combating HIV/AIDS, and reduction of the proportion of the population without access to clean drinking water by 2015 on the basis of financial constraints.

In a review carried out by the UN (2005), it was reported that Sub-Sahara African has not achieve drastic changes in improving quality of life and are at major risk of not accomplishing the MDGs, on Goals 3 and 7. Wikipedia (2010) noted that the daunting issue is to determine whether or not gender equality among others will be accomplished by 2015.

In Nigeria, gender inequality in some professions like surveying is so overwhelming that it could hamper the contribution of women to ensuring environmental sustainability. According to NIS (2004), there are 1,433 people in the three main classes of the profession, namely fellows, full

members, and associate members. Fellows accounted for (7.5%), full members, 36.2% and associate members, 56.3%. Men accounted for 99% of the 1433 members, while 1% are women (NIS, 2004). In 2010, the total number of resident and non-resident surveyors (surveyors in private practice) in Osun State was 103, out of which only three were women. Regarding surveying education, in the institutions of higher learning, female candidates hardly choose surveying and geoinformatics as the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Course of Choice, therefore, enrolment into Departments of Surveying and Geoinformatics in the tertiary institutions and membership in this profession in Nigeria has been dwindling.

In the case of leadership roles within the profession, from 1965-2004, a period of 39 years and out of 14 presidents of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors, no woman in the profession rose to the post of the president of the institution (NIS, 2004). Out of the 44 officers and council members of the NIS in 2004, Surv. (Mrs.) F.K Omatshola was the only woman member in the executive level (NIS). Also, the late Surv. (Mrs.) Adekoya Olayinka was the only woman that ever rose to the post of Surveyor-General of the Federation.

Surveying in Nigeria is 76 years old (1934-2010), and the problems had been ongoing for this period of time, therefore, there is a need to reassess this glaring gender inequality and low level of empowerment of women in the surveying profession and every sphere of human life to ensure adequate contribution by women to the attainment of environmental sustainability by 2015.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to UN (2010), the MDGs are 8 international development goals that 189 countries ratified on September 3, 2001 and out of which 147 countries including Nigeria agreed to attain by 2015. The goals are categorized into 21 quantifiable targets that are measured by 60 indicators, and according to UN, the goals are to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (Goal 1), achieve universal primary education (Goal 2), promote gender equality and empower women (Goal 3), reduce child mortality (Goal 4), improve maternal health (Goal 5), combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (Goal 6) ensure environmental sustainability (Goal 7) and develop

a Global Partnership for Development (Goal 8) (UN, 2010). This paper concentrates on Goals 3 and 7 only.

The promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women involves works on pro-women policy, capacity development, and support of projects for gender equality, and is mainly aimed at eliminating gender disparity in education, wage, employment, women in rule. In line with this idea of MDGs, this paper explores gender inequality and empowerment of women in the surveying and geoinformatics community in Osun State and its implications for women in their contribution to the attainment of the environmental sustainability.

The principles of environmental sustainability have to do with integrating development into country policies and programs; reversing loss of environmental resources, reducing biodiversity loss, reducing the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and achieving significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers (UN, 2010). These concepts are relevant to this study, but this study specifically explores gender inequality in surveying and geoinformatics profession in relation to environmental sustainability in the study area.

Surveyors are people with the art and science of describing all land properties and who have the ability of making measurements to determine positions above, on, or beneath the surface of the earth (Edmark, 2008). Therefore, surveyors have critical roles to play in the attainment of environmental sustainability of the MDGs. Adequate land policy and regulatory framework, adequate land registration, improved land tenure system, transparent land administration system and management, production of spatial data such as plans, aerial photographs and satellite imageries (Benjamin, 2009) by the surveyors are very important in environmental sustainability. The Office of the Surveyor General and Survey Unit in Local Government Areas of Nigeria are the key partners in ensuring environmental sustainability.

Surveyors play roles in ensuring environmental sustainability through their professional functions in support of an efficient land market and effective land-use management (Enemark, 2008). These roles underpin development and innovation in environmental sustainability. Environmental

policies normally include provisions to prevent and control pollution of air, earth, and water as well as provisions for noise and waste treatment. He recommended the use of latest pollution technology in ensuring environmental sustainability of the MDGs, and that the technology could be made operational by providing information of all kinds of plants or activities considered as potential sources of pollution.

Similarly, Enemark (2008) reviews the MDGs and its relevance to geospatial community and he said geospatial community is central and vital to the realization of the goals. He therefore, listed issues such as tenure security, poor land management, and good governance in land administration as key issues to be advocated in the process of reaching the goals.

Surveyors provide relevant geographic information such as maps and databases of the environment, providing secure tenure systems, and Global Reference Systems (GRS) for land valuation, land use management and land development to make decisions better and more reliable. He said the development of the geospatial reference system and spatial data structure (SDI), Geographic Information System (GIS), and future direction of GRS and SDI technology development is the major driving force in changing the face of the spatial information world.

Enemark (2007) presents millennium goals and targets with specific emphasis on the relevance of surveying profession to the goals and targets and said survey can make contributions to issues such as tenure, security, proper land management and good governances in reaching the goals. Preconditions for development which are spelled out in and embedded in the 8 goals and over 60 indicators for alleviation of poverty may be provided by the surveyors (UN-Habitat, 2006). The work shares the ideas of Enemark (2008 and 2007).

In the opinion of UN-Habitat (2006), the rights and conventional cadastral and registration system and structure are not adequate to supply the required security to the people for development. He therefore developed Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM). The model was found effective in providing security over land for development. He recommended the use of the model for land for development. Surveyors in the state will equally

find the model useful in tackling environmental problems.

The researches carried out by Benjamin (2009), Enemark (2007 and 2008), and UN-Habitat (2006) are relevant to the present study. These studies employed a theoretical approach and focused generally on roles of the surveyor in the 8 MDGs, but the present study employs descriptive statistics in its approach and focused on gender equality in surveying and environmental sustainability in a state to ensure a more detailed discussion.

Although the surveying profession allows several groups such as women in surveying to operate within its body, there is a wide gap between men and women in the surveying profession. As is well known, there is usually a difference between policy making and execution in Nigeria. In an attempt to fill this gap, this work examines gender disparity in membership, education, employment and women in leadership in the surveying profession in line with MDGs, because these gaps have to be filled before Goals 3 and 7 can be attained.

In Germany, Dasse (2006) carried out a study on which changes to the curricula do we need to attract women to study surveying? He studied the situation of surveying in German universities and this was aimed at assessing education for women in the universities. It was found that the number of women studying surveying is decreasing. Women asked for changes in the image of the profession, teaching methods, modification of the technical lectures, and higher percentages of female professors among others things. Therefore, she recommended change in the content, teaching process and the culture of education.

Subsequent to this, Greed (2006) carried out another work titled "Women and Surveying Revisited: Two Separate Realities?". The position of women in surveying was examined and the result showed that women in surveying in 1990 accounted for 5% of surveyors in Great Britain and 10% of surveyors in 2004. He concluded that the profession in the UK is facing the problem of recruiting more young women and narrowing down gender gap. This problem is similar to the one facing surveyors in the study area.

In a separate work done by Enermark (2008), he considered the theoretical framework for land administration systems to include environmental

development and good governance and that responsibility is related to environmental sustainability. He concluded that surveying communities has roles to play in building capacity in land administration and responding to the global agenda. Land management underpins distribution and management of land and is usually aimed at delivering an efficient effective use of land in support of environmental sustainability.

Considering the gender inequality in surveying in Nigeria, the profession consists of men and women in the 36 states including the Federal Capital, Abuja. The number of men in the profession is far greater than women. The issue of gender inequality is well pronounced in surveying and geoinformatics education, practices and leadership in Nigeria. This situation negates Goal 3 (ensure gender equality and empower women) and it poses a great question on the contribution of women in surveying and Geoinformatics profession in ensuring environmental sustainability.

## **PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURES**

Survey methods using record inspection and questionnaire were the adopted research methods for this work. Surveys are useful for collecting an analogue map of the study area and demographic data for the analysis of the objects' characteristics. The map was scanned and geo-referenced and exported into AutoCAD Map for digitizing into various layers. The digitized map was imported into ArcView GIS 3.2a for cartographic processing. In the ArcView GIS 3.2a environment, because of the scale of the map, the location of the surveyors were placed on any point on the LGA where the surveyors operate. A digital database was automatically created for all these members and Microsoft database containing other data on the members of the profession was imported into the Arcview GIS 3.2a and the two databases were linked together. The spatial analyses carried out on the database are overlay operation, spatial query and statistical analyses.

Osun State was carved out of the old Oyo State of Nigeria on August 27, 1991. The state is located between longitude  $04^{\circ} 00''\text{E}$  and  $05^{\circ} 05''\text{E}$  and latitude  $07^{\circ} 00''\text{N}$  and  $08^{\circ} 07''\text{N}$ . It covers an approximate area of 14,875 square kilometers. According to 1991 population census, the



population of the area is 2.1 million. The state consists of 30 local government areas and it is one of the states in Nigeria which is steadily growing in terms of population, physical infrastructure, and commercial and industrial activities.

The physical infrastructure in the state which includes roads, water supply, and electricity has been on increase. Administrative, cultural activities and services such as health services, judiciary, educational and communication are not left out. There are seven government tertiary institutions in Osun State and these consist of two Universities, two Polytechnics, one College of Technology, and two Colleges of Education. Apart from these government owned institutions, there are tens of private owned universities and polytechnics in the area.

Apart from the major markets such as the new and old Orisunbare markets, Oja-Oba, Dugbe, Oluode, and Gbajumoh shops in the area, other commercial activities spread all the 30 local government areas in the state. Also, industrial activities which include Osogbo Steel Rolling Mills, Nigeria Machine Tools, and Industrial Development Centre among others are found in the area. Equally, Federal, State and Local Government Estates are located in all the local government areas of the state.

Finally, the population, physical infrastructure and commercial, industrial and educational activities as well as other services are steadily growing, and this could explain the reason behind the large number of residents and non-resident surveyors in the state. Notwithstanding the high number of tertiary institutions in the state, only the College of Technology, Esa-Oke, had been offering surveying and geoinformatics courses, while the Federal Polytechnics, Ede started offering it in 2010.

## RESULTS

The results of the analyses were derived from the geodatabase created. The results for percentage analyses are presented in Figure 1 and Tables 1 to 3. Figure 1 shows the total number of Registered Surveyors in the 30 LGAs of Osun State. From Figure 1, male surveyors accounted for 95% of the surveyors in the LGAs, while females accounted for 5%. Out of the 32 surveyors in private practice residing in the state,

women accounted for less than 1% and out of 69 non-resident surveyors less than 2% are women (Table 1).

Out of the 32 Surveyors in private practice residing in the state, women accounted for less than 1% and out of 69 non-resident surveyors (surveyors in private practice from other states that are partially practicing in the state) less than 2% are women (Table 1).

Finally, gender inequality in surveying profession is depriving women from land management and administration and capacity building to ensure environmental sustainability.

**Table 1: Surveyors in Private Practice.**

	Male	Female
Resident Surveyors	31 (30.10%)	1 (0.97%)
Non-Resident Surveyors	69 (66.99%)	2 (1.94%)
Total	103 (100%)	

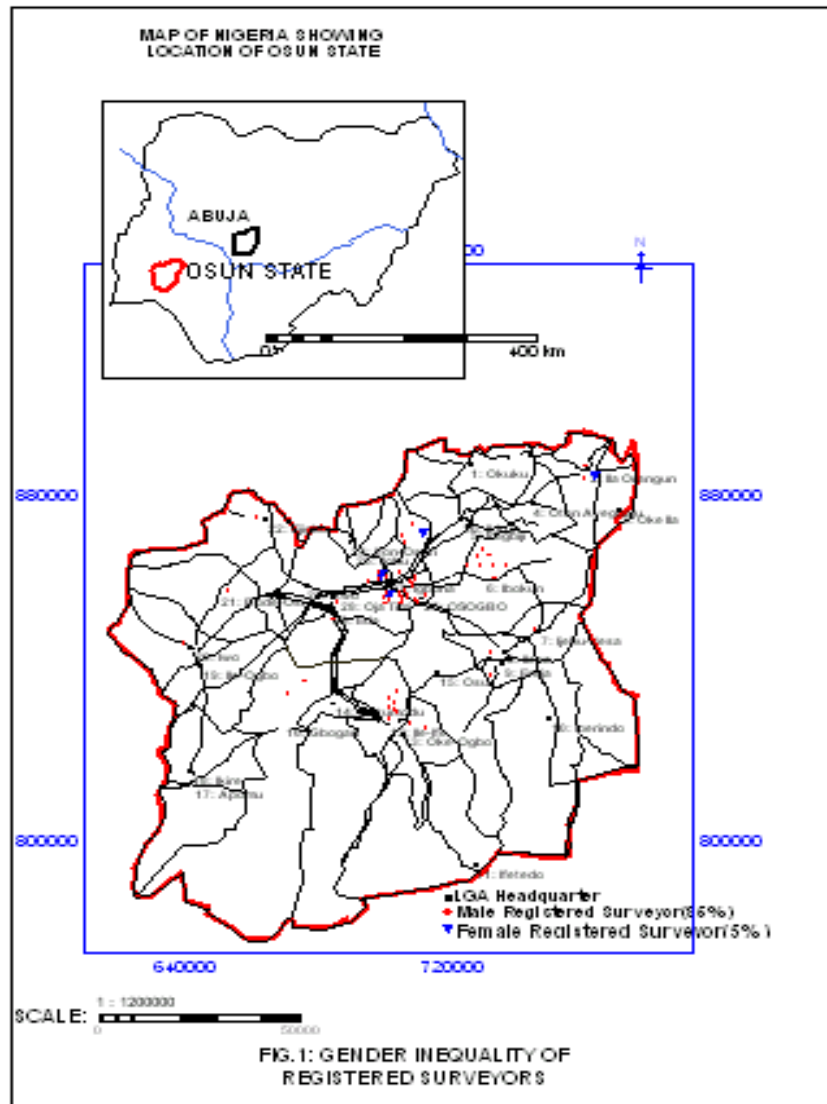
**Source:** Nigerian Institution of Surveyors, Osogbo: 2010

Table 2 shows that 2.91% women surveyors out of 103 surveyors in private practice are operating in the state. That is, the total number of women who own survey firms and practice the profession in the state is dismally low and it appears the women membership is not significant compared with men in surveying profession in the state. Table 2 shows between 60-67.7% are male surveying students, while 32%-40% are female students. From the data, it is revealed that between 1999/2000-2008/2009, a total number of 215 students (males, 174 and females, 41) graduated from the Department of Surveying and Geoinformatics, Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke. Out of this figure males students accounted for 80.9%, while female is 19.1%.

**Table 2: Survey Student Enrolments 2009/2010 Session.**

	Total	Male	Female
Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke	99 (100%)	68 (67.7%)	31 (32.3%)
Federal Polytechnics, Ede	30 (100%)	18 (60%)	12 (40%)

**Source:** Department of Surveying and Geoinformatics, Esa-Oke and Fieldwork: 2010



Source: NIS: 2009

**Table 2:** Survey Student Enrolments 2009/2010 Session.

	Total	Male %	Female %
1999/2000	8	75	25
2000/2001	5	80	20
2002/2003	62	90	10
2003/2004	10	100	0
2004/2005	18	72.2	28.8
2006/2007	9	77.8	23.2
2007/2008	25	88	12
2008/2009	78	74	26
Total	215	174 (80.9%)	41 (19.1%)

Source: Osun State College of technology, Esa-Oke, 3<sup>rd</sup> Convocation Ceremony Handbook: 2009

In considering women in leadership positions within the body of the profession, 0.11% of women surveyors occupy a position in the NIS executive in the state (Table 4).

The total number of women holding position in the executive of Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (NIS) in the state is not only low, but also negligible. The low number of women holding position in NIS in the state increases gender inequality, not only in surveying profession, but also in other professions in Nigeria.

**Table 4:** Surveyor Women in Leadership Positions.

	Male	Female
Chairman	1	0
Vice Chairman	1	0
Treasurer	0	1
Publicity Secretary	1	0
Secretary	1	0
Auditor	1	0
Welfare	1	0
Ex-Officio	2	0
Council Member	1	0
Assistant Secretary	0	0
Total	9	1

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of gender analysis in the surveying and geoinformatics profession considered above show there is gender inequality in many aspects of the profession. The situation is similar to what is happening in the German Universities (Greed, 2006). Compare the 95% male Registered Surveyors with 5% female Registered Surveyors in survey activities in the state, the survey activities of women in surveying profession operating in the state cannot be significantly felt in the 30 local government areas covering about 14,000 square kilometers. The number of women in private practice is also negligible

On the education or (empowerment) of women in surveying and geoinformatics profession, survey student enrolments and survey students who graduated or empowered in surveying and geoinformatics profession in the state (Table 2 and 3) were considered. It appears that females are not willing to enroll in surveying courses; therefore, the number of women empowered in surveying profession for a period of 1999-2009 was also low. The relatively low level of female student intake in the Departments of Surveying and Geoinformatics in the tertiary institutions in the state indicates fewer numbers of women will have opportunity to take up survey job or create survey job in the state.

If these inequalities in the participation of women in all these aspects of the profession are considered, their activities in ensuring environmental sustainability in the state cannot be said to be significant. It appears that males usually prefer survey than females; therefore, male surveyors are likely earning higher income

from surveying than their female counterparts in the state. They are equally, contributing more to environmental sustainability in the area.

## FINDINGS

The measuring indicators considered in the study were grouped into membership of the surveying professional body, education, holding of public offices in surveying, and empowering of women in surveying are adequate and relevant for effective assessment of gender equality in surveying. For instance, Ki-Moon (2010) used the same indicators for promotion of gender equality and empower women goal in the MGDs. On the basis of these analyses it was found out that:

- I. The study area has 103 resident and non-resident surveyors. Females accounted for 0.97% of the Resident Surveyors and 1.94% of the non-Resident Surveyors are in the 30 LGAs of the state. That means, only 0.3% women in private are to ensure environmental sustainability. Even the entire 5% women Registered Surveyors in the state are grossly inadequate to ensure environmental sustainability for the area.
- II. Candidate enrolment in surveying education is just between 30-40% only, and female students that graduated or (empowered in surveying profession) into the profession are 1.9%/year.
- III. In addition, women accounted for 0.11% only of the members of the NIS executive in the state. Those are the women in rule in the profession in the state.
- IV. Finally, there is gender inequality in membership, education, holding of public offices and empowerment in surveying and Geoinformatics in the state.

## IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The implication of the gender inequality and empowerment of women in surveying profession on ensuring environmental sustainability cannot be overemphasized. The gender inequality in surveying and geoinformatics profession as observed by this study and Dasse (2009) is not

allowing adequate participation of women in realizing Goal 7 and this negates the principles of environmental sustainability propagated by 147 countries in 2001. This situation will not allow women to be involved in making adequate land policy and regulatory framework, adequate land registration, production of spatial data such as plans, aerial photographs and satellite imageries among others as enumerated in (Benjamin, 2009), Greed (2006) and Enemark (2008). All these are the key ingredients for integrating development into country policies and programs; reversing loss of environmental resources, reducing biodiversity loss, reducing the proportion of development into country policies and programs; reverseing loss of environmental resources, reducing biodiversity loss; and reducing the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

The Office of the Surveyor General and Survey Units in Local Government Areas in the state which are supposed to be major partners in ensuring environmental sustainability have very few number of women surveyors in employment, therefore, women could not contribute much to the environmental sustainability through these bodies.

The low level of empowerment of women in the profession is directly jeopardizing the millennium development goals on achieving significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although efforts on promotion of gender equality and women empowerment in the surveying and geoinformatics professions are going on in the state, gender inequality and low levels of empowerment of women in the profession are highly evident in the area. The disparities are evident in women capacity building and development, education, employment and women in leadership roles in the profession. Female Nigerians are not likely contributing much to ensuring environmental sustainability in the area of acquisition, production and management of geodata for the stated UN goals. The issue of gender equality and ensuring empowerment of women and environmental sustainability as well as other goals of the MDGs must be genuinely and vigorously pursued, if not, the MDGs would fail like the previous ones in Nigeria

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