



Gender sensitivity in training: NWRI Case Study

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Introduction

In recent times, gender studies have acquired prominence at both national and international fora. Specifically the issue of women, their education, training and their role in national development continue to be focal point at all avenues of discussion. The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985) succinctly declares that, "Education is the basis for the full promotion and improvement of the status of women. It is the basic tool that should be given to women in order to fulfill their role as full members of society." Furthermore, the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing noted the education of women as an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate in decision making in society. Besides, the World Bank in its report regarding the importance of water and sanitation (WSS) project undertaken realized that, women have primary roles in the collection, transport, use, management and the promotion of sanitary practices. Having realized that women are not systematically incorporated in the decision-making bodies, it has resolved to use the WSS projects to provide opportunities to close the gender gap between men and women's roles. All these, put together, reflect an admission of the fact that gender gap in human resources development, whenever they exist, constitute a significant problem.

The fact that gender gaps exist in all facets of human endeavour right through the ages is by no means a new phenomenon. What is new, perhaps, is the awareness or realization of the potential negative effects of such gaps and, therefore, the need to be sensitive to them and find means of bridging them. Rajathi (2002) posits that, even though women have a major role to play in water and sanitation programmes, men, families, communities and institutions generally discriminate against them in the development process. Similarly, Adejokun and Gbuyiro (2002) report that, the woman's place in African traditional setting often prevents planners and implementers of development projects from incorporating women in their activities, including educational opportunities.

This lopsidedness in access to information, knowledge and skills of water resources procurement, processing, treatment and management for sustainable development run counter to the ideals of water and sanitation programmes world-wide, especially against the backdrop of the fact that, women and children suffer most from water related problems or crises.

It is in the light of the above that this study looks at the National Water Resources Institute (NWRI) Kaduna, with regard to how it has reflected this fundamental consideration of gender sensitivity and equality in the execution of its assigned mandate over the years. It is hoped that the result of this study will help the importance of gender consideration to increase women participation and subsequent empowerment in the institute's training programmes.

The National Water Resources Institute was set up to contribute to skill oriented manpower training applied research and provision of technical services in water resources. The main training activities are to train all categories of professional cadre manpower that will execute and operate various water resources project in Nigeria and where possible in other African countries. To this the institute runs on a regular basis a certificate course, a diploma course in civil engineering, higher diploma course and professional postgraduate course in water resources engineering. It also organizes conferences, workshops and short courses in aspect of water resources their exploitation and management for agricultural domestic and industrial use.

Purpose of the Study

The study was embarked on to examine the gender sensitivity status at the NWRI, Kaduna. Furthermore, the specific objectives of the study include:

- To find out the sex enrolment and graduation desegregation at NWRI;
- To ascertain the general level of gender sensitivity amongst the management;
- To find out management's reasons for the admission disposition of the Institution (with respect to gender).

Methodology

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the enrolment trend in NWRI, with respect to gender factor, from 1981–2000?
- How has the management reflected gender sensitivity in the running of the NWRI?
- What are the reasons advanced by management for the discernable gender disposition in the enrolment and graduation statistics of NWRI?

The study gave specific attention to the regular programmes

of NWRI for which it has direct control over enrolment and graduation matters thereby leaving out the short-term courses such as induction courses and workshops whose participants may be enlisted by the sponsors rather than the institution. Consequently, the available enrolment and graduation records of the regular programmes of NWRI were studied to arrive at the percentage enrolment and graduation of male and female students in the programmes. Secondly, the management staff of the Institution provided responses via the Gender Sensitivity Identification Questionnaire fashioned after the Likert-Scale. According to Nworgu (1991) “the construction of this scale entails generating a list of statements about what is being measured and providing a set of graduated response options. Using this set of graduated options” he continued, “an individual is expected to indicate his degree of agreement or disagreement. This response options are weighted and by summing up an individual’s responses to all the statement, a total score is obtained which will help determine that person’s standing on the variable or attribute being measured”. The instrument was subjected to face and field validations in addition to test-retest reliability with high positive correlation coefficient. Using hand-to-hand method of administration and collection, the researcher was able to collect data from the management staff for the study. Mean analysis of the data was undertaken with 2.50, which is the mean of the 4-point Likert-like scale, as the cut-off point for acceptance of responses.

Results and Discussions

Firstly the study sought to establish the gender-related enrolment trend in NWRI between 1981 and 2000. Data collected in this regard are presented in Table 1.

As can be seen from Table 1, the male enrolment and figures are far in excess of the female ones. Whereas the males account for about 92% of the enrolment figures during the period under review, the females at best account for about 8% of the enrolment and graduation statistics of the Institution. This depicts a very serious level of gender imbalance in the enrolment and graduation records of NWRI.

Secondly, the study was concerned with establishing how the management of NWRI has reflected gender consciousness in the running of the Institution. In this direction, it was found that the management of NWRI was not sensitive to gender factor in the conduct of its activities (Table 2). This can be seen in the total absence of gender considerations in the formulation, policy making, recruitment, admission and awareness activities of the Institution which all scored short of the cut-off point of 2.50 on a 4-point Likert-like scale of opinion measurement used for data collection.

Reasons advanced by the management of NWRI for the discernable gender disposition in the enrolment and graduation statistics of the Institution are many. According to Management, too much emphasis on the civil engineering

component of the certificate, national diploma, higher national diploma, etc. has limited the areas women would have benefited in the institute’s training programmes. This scored a mean of 3.83. Other major reasons include, lack of clear-cut admission quota for both sexes, which has a mean score of 3.67; the general low level of female applicants for training in the Institution with a mean rating of 3.46; and the general deficiency in pure science subjects among female applicants, which scored 3.12. Other reasons adduced by management include: lack of incentives for female trainees during and after their programmes; the society’s discouraging belief that water-related occupations are for men rather than females; and that females generally find the programmes of NWRI too abstract for their ambitions (with mean scores of 2.98, 2.69 and 2.58 respectively).

On the other hand, however, the management did not agree that many female entrants drop after enrolment. This item has a mean rating of 1.46, which is below the cut off point of 2.50 hence its rejection by the respondents.

Lesson learnt

1. Equality of access to training is not one of the cardinal objectives of decree establishing the NWRI.
2. NWRI does not take gender factor into account in the recruitment and placement of staff.
3. The management of NWRI over the years, has not been fairly constituted by both sexes.
4. There is no specific admission quota for both sexes.
5. Steps are hardly taken to ensure adequate participation of both sexes in the regular programmes and extension services of the Institution.

Recommendations

1. Based on the lessons learnt above the objectives of NWRI should be revisited with a view to entrenching gender sensitivity. Thus, equality of access, participation and control as well as conscientization of the public is essential in this direction. A percentage of 60 male students to 40 female students are recommended for admission quota. likewise a ratio of 2 males to five females for placement and recruitment of staff.
2. There is need for gender sensitivity in the formulation of human resources development programmes of institute in particular and Nigeria in general with reference to education and training opportunities
3. Special short-term courses targeted at the women folk with a view to ensuring adequate capacity building for women in areas such as community management of water and sanitation points; environmental and health education for women and children; more functional adult literacy and skill acquisition opportunities for women, etc. should be embarked upon by Institute, the government and the organized private sector in order to remedy the devastating consequences of the present undesirable trend.
4. Incentives by way of scholarships, automatic

Table 1: Sex classification of enrolment/graduation in the regular programmes of NWRI (1981 – 2000)

SESSION	ENROLMENT					GRADUATION				
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Male	%	Female	%	Total
1981/82	29	94	2	6	31	25	93	2	7	27
1982/83	43	96	2	4	45	41	95	2	5	43
1983/84	36	90	4	10	40	32	89	4	11	36
1984/85	52	95	3	5	55	50	96	2	4	52
1985/86	46	87	7	13	53	40	87	6	13	46
1986/87	77	95	4	5	81	63	94	4	6	67
1987/88	71	91	7	9	78	64	91	6	9	70
1988/89	57	90	6	10	63	54	90	6	10	60
1989/90	51	88	7	12	58	44	90	5	10	49
1990/91	86	93	6	7	92	80	93	6	7	86
1991/92	71	95	4	5	75	67	94	4	6	71
1992/93	90	93	7	7	97	87	93	7	7	94
1993/94	91	93	7	7	98	80	92	7	8	87
1994/95	81	91	8	9	89	78	91	8	9	86
1995/96	95	93	7	7	102	93	94	6	6	99
1996/97	96	90	8	10	84	73	92	6	8	79
1997/98	67	86	11	14	78	61	95	3	5	64
1998/99	81	90	9	10	90	73	86	12	14	85
1999/2000	100	93	7	7	107	89	93	7	7	96
TOTAL	1,300		116		1,416	1,194		103		1,297

Source: Registry Department, NWRI, Kaduna

Table 2: Gender sensitivity in the management of NWRI

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Equality of access to training is one of the cardinal objectives of decree establishing the NWRI.	1.89	0.12	Rejected
2.	NWRI takes gender factor into account in the recruitment and placement of staff.	1.13	0.09	Rejected
3.	The management of NWRI over the years, has been fairly constituted by both sexes.	1.43	1.04	Rejected
4.	There is specific admission quota for both sexes.	1.08	0.07	Rejected
5.	Steps are always taken to ensure adequate participation of both sexes in the regular programmes and extension services of the Institution	1.37	0.04	Rejected

employment upon graduation, etc. should be provided for women trainees in water-related programmes as a way of inducing female participation in these ventures.

References

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