

**GENDER PARITY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: AN APPRAISAL OF  
HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES STUDENTS, KOGI STATE  
UNIVERSITY, 2010-2019**

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***ABSTRACT***

This study highlights gender parity among the History and International Studies Students of Kogi State University, Anyigba. This research further demystifies aspects of gender disparity. To this extent, it brings to the fore our historical knowledge of gender issues that affect contemporary global history. Study of this kind among History students at Kogi State University has never been carried out before now. The chronological scope covers only 2010-2019. Although 2019 is included, the researcher could not access the 2019 admission list at the time of compiling this result. It will be included in the subsequent analyses. It is however good to note that the admission list for 2019 is inconsequential to what obtains from 2010-2018. A qualitative approach based on the historical method is used in analyzing issues relating to gender studies. This means primary and secondary sources of information are used. The primary source includes oral interviews of some selected students in the Department of History while the secondary source includes written records based on an interdisciplinary approach. Given the information gathered from the students, the result shows active enrolment of female students in the History Department and positive students' attitude to studies as against what was obtained in the previous years. This finding tends to prove wrong; the stereotypic belief is that males are usually considered by parents to acquire formal education than female peers. This will serve as a guide and a reference point to all and sundry who would want to consider this type of research.

**Keywords:** Gender Parity, Students, History Department, Kogi State University.

**INTRODUCTION**

This work explores the trajectories in gender studies among university students in Nigeria. Particularly, the students of the History and International Studies Department of Kogi State University, Anyigba were used as a case study. The point in case is the fact that there is parity in the admission process at Kogi State University than elsewhere. For instance, it's on record that women are not usually given their pride of place to display their God's given potential fully when it comes to the educational circle. This prompted this research as a result of the fact that, on arrival at the university in June 2018, I saw an entirely different thing. The researcher was able to teach across all undergraduate levels and was able to establish that, the female

students were higher in number in terms of admission. And were also faring well, and even doing fairly better than their male folks. Arising from the research, it will be advisable for other universities in Nigeria to always factor aspiring female students into consideration in the selection and admission process to be able to close the gap in research and scholarship. This will in no little way, breed a community of literate parents that will, in turn, affect the generality of the Nigerian society, Africa, and the world at large. When they are given a leveled playing ground, the sky could be their limit. More so, this will help to demystify the mystery behind inequality. And in addition, will shut the mouth of Feminists and all Critics questioning the domineering power of the male folks in society.

### **WHAT IS GENDER?**

Gender means somebody's sex. Sex refers to the biological features to which gender is analogous<sup>1</sup>. It is the state of being male or female<sup>2</sup>. Anthropologists use gender to distinguish between cultural and biological categories.<sup>3</sup>. Gender is associated with the male or female sex when considered with a particular reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones.<sup>4</sup>In most cases, gender is associated with inherent contradictions of the domineering tendency of the men folk based on their masculinity and strength. Categorization of the function of sexes has over time been misunderstood and the use of the concept is often abused and misinterpreted. This has generated biases and discrimination among individuals or groups of different sexes in contemporary societies hence; it has become a subject of global historical discourse and debate due to its scholarship appeal. The definition of sexual functions and roles based on discriminatory tendencies has from the time past and in recent times generated sex consciousness leading to the redefining of sex roles, functions, and inclusions in body politics, socio-cultural activities, economic activities, education, and all spheres of human endeavors and careers. Walker Alice,<sup>5</sup> Chinua Achebe,<sup>6</sup> Criado Perez Caroline,<sup>7</sup> Millett Kate<sup>8</sup> and a host of others have alluded to discrimination against women in one way or the other. The question is how did this come about? As rhetorical as this question is, it is satiric to ignore it.

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<sup>1</sup> Encarta English Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary

<sup>3</sup> Encarta English Dictionary

<sup>4</sup> Friedan, Betty. 1963, *Feminine Mystique*. W.W. Norton. 1-239

<sup>5</sup> Walker, Alice, 1992. *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. New York. Washington Square Press.1-286, *The Colour of Purple*, 1982. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

<sup>6</sup> Chinua, Achebe, 1958. *Things Fall Apart*. William Heinemann Ltd

<sup>7</sup> Criado-Perez, Caroline. 2019. *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*. Abrams Press

<sup>8</sup> Millett, Kate, 1970. *Sexual Politics*. Doubleday

## **THE ORIGIN OF GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS**

Although gender studies and feminist movements are widely applied in more recent times, this work tends to bring out history from the beginning. The historiography of gender history and awareness can be categorized into protofeminism and modern feminism or post-feminism. Proto simply refers to the earlier movements before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> Modernity means in recent times or the recent past.<sup>10</sup> Modern Western Feminist history is split into: First-wave, Second wave, Third-wave, and Fourth-wave. First-wave era is described as the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This was the period where some women activists emphasized the need to overturn or address the legal inequalities of women that have to do with women's suffrage.<sup>11</sup>

The Second-wave alludes to the 1960s-1980s. This was when there was a broad debate on cultural inequalities, gender norms, and the role of women in society.<sup>12</sup> The Third-wave was during the 1990s-2000s. In this period, women activists majored in diverse strains of feminist activities as a continuation of the Second-wave and as a response to its perceived failures.<sup>13</sup> The fourth wave is classified within the past 13 years (2010-present).<sup>14</sup> In all, feminism has come to stay on the academic historical calendar and will continue to be relevant as a field of historiography and as a struggle toward gender equality.

## **GENDER PARITY AND DISPARITY**

Gender parity means gender equality. It's all about seeking equity and justice by women from among the male folk. It tries to address the freedom gap that exists in our societies. Inequality is a social and patriarchal construct that the women folk are fighting against. This is because this affects their individual lives and experiences.

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<sup>9</sup> Walters, Margaret. 2005. *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. Kinnaird, Joan. 1983. *Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Key Women Thinkers*. Pantheon Book. 1-29

<sup>10</sup> See Allen, Ann Taylor. 1999. Feminism, Social Science, and the Meaning of Modernity: The Debate on the Origin of Family in Europe and the United States, 1860-1914. *The American Historical Review*. 104 (4). 265-278

<sup>11</sup> Botting, Eileen Hunt and Sarah, L. 2006. Drawing the Line of Equality: Hannah Mather Crocker on Women's Rights. *The American Political Science Review*. 100 (2) 265-278

<sup>12</sup> Nicholson, Linda; McCann, Carole; and Seung-Kyung. Eds. 2010. *Feminism in Waves. Useful Metaphor or Not?* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.) New York. Routledge. 49-55

<sup>13</sup> Walker, Rebecca. 1992. Becoming the Third-wave. *MS*. New York: Liberty Media for Women. 39-41

<sup>14</sup> Cott, Nancy F. 1989. What's in Name? The Limits of Social Feminism; Or, Expanding the Vocabulary of Women's History. *Journal of American History*.

(74) 809-829

This paper uses the parity formula to measure the parity of admission among the male and female History and International Students of Kogi State University now (Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba) between the periods of 2010 to 2019. It is not the index of UNESCO but that of the researcher carried out manually using the UNESCO model. In this case, as represented here, when Gender Parity Index (GPI) is close to one (1), it can be said such a country is nearer to achieving equality of women to men. If it is equal to one (1), it means there is equality. But if it is greater than one (1), it means it favours the female folk. By so doing, it goes to mean if less than one (1), the admission does not favour women in Kogi State University among the females and males of History and International Studies within the period of study.

This study uses the parity theory of gender to analyse the rate of male and female enrolment in school as applicable to the Department of History and International Studies Students of Kogi State University, Anyigba. The phobia of studying history as a course by student is gradually waning due to widespread knowledge and information about the subject matter globally. There is improvement in the interest of people which promotes an attitudinal paradigm shift in choosing history and related disciplines for advanced studies and research. Given this development, in the nearest future, the equation will be balanced. History will see a resurgence like other sciences in the development of Nigeria especially because of the recent welcome back of history to both primary and secondary school curricula.

### **THE STUDY OF GENDER AMONG HISTORY STUDENTS OF KOGI STATE UNIVERSITY, ANYIGBA**

In 2010, the total number of students admitted to History and International Studies Department was sixty-nine (69). The ratio stood at forty-four (44) for males and twenty-five (25) for the female<sup>15</sup>. This shows GPI is less than one (<1). Males are more in number. In 2011, the total number admitted was 191. Females were ninety-four (94) while males were ninety-seven (97)<sup>16</sup>. Still shows GPI is <1 meaning males are more in number. In 2012 the total number was 153. Females stood at eighty-nine (89) while males stood at sixty-four<sup>17</sup>. GPI is >1. In 2013, the total was

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<sup>15</sup> Comprehensive Admission List for the 2009/2010 Academic Session, *Internal Memo, Office of the Registrar, Academic Office, to the H.O.D., History, and International Studies, Ref: KSU/ACAD/MAT/10*

<sup>16</sup> Comprehensive Admission List for the 2010/2011 Academic Session, *Internal Memo, Office of the Registrar, Academic Office, to the H.O.D., History, and International Studies, Ref: KSU/ACAD/MAT/11*

<sup>17</sup> Comprehensive Admission List for the 2011/2012 Academic Session, *Internal Memo, Office of the Registrar, Academic Office, to the H.O.D., History, and International Studies, Ref: KSU/ACAD/MAT/12*

218. Males stood at ninety-eight while females stood at 120<sup>18</sup>. GPI was >1. In 2014 total number of admitted was 119. Females stood at fifty-seven while the males stood at sixty-two<sup>19</sup>. GPI is less than one (<1). In 2015, the total was 105. Males were fifty-nine while the females were forty-six<sup>20</sup>. GPI is less than one. In 2016 the total number was 114. Males were forty while the females were seventy-four<sup>21</sup>. GPI is >1. In 2017 the total was 116. Females were fifty-two while males were sixty-four<sup>22</sup>. GPI was >1. In 2018, the total number of admitted students was 176. Female ninety while the males were eighty-six<sup>23</sup>. GPI was >1. In view of the above comparison, the average admission into History and International Studies Department when gender sensitivity is factored into consideration within the period of study 2010-2018 is around 1261. The total for Females within the period is 647 while the total for males stood at 614. Although we can say GPI is greater than one, there is a close gap in admission. This stands to debunk the ruse that the girl child is denied quality education and opportunities as some would have us believe. Admission into the History Department unlike what was obtained before is gradually shrinking away stereotypes about the discipline.

The recent research carried out among students of History and International Studies also shows that the Kogi State University Management considers merit in admission rather than being gender biased. Even though there are more females admitted, it is not based on biases. Emmanuel Dakwo Joy<sup>24</sup>, Oluberu Deborah<sup>25</sup>, Olorunnipa Omowumi Alice<sup>26</sup>, Domozu Gloria<sup>27</sup> among others corroborated this position but did not deny the fact that females have the upper hand. In the view of Shaibu Khadijat, by ratio women are more in a country than men. As such, the ratio of women that are more in the admission process is normal<sup>28</sup>. Alemeru Gloria Abiodun<sup>29</sup> is of the same opinion. David Ojotule

*Office, to the H.O.D., History, and International Studies, Ref: KSU/ACAD/MAT/15, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 and 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015*

<sup>21</sup> Ikani Achimugu, Matriculation Numbers for the 2015/2016 Academic 100 Level Students, *Internal Memo, Office of the Registrar, Academic Office, to the H.O.D., History and International Studies, Ref: KSU/ACAD/MAT/Vol. 1/16, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2016*

<sup>22</sup> C.J. Itodo, Matriculation Numbers for 100 and 200 Level Students for the

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<sup>18</sup> Comprehensive Admission List for the 2012/2013 Academic Session, *Internal Memo, Office of the Registrar, Academic Office, to the H.O.D., History, and International Studies, Ref: KSU/ACAD/MAT/13*

<sup>19</sup> Matriculation Numbers for the 2014/2015 Academic Session, *Internal Memo, Office of the Registrar, Academic Office, to the H.O.D., History, and International Studies, Ref: KSU/ACAD/MAT/14*

<sup>20</sup> C.J. Itodo, Matriculation Numbers for 100 Level and Direct Entry Students of the 2014/2015 Academic Session/ Comprehensive Matriculation Number for

<sup>21</sup> /2015 Academic Session, *Internal Memo, Office of the Registrar, Academic*

2016/2017 Academic Session, *Internal Memo, Office of the Registrar, Academic Office, to the H.O.D., History and International Studies, Ref: KSU/ACAD/MAT/1/17*, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2018

<sup>23</sup> C.J. Itodo, Updated Matriculation List for the 2017/2018 Academic Session, *Internal Memo, Office of the Registrar, Academic Office, to the H.O.D., History and International Studies, Ref: KSU/ACAD/MAT/1/18*, 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 <sup>24</sup> Interview with Emmanuel Dakwo Joy, 24, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Interview Oluberu Deborah, 22, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Interview Olorunnipa Omowumi Alice, 20, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Miss Domozu Gloria, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019, 23, 10am to 12 pm

<sup>28</sup> Interview Shaibu Khadijat, 21, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

Mercy<sup>2223</sup> states that the reason was due to male students' underperformance in Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination (J.A.M.B.) and Post Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME).

According to Idakwoji Favour Iko-Ojo <sup>24</sup>, the reason could be that the number of females that applied for admission was more in number than that of their male counterparts. In the view of Meriga Elijah E.,<sup>25</sup> in 2016/2017 academic session 150 students were admitted but three left due to reasons best known to them. Out of the remaining 147, 105 are females while only 42 are males. He shares a similar opinion with others who see this from the light of the large population of females across the globe. More so, due to gender education and enlightenment, females have now seen the importance of being educated in society. To this extent, he did not see the University as gender sensitive because females naturally dominate every scene in society due to their population. This is contrary to the view of Amana Ufeli Hope<sup>26</sup> who attributes gender sensitivity to the University. She stated the ratio to be 10.4% in her class in favor of the females and this would not be out of place for other

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<sup>22</sup> Interview Alemeu Gloria Abiodun, 23.

<sup>23</sup> Interview Mercy Ojotule David, 21, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Interview Favour Idakwoji Iko-Ojo, 20, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Interview Elijah Meriga E., 24, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Interview Hope Amana Ufeli, 21, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

departments in the University. Mr. Ayuba Danjumah<sup>27</sup> inferred the ratio to be 70% to 30% in favor of females where females always outnumbered the males. Osheidu Bumi Nelson sees the ratio as 65% to 35%<sup>28</sup>. No matter how we view these analyses, one undeniable fact is that females are competing favorably with males.

### **LIGHT AND LESSONS**

The light drawn from the analyses above although some argue that the school is not gender sensitive, there is still parity in admission based on merit as a result of Post Jamb and UTME aptitude tests or examinations. More so, gender parity in admission is necessary given the large population of females than their male counterparts. It will, therefore, be a good omen if this stand continues. The lesson is that if we cannot improve our society, let's leave it the way it is or allow the natural phenomenon to play out itself. By so doing, justice will prevail. More rooms should also be provided for female participation. The current situation should not be mistaken for gender inequality against male students. If this is done, the female students will develop into good motherhood for reproductive advantage to better their society. It's also a clarion call to other institutions that do not grant equal opportunity to both genders to wake up. This will help to revamp our societies from gender decadence.

### **CONCLUSION**

Given the information gathered from the students, the department, and the Kogi State University internal memo within the period of study, the research submits that there was an active enrolment of female students in the History and International Studies Department and also, positive attitude to studies as against what obtained in the previous years. The finding no doubt, has brought to the fore, the level of enrolment of the female students and as well, shows they are becoming more competitive than what was obtained before the present and are more eager to learn. They rarely engage in cult cases apart from promiscuity and other lesser offences. Suffice it to say, therefore, in no time, there will be more commotion of literate women than men. This is because women are beginning to see it as a challenge, and are fast discovering and rediscovering themselves and their innate and inordinate capabilities as more fitted to survive in this crooked world rather than being regarded as weaklings and sidelined in this realm of the survival of the fittest.

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<sup>27</sup> Interview Momoh Ayuba Danjumah, 23, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Interview Nelson Osheidu Bumi, 22, 400 Level History and International Studies Student, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.