

# DOES POVERTY DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN GENDERS? AN EXAMINATION OF HOUSEHOLD POVERTY IN NIGER STATE

By

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## Abstract

*Gender inequality has been acknowledged as an important factor that is affecting poverty in the world both at the micro and macro level. Many countries around the world have been battling with the menace of poverty for over decades with no serious achievement on its reduction despite some efforts geared toward it under Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This paper examines the impact of gender equality on household's poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. It focuses on the micro level of gender equality and how it reduces the level of household's poverty in Niger State. The study employs a set of household data generated from the administration of structured questionnaires to 479 households in Niger State. This paper investigates the impact of gender equality on household's poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria using Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software and Structural Equation Model (SEM) as method of analysis. The results obtained shows evidence of gender inequality which has significantly affects the living standard of the households of women in the study area. Consequently, fulfilling a priori expectation that gender inequality has negative impact on household's poverty reduction. The study suggests policy measures that would address household's poverty reduction and gender inequality especially through girl-child education and women empowerment programmes in Niger State in particular and Nigeria in general.*

**Key Words: Gender Equality; Households; Inequality, Poverty Reduction**

**JEL Classification: J14, J18**

## 1. Introduction

The progress made over the years in improving the social and economic status of women and girls notwithstanding, the gender situation worldwide is still characterized by structural inequality and anachronisms. The international agreements negotiated over the last decade at the United Nation (UN) level oblige the governments of UN members to eliminate political, legal, and social discrimination against women in all spheres of society (Rodenberg 2004).

Nigeria is endowed with huge minerals and natural resources, but the citizens are hungry and poor in the midst of abundance. The poverty trend in Nigeria can be traced back to the year of independence where about 15 percent of the population lived below poverty line. In 1980, with an estimated population of 64.6 million in Nigeria, the poverty level rose to 28.1 percent and

subsequently rises to 69.1 percent in the year 2010. The percentage rate represents, in absolute term 112.4 million people from an estimated population of about 160 million people. It again rose to 70 per cent in the year 2011 and 2012 and slightly drop to 67 per cent in 2013 (Ijaiya, Oni, Ikupolati, Saliu, and Ochepea 2018).

In Nigeria, using institutional indicators, such as percentage of university enrolment by gender, percentage of teaching staff in tertiary schools by gender, percentage of seats held in National Assembly by gender, percentage of high ranking government administrators by gender, percentage of Federal Ministry, Department and Agencies (MDAs) staff on grade level 15 – 17 by gender and percentage of judges in courts by gender also depicts the extent of inequality in Nigeria.

Niger State is part of North central region of Nigeria, and its poverty rate as at 2014 stood at 61.20 percent. The causes of poverty in the State can be attributed to high level of adult illiteracy, gender inequality, lack of access to basic needs, such as, food, shelter, drinkable water, health, sanitation, epileptic electric power supply among others (NBS, 2014; UN 2015). The effects of increase in the rate of poverty in the state can lead to poor nutrition and physical health problems, gender inequality which will eventually lead to malnutrition and starvation, infectious disease, mental illness and drug dependence related crime and violence, as well as increase in the rate of “Almangiri” menace (Ijaiya et al. 2016).

Some of the factors that determined poverty and inequality (income and gender disparities) in Nigeria include among others; an unprecedented decline in both economic growth and social development caused by the huge fall in the price of crude oil in the international market [(the key foreign exchange earner of the nation) from US\$109 per barrel in 2008 to US\$37 per barrel in 2015], exchange rate volatility that led to excessive devaluation of the nation’s currency (Naira) from N125.81 per US\$ in 2008 to N192.44 per US\$ in 2015 at official rate, increase in inflation rate from 9 per cent in 2014 to 18.5 per cent in 2016, macroeconomic policy inconsistency, instability and policy reversals, budget contraction, public sector dominance in production of goods and services, weak institutional capacity for economic policy management and coordination, lack of effective coordination among the three tiers of government, increase in security challenges in the North East and the Niger Delta that limited revenues, investment and output in both the real and oil sectors, a huge external debt overhand, deterioration in the state of infrastructural facilities (most especially electricity power supply), bad governance, pervasive rent seeking and corruption ( AfDB, 2016).

Despite the numerous policy and strategy put in place by the Nigeria government since independent in order to reduce the poverty rate in the country, evidence shows that the rate of poverty is still on the increase (NBS, 2014; Balogun, Yusuf, Omonana & Okoruwa, 2011; Balogun, 2011; Ojimba, 2012; Zaccheaus & Nwokoma, 2012; Ijaiya, Dayang & Norimah, 2016). As indicated in Table 1, there is no aspect of the institutional indicators that did not show that women in Nigeria were marginalised over the years. For instance, in 2015, male university enrolment rate was 55.3 percent to female 44.7 percent, male in the nation’s Senate in the

National Assembly was 91.7 percent to female 8.3 percent and male judges in the nation's courts was 73.8 percent to female 26.8 percent (Ijaiya et al. 2018).

Table 1: Gender Inequality in Nigeria

Year	University Enrolment (%)		Teaching Staff in Tertiary Schools (%)		Seats held in the National Assembly (%)				High Ranking Government Administrators (%)				Federal MDAs Staff on Grade Level 15 – 17 (%)		Judges in Courts (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Senate		House of Rep.		Governors		Deputy Governors		Male	Female	Male	Female
2010	58.9	41.1	74.6	25.4	-	-	-	-	100	0	86.1	13.9	-	-	74.3	25.7
2011	57.3	42.7	75.6	24.4	92.7	7.3	93.9	6.1	100	0	91.7	8.3	75.4	24.6	73.5	26.5
2012	57.4	42.6	74.4	25.6	-	-	-	-	100	0	97.2	2.8	75.2	24.8	74.5	25.5
2013	56.1	43.9	74.5	25.5	-	-	-	-	100	0	94.4	5.6	74.0	26.0	73.7	26.3
2014	56.0	44.0	75.1	24.9	-	-	-	-	100	0	97.2	2.8	72.5	27.5	74.7	25.3
2015	55.3	44.7	73.7	26.3	91.7	8.3	92.8	7.2	100	0	94.4	5.6	72.1	27.9	73.8	26.2

Source: NBS, (2015)

Recently, researchers and policymakers have been concerned with understanding why the Africa's high growth rates have had limited impact on poverty reduction. Measures of the growth elasticity of poverty suggest that the effect is even lower in countries where inequality is high. However, most of these measures consider inequality along the income dimension. At the same time, there is another type of inequality that deserves attention: That is the inequality between men and women, which continues to be substantial in many African countries. (ADR 2015). Inequality between men and women is one of the most crucial disparities in many societies even in modern age—particularly in the less developed countries, Nigeria inclusive. Women tend in general to fare quite badly in relative terms compared with men, even within the same families.

Achieving equality between men and women has both intrinsic and instrumental significance. Intrinsically, women, like men, have a right to justice in all societies. Instrumentally, achieving gender equality would have numerous economic and social benefits for women, their children and for society as a whole. Denying 50 percent of Africa's population from their deserved justice and the opportunities to contribute to economic and socioeconomic development; impact negatively on the continent as a whole. Despite the numerous merits of achieving a gender equal society, men and women are far from being equal in Africa. Therefore, this paper examines the impact of gender equality on household's poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: section two provides the literature review of poverty and gender inequality, section three provides methodology and data source, section

four present and interpret the result, while conclusion and policy implication is provided in the last section.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### *Gender Inequality*

Gender inequality refers to a situation where there is no equal treatment of men and women. This unequal treatment can be partially or wholly on basis of the gender. Gender inequality arises mainly due to the differences in socially constructed roles in genders. This difference, between men and women; is generally as regards to political, social, economic or any other problem that is perceived to exist as a result of such differences (Women, 2017). Gender inequality is a universal problem. Inequality in treatment of men and women is one of the most crucial disparities in many societies. Differential treatment of women is reflected in matters such as education and opportunity to development, availability of health care facilities, nutrition, property rights, etc. The significance of this issue can be understood by the fact that the United Nations has set promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women as one of its Millennium Development goals. Empowerment and equality are important human rights on their own. The record-class status of women carries a social cost, not only for women, but also for men, and society in general. Gender inequality exists in most countries of the world; however, the problem is more acute in some countries as compared to others. To be more specific, greater gender inequality has been observed in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. According to Sen (2001) "Gender inequality is not one homogeneous phenomenon, but a collection of disparate and interlinked problems".

The term "gender" refers to economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female (UN-Habitat (2003). In almost all societies, women and men differ in their activities and undertakings, regarding access to and control over resources, and participating in decision-making. Ikechukwu (2013) identified gender as a social institution, cultural construct and power tool. There is a danger to confuse "gender" with "women". Soetan (2003) posited that the concept of gender is not limited to the male or female species, but goes further to assess the relations between them as are constantly being renegotiated in the context of changing political, economic, social and cultural environments at the local, national and supra national levels. Gender analysis entails having knowledge of both women and men's roles and responsibilities, as it is the comparative analysis between these that will highlight the gender inequalities of any society. Gender inequality does not imply that all women are worse off than all men. Rather, gender (being male or female) is an important social division characterized by inequality. Being a woman or a man influences people's perspectives and their social expectations.

Gender equality according to the Canada –Ukraine Gender Fund (2004) means that women and men enjoy the same status and have equal opportunities for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social, and cultural development, and to benefit from the results. The concept of gender equality acknowledges that different treatment of women and men sometimes required to achieve sameness of results, because of different life conditions or to compensate for past discrimination. UN-Habitat (2003) states that gender analysis must take into consideration and address differentials in control over and access to land and other resources, inequalities in gender participation and roles in decision-making forums as well as inequalities in representation concerning urban planning and development. According to Adeniran (2006), sustainability can only be achieved when the gender manipulations and ecosystem relationships within the local environment are identified. The

collection of gender-differentiated information on the social, environmental, technical and economic aspects of development will render planning for development more efficient and egalitarian, two points which are essential for sustainability. Among the benefits which derive from integrating gender issues include enhanced social and economic impact of development and more efficient use of resources.

The concept of equality emphasized that both men and women enjoy equal opportunities. Gender equity is a process or strategy for achieving gender equality. The United Nations regards gender equality as a human right; empowering women is an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty. Gender equality does not imply that women and men are the same, but that they have equal value and should be accorded equal treatment (Igbuzor, 2010)

### **Areas of Gender Inequality in Nigeria**

According to Okpe (2015), Gender Inequality can be seen in the following areas:

(1) Labor and Employment –Women do not generally earn the same wages as men for the same work especially casual or unorganized labour which is where most women are employed. Those in public service are discriminated against in the area of maternity, sexual harassment and employment practices.

(2) Access to Finances and Credit –Most banks and financial homes do not give loans to women and most times women have to be guaranteed by men before they can access credit for economic activities. This results in more women becoming poorer, even those who are able to do some business for their economic enhancement.

(3) Harmful Traditional Practices –Traditional practices like female genital mutilation, widowhood practices, male preference, and domestic violence lend weight to discrimination against women. The heavy workload of women within the household and lack of house decision making powers contribute to deprive women of their rights and life. Information on family planning where they exist sometimes produces harmful side effects. Male preference leads to abuse and low self-esteem for the female child even from birth and thus she does not develop her full potentials to enable her contribute effectively to the nation.

(4) Violence against Women –Women are still victims of rape, sexual assault/harassment and battery, widowhood practices, forced labor, trafficking, incest, and other forms of gender assaults and abuses. Domestic violence is still regarded as a private affair requiring no legal or official intervention.

(5) Access to Justice –Women are politically, economically, socially, culturally, educationally, and legally disadvantaged. They cannot take advantage of facilities and opportunities available to them to achieve and enforce their human rights. They are mostly ignorant of their fundamental rights and freedoms. In many police stations, women are still not allowed to take people on bail (Okpe, 2015).

### **Dangers of Gender Inequality**

Some of the consequences of gender inequality related to industrial development can be clustered into economic, environmental and social focus areas, and include:

Economic: Low levels of women participating in the manufacturing sector. Women still account for only 24% of jobs in manufacturing and are more likely than men to access low-paid, low productivity and vulnerable jobs with no basic rights, social protection nor voice (UNDESA 2010).

Women produce between 60 and 80 percent of food in most developing countries and are responsible for half of the world's food production (UNIDO 2012). According to UNDESA

statistics, women account for two thirds of the world's 774 million illiterate adults, and just over one-quarter of scientific researchers (UNDESA, 2010). There is still a significant gender gap between boys and girls as we move from primary to secondary and tertiary education. The economic repercussions of these inequalities are far reaching, given the clear evidence that educated women invest more in their children and contribute to the welfare of the next generation.

Environmental: Low levels of access to efficient resources, technologies and operating practices exclude women, girls, men and boys from fully participating in economic growth and sustainable development.

Lack of energy access and low energy efficiency is one of the most pressing of all the global challenges and a major factor in sustaining gender inequality. One person in five lacks access to modern energy services and twice that number, three billion people, rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating. In today's economy, this is inequitable and a major barrier to eradicating poverty and gender equality. (UNIDO, 2012).

### ***Gender-Related Development Index (GDI)***

According to Sen (2009) economic development needs to be defined in terms of 'entitlement' and 'capability'. By entitlement we mean a set of alternative commodity bundles that an individual can command through the totality of rights and obligations that one faces. Thus, entitlement generates 'capabilities' that represent a person's freedom to achieve various functioning combinations. In other words, capability is essentially one type of freedom. And by economic development Sen suggests capability expansion or expansion of freedoms. For instance, poverty is a failure to achieve certain minimum capabilities. Lack of freedoms like hunger, malnutrition, poverty, poor health, economic insecurity, poor schooling and health care among others generating inequalities. Despite remarkable growth, a vast section of population of the contemporary society is deprived of basic freedoms. One of such lack of freedom is gender bias.

Though Human Development Index (HDI) incorporates some aspects of human development, inequalities in opportunities between men and women are missed out in HDI. Gender bias in health care, mortality rates of women are high compared to men. It is the adverse sex ratio as observed in Asia and North Africa which is attributed to 'missing women' concept (UNDP 2018).

With the advancement of economic progress as well as social progress, such clear cut bias against women should have declined. Unfortunately, such trend is on the rise. Capability deprivation results in gender inequality. Through sex-selective abortion, female fetuses are eliminated so that no female child is born. In 1998, as a result, for the world as a whole, shortfall of women relative to men exceeded 100 million. This is called 'missing women'. (Allyse, *et al.* 2015). According to World Development Report (2012), the figure is 3.9 million in low income countries. Substantive freedoms that a male member enjoys are denied to female member. For example, women eat less and get little medical attention. Educational gender gap is also perceptible. Women have no or little power or authority over any household decision-making process. Outside the home, women are politically marginalised. All these reflect gender disparity. To measure the extent of this disparity or inequality, UNDP (1995) took a new initiative to construct an index called 'gender-related development index' (GDI). Also to

measure the extent of empowerment of women, the UNDP devised 'gender empowerment index' (GEI) (1995). The HDI measure achievements in human development in terms of three indicators, but ignores differences between men and women. Gender differentials in achievement are studied with the index called GDI. Like the HDI, GDI measures achievements in the same three dimensions and variables in respect of men and women. These three dimensions are:

- (i) A long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth;
- (ii) Knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio; and
- (iii) Estimated earned income measured by US \$.

### ***Poverty: Concepts, Causes and Consequences***

Poverty is a multidimensional in nature; scholars have described it in different ways. There is no precise agreement on the definition of poverty. Depending on the societies and changes over time, the perceptions, contexts, meanings and usages may differ among the observers and researchers. For example, World Bank (2006) defined poverty as a condition of having insufficient resources or income. In its most extreme form, poverty is a lack of basic needs, such as adequate and nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water, and health services. According to United Nations (2009), "fundamentally, poverty is the inability of getting choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation". Related to the definition of poverty are the causes and consequences of poverty. Maldonado (2004) classified the causes of poverty into two, (i) low productivity of available household resources and (ii) the high income and consumption volatility experienced by poor households. The first one is associated to limited endowments (that is, human capital, technology and knowledge, social capital and physical capital), not well-defined property rights, and precarious access to markets (e.g., markets for goods and services, financial services, labor markets, and land markets). These constraints make it difficult for poor households to take fuller advantage of their productive opportunities. The second one is the instability of income and consumption results from the incidence of shocks and the lack of mechanisms to anticipate and cope with adverse occurrences. The inability of households to deal efficiently with shocks may lead to loss of productive assets and, thereby, reduce income-generating opportunities. To solve this problem, households may choose strategies that generate lower, but more stable returns in the process trap into poverty. Consequently, poverty involves a complex array of risk factors that adversely affect the population in a multitude of ways. It has a wide ranging and often devastating effects. World Bank (2006) highlighted five major consequences of poverty. These are: (i) malnutrition and stunted growth, (ii) Infectious disease and exposure to the element, (iii) mental illness and drug dependence, (iv) crime and violence and lastly (v) long-term effect.

### 3. Methodology and Data Source

This study was conducted in Niger State of Nigeria. Niger State is one of the State in the Northern part of Nigeria, specifically, North Central Region. The State is located in an area of about 150 Kilometer from Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria and on Latitude 8022'N and 11030'N and Longitude 3030'N and 7020'E. Data was collected through structured questionnaire administered among the heads of households in Niger State between the month of February 2019 and May 2019. A multistage sample design was used to collect cross sectional data from households in the study area. Specifically, a stratified sampling method and a random sampling were used in selecting the respondents. The first stage was to identify the sample areas which comprise 25 local government areas, which was divided into 3 senatorial districts that are Niger East, Niger North and Niger South. Niger East is divided into 9 local government areas, these include: Bosso LGA, Chanchaga LGA, Paikoro LGA, Suleja LGA, Shiroro LGA, Munya LGA, Rafi LGA, Tafa LGA, and Gurara LGA; Niger North is divided into 8 local government areas, it includes the following: Agwara LGA, Borgu LGA, Wushishi LGA, Magama LGA, Rijau LGA, Mashegu LGA, Kotangora LGA, and Mariga LGA, while Niger South is also divided into 8 and it includes the following: Agaie LGA, Lapai LGA, Kactha LGA, Bida LGA, Gbako LGA, Edati LGA, Lavun LGA and Mokwa LGA. In the state, two local government areas were randomly selected from each of the senatorial districts based on the proximity, ecological, socio-cultural, language speaking, and economic variations. This was necessary for equal representation of the study area. The second stage identified the number of households and population in each study area, while the third stage of the sampling involves random selection of 87 households in each of the selected study areas. In all a total sample of about 519 heads of households were randomly selected to respond to the questions in the questionnaires.

In determining the influence of gender equality on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria, an econometrics model of simultaneous equation modeling through structural equation model was built around the indicators of gender equality and poverty reduction as the main objective of the paper. The model was used in estimating the impact of these indicators on the poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. The variables considered are as follows: Knowledge (Education status) Income status and Participation in government.

These can be represented in the following model:

$$\text{PovR} = F (\text{ES} + \text{IS} + \text{PG}) + \text{Ui}$$

Where:

PovR = Poverty reduction of the female heads of household in the study area.

ES = Education status of the heads of household in the study area.

IS = Income status of the heads of household in the study area.

PG = participation in government

Ui = Error terms.

The responses to the questionnaires by the respondents were coded and then analyzed using SPSS version 22. Structural Equation Model (SEM) was conducted using Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS). All tests were at 95 percent confidence interval.

Structural Equation Model (SEM) is a statistical tool used in testing and estimating the causal relationships among latent variables. SEM was derived from an econometrics simultaneous equation modeling. SEM technique can be categorized among the second generation multivariate analysis such as confirmatory factor analysis, correlation, multiple linear regression and path analysis (Fornell, 1987). Also, SEM is a technique used by researcher to simultaneously assess the relationships that exist between multiple independent and dependent constructs. SEM can also be called latent variables model, the term structural depicts a causal relationship that the parameters show. AMOS is the software used in the analysis of the data. According to Kline (1998), a sample size that is more than 200 can be considered to be large enough for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis. Hence, this study is qualified to adopt Structural Equation Model (SEM) technique, because the sample size exceeds 200.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

##### 4.1 Measurement Model Fit

In the measurement model, the model fit generated along with the output including the Comparative fit index (CFI), Normed fit index (NFI), Goodness of fit index (GFI), Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) and Relative Chi-square meet their expected range to justify the validity of the measurement model.

**Table 2. Established Criteria for fit Indices**

Fit Indices	Authors	Recommended Values	Values from current model
CFI	Bentler, (1990) Hatcher, (1994),	>.90	9.54
NFI	Bentler & Bonett, (1987)	>.90	9.76
GFI	Yuan, K.H, (2005) Steiper, J.H, (2007) Hair et.al., (2010	>90 >.80	9.58
RMSEA	Byrne, (2001), Hu & Bentler (1999)	< 0.50 or <= 0.08	0.04
Relative Chi-square	Marsh & Hocevar, (1985), Bentler (1990)	0.05 or < 5.0	2.543

The CFI generated for the study was 9.54, NFI is 9.76, GFI is 9.58, RMSEA is 0.04 and Relative chi-square is 2.543. Also, the unidimensionality was tested and this was achieved because all factors loading were positive and greater than 0.5.

**Table 3: Discriminant Validity Testing**

	ES	IS	PG	Pov
ES	<b>0.75</b>			
IS	0.24	<b>0.79</b>		
PG	0.29	0.42	<b>0.84</b>	
Pov	0.36	0.44	0.37	<b>0.92</b>

The value in diagonal and bold is the square root of AVE of the construct while other values are the correlation between the respective constructs. The discriminant validity is said to be achieved when a diagonal value (bold) is higher than the values in its row and column. Therefore, this study exhibits sufficient discriminant validity since the value in bold is higher than the values in its row and column. Also, there is the absence of multicollinearity since the correlation coefficient among the latent variables did not exceed 0.85 (See Zainudin 2015).

**Table 3: Results of SEM on the Impact of Gender equality on Poverty Reduction in Niger State, Nigeria**

Construct	$\beta$	SE	Beta	CR	$\rho$	Results
ES	-0.213	0.042	-0.245	3.213	0.641	Not Significant
IS	-0.143	0.041	-0.423	2.413	0.543	Not Significant
PG	-0.254	0.043	-0.615	4.234	0.734	Not Significant

R = 0.82

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.68

The regression analysis on the impact of gender inequality on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria is shown in Table 3. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.68 shows that 68 percent variation in the dependent variable; Poverty can be explained by the explanatory variables (gender inequality Components). According to Chin *et al.* (2003), R<sup>2</sup> values greater than 0.67 is having practical value. R<sup>2</sup> value between 0.33 and 0.66 is assumed to have moderate explanatory value, while R<sup>2</sup> value between 0.19 and 0.32 has weak explanatory value. Therefore, R<sup>2</sup> for this study is 0.68 and it has a practical explanatory power. Looking at the individual variables, all independent variables, gender inequality components are statistically insignificant, an indication that the model is acceptable.

Educational status (ES) has a coefficient of -0.213, with critical ratio of 3.213 was negatively related to poverty reduction and statistically insignificant at 1 percent level. The beta result of -0.245 indicates that educational status has 24.5 per cent direct effect on poverty reduction among gender in Niger State, this can be attributed to the fact that female education is not a priority in the study area rather male education is preferred. Income status (IS) has coefficient of -0.143 with critical ratio of 2.413 been negatively related to poverty reduction and statistically insignificant at 1 per cent level. The beta result of -0.423 indicates that income status has 42.3 per cent direct effect on poverty reduction among gender in Niger State, Nigeria. This could be as a result of the fact that most women are not allowed to work, they are mostly full housewife, and they are not engaging in any economic activities. This can be attributed to the religion belief or their ethical belief. Participation in government (PG) has coefficient of -0.254 with critical ratio of 4.234 was negatively related and statistically insignificant at 1 percent level. The beta result of 0.615 indicates that participation in government has 61.5 per cent direct effect on poverty reduction among gender in Niger State, Nigeria. This can be attributed to the fact that women in the study area are not allowed to participate in politics because of their religion and ethical belief. All these have negative impact on gender poverty reduction in the study area. This result goes in line with our a priori expectation also similar with the work of Blau, (2016) and Kabeer, (2015) who were of the view that gender inequality

components such as educational status, income status and participation in government have negative impact on poverty status in United State.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper investigates the impact of gender inequality components on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria, using Structural Equation Model technique. The findings of this study revealed that educational status (ES), income status (IS), and participation in government (PG) all have negative impact on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. Gender inequality and poverty have been seen as two evils that are highly associated with a view of impacts which seem incontestable and must be fought together. This study focused on investigating on the causal relationship between gender and poverty using Niger state, Nigeria. The result of the study showed clearly that there is a very high level of poverty and poverty does not discriminate among gender in the study area in Niger State. There is a feedback causality effect between gender and poverty in Niger State, Nigeria. Income and educational status as well as participation in government do not reduce poverty in the study area. This is consistent with the few studies that have investigated on the causal relationship between both. The result of the study further showed that Educational status, income status and participation in government causes inequality between genders in the study area. Thus there is an indirect link between poverty and gender inequality as well as an inequality causing poverty.

It recommends that female education should be encouraging in the study area, it's should be a major tool to be considered in the fight against poverty and gender inequality in the study area. It is also recommended that the issue of income inequality should also be addressed among genders; this can be done through women empowerment. This should not be left for the government alone; the private sectors are also encouraged to be actively involved in this as well as individuals through imbibing the spirit of entrepreneurship. The study also recommended that women participation in government should also be encouraged; this will go a long way in reducing the inequality among women in the study area. This study thus concludes that since gender inequality and poverty are two major problems that are eating up the country, policy measure that would improve gender equality and poverty reduction in the study area should be put in place. Niger State government should come up with a policy that will try as much as possible to encourage women employment in the state.

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