

Gender Discrimination in Building Industry in Nigeria Slows Progress on The Realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5 of Vision 2030

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ABSTRACT

This research appraised gender justice in building construction industry in Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted to purposively select qualitative data from the stakeholders. In depth interviews coupled with focus Group discussions (FGDs) were adopted and 110 interview guides were administered to the women which include National Council of Women Society (NCWS) Oyo state chapter, professional Women Associations, Oyo state Association of women Town Planners of Nigeria and Selected Ministries in Oyo State including ministry of women Affairs. Information collected include women level of recognition on specified building job roles, level of women representation concerning building project decision making, level of women involvement in resources allocation and opportunities concerning construction project and lastly the perceived causes of gender discrimination in building industries in Nigeria. The study used descriptive statistics for the analysis. It highlights critical issues of low women recognition in some construction job roles and under represented at the level of decision making in Nigeria, revealing systemic barriers that hinder their rights and participation in building job roles. This is caused in part by the patriarchal nature of Nigeria society, norms and traditions. The finding, underscore the urgent need for government to review and amend discriminatory laws enforce gender equality legislation and advocate for equal representation in decision making roles.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Discrimination, Building Industry, Sustainable development Goals, Vision 2030.

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INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The construction industry is one of the sectors globally observed to be capable of contributing to economic development of a nation. It is estimated that over 3 million people work in the industry in various capacities as professionals, administrative staff, operatives and labourers (Jnasshaka and Admin 2020). The construction sector is a vital pillar of the Nigerian economy, directly contributing between 4% to 6% to the country's total Real Gross Domestic product (GDP) and its nominal contribution reaches approximately 10% with recent annual construction output hitting roughly ₦19.36 trillion (Chukwuanu M. 2024). It is a sector that is driving capital formation and a massive catalyst for wealth creation, job provision and infrastructure expansion (Muhammed & Bala 2018). Private and public construction projects are essential to bridging Nigeria's vast infrastructure gap, which the world Bank and other development entities estimate requires a massive influx of capital (International Trade Admin 2025). Also, the sector plays a fundamental role in meeting the shelter needs of Nigeria's rapid expanding population with a gross deficit exceeding 31 million units, residential and commercial construction serves as a lucrative avenue for private investment and economic activity (Agusto store 2025).

However, Nigeria is ranked 123rd out of 146 nations in the 2022 world gender gap study, based on economic participation, survival, political appointment and financial exclusion of women in which Nigeria has a 63.9% gender gap (Chukwuanu M. 2024). Similarly, the international monetary fund (IMF) report shows a significant gap in labour-force participation's 49.32 for women compared to 80% for men exposing the persistent disparity in workplace representation and more specific to the construction industry the latest data shows that women make up just under 11% of the total global workforce (Chukwuanu M. 2024). Distributive justice for women in the Nigerian building and construction industry remains notably low and highly skewed, characterized by significant gender

disparity on wage distribution, job roles and resources allocation (Shodipe Olabanji et al 2025, Adebimpe Adenuga & Oderinde 2019) women hold severely limited representation in executive and site leadership roles and they often face exclusion from major decision-making processes and unequal access to lucrative contracts mentorship opportunities (Ognuefi et al 2026). Similarly, women's recognition in Nigeria's building and construction industry remains low with female representation in the professional workforce estimated to be 0.2% to 6% (INasshaka et al 2020).

In developing countries and Nigeria inclusive high percentage of women were found to be engaged as helper or labourers and in unskilled jobs (Adenuga & Oderinde 2019). Women make up approximately 6% - 16.3% of formal construction professional in Nigeria (Jimoh et al 2021). Jimoh (2016) observed that most of the women found in the construction workforce are engaged in carrying out managerial, secretarial, messenger, helper or labourer work with little or none involved in carrying out specialized and other professional works women face biased and underrepresentation across several areas and the most prominent sectors of discrimination include: skilled manual trades such as masonry, carpentry and plumbing, site management and supervision, wage distribution and the corporate contacting businesses (Abubakar Sakinal 2023, Adenuga & Oderinde 2019).

Among the professions in the building industry there is gender disparity. For instance, historically urban planning has operated under male centric paradigm where cities were designed for the "neutral" male users, which perpetrates traditional gender roles and created division of labour (World Bank 2020). This male-dominated in urban planning has impact for limited representation of women and gender minorities at the decision-making table and the specific spatial needs of diverse communities are frequently overlooked (Diva Podesta (2023). Male stereotype in engineering portrays the profession as hyper-logical, hand-on and traditionally masculine, this perception assume men naturally possess superior, technical and spatial abilities often casting the field as aggressive or solitary boy's club (National Institute of Health 2021).

Similarly, surveying profession traditionally requires outdoor fieldwork and navigating rough terrains, there is a deep-rooted assumption that it requires traditional masculine physical strength, this overshadows the highly technical and analytical aspect of the profession (Turrel et al (2002).

The word patriarchy established the origin and condition of men's oppression of women (Kamarea 1992, Nwanko 2025). It was used to describe the power of the father as head of household. Patriarchy is centred on the belief that supports and promote the idea of superiority of men over women. The claim of discourse around patriarchy is that women were inferior to men and that this natural inferiority explained their socials subordination (Allanana et al 2024, Kitzor 2012).

As a consequence, women are believed to be restrained, subordinated, molded used and abused by men.

Nigeria is a patriarchal society. This situation supports circumstances where men have attempted to define women's essence by application of various categories of stereotyping that deny women the opportunity of choosing who they want to become. For instance, men are universally expected to embody physical strength and resilience while serving as the primary bread-winners, resulting in a workforce where women remain severely underrepresented (Chukwuonu M. 2024).

The global ambition for gender equity started in 2015, when the United Nation call to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. It is one of the 17 Global Goals designed to ensure a fair, safe and sustainable world acting as a critical accelerator for all other sustainable development targets. End all forms of discrimination against women and girls, end all forms of violence among others (UN women 2017).

Similarly, Nigeria combat discrimination against women through a mix of legislative frameworks, constitutional guarantees and strategic policy initiatives. These efforts are designed to domesticate international agreements, enforce gender equality and protect women from cultural and economic biases (UN Africa Renewal 2017).

Despite Nigeria's ratification of international treaties like CEDAN and adoption of the National Gender policy, deep-rooted cultural, religious and structural barriers continue to limit female inclusion in both public and private spheres across the country (Amaechi V.U et al 2024).

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to appraise gender justice in building construction industry in Nigeria. In order to achieve this, aim the following objectives are to:

- i.) Investigate the level of women's recognition in some specified building construction job roles
- ii.) Investigate the level of women's representation among decision making bodies private and public regarding building construction projects.
- iii.) Investigate the level of involvement of women in resources allocation, training and opportunities regarding building construction project.
- iv.) Investigate the causes of gender injustice in building construction industry in Nigeria
- v.) Proffer suggestions to the individual's professionals and policy maker about solution to gender discrimination in construction industry in particular and other areas in general.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Studying gender discrimination in Nigeria is essential because systemic biases restrict women's access to education, economic participation and political representation, severely hindering the nation's overall development (Anas Abubakar & Aminu Abdulahi sale 2025). Therefore, understanding these root causes allows researchers and policy makers to address human right violations, dismantle deep-rooted cultural prejudices and foster more equitable socioeconomic growth. Most extant studies carried out focused on gender discrimination in general terms. However, this study focuses on gender discrimination in building construction sector of Nigeria. Also, this study used the three dimentions of gender justice according to Frazer (2009) to appraise the level of women's gender justice in Nigeria's building and construction industry.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on gender discrimination in building and construction sector in the built environment of Nigeria. Therefore, samples were drawn from women non-governmental organization: National Council of Women Societies (NCWS), professional women Organization: Oyo state Association of Women Town Planners of Nigeria and relevant ministries including ministry of women affairs. The study was carried out in Oyo state.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to achieve the research objectives, a survey research design was adopted. Qualitative approach was employed with purposive sampling technique to select qualitative data from the respondents. In-depth interviews coupled with Organized Focus Group Dissensions (FGDs) were adopted. 6 sections with 15 respondents in each section of the professional women town planners in Oyo state chapter and National council of women societies Oyo state chapter. Tpl. (Dr) Oladiran Ibiynka Olaide the chairperson of Association of women town planners and Mrs Oyelade Kikelomo Olufunmilayo the president NCWS Oyo state were in attendance. 20 interview guides were administered to the relevant ministries including ministry of women affairs Oyo state. A total of 110 interview guides were used for the study and retrieved for final analysis. The variables of the interview guides include: Women level of recognition on specified Building construction job roles, level of women's representation concerning building project decision making level of women's involvement in resources allocation, opportunity, training, among others concerning building construction decisions, lastly the perceived causes of gender discrimination in building construction project in Nigeria.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Table 1 perceptions on the level of women's recognition in specified construction roles.

Items	HR	MR	RR	NR	X	Std	Decision
Women's level of recognition in leadership and site inspection	3	2	29	75	1.376	0.45	NR
Women in block laying	6	2	23	78	1.376	0.45	NR
Women in tiling	6	1	23	79	1.3490	0.45	NR
Women in plumbing & carpentry	2	10	24	73	1.459	0.47	NR
Women in electrical installation	1	7	21	80	1.349	0.44	NR
Women in surveying, plastering & rendering	4	1	21	83	1.294	0.43	NR

Criterion mean = 2.500: weighted mean 1.367 SD= 0.45

Overall Decision = Not recognised

Source field survey 2026

Rating scale used:

Highly recognised (HR)= 4

Moderately Recognised (HR) = 3

Rarely recognised = 2

Not recognised =1

Std = Standard Deviation

Mean Threshold: 0,000 – 1.499 = Not Recognised

1.500 – 2.499= Rarely recognised (moderate) and 3.500 – 4.00 = Highly recognized (High)

Table 1 presents the recognition level of women in specified building construction job roles, such as leadership and site inspection, block laying, tiling, plumbing and carpentry electrical installations site surveying among others. The criterion mean was set at 2.500. the rating scale of not recognized (1) to highly recognized (4) was used six (6) items were used to ascertain the recognition level of women in the specified building construction job roles. All the six items were rated not recognized as their means were within 0.000 – 1.499. the weighted mean SD of 1.567(.45) confirms generally that women are not recognized in the listed building construction

Gender Discrimination in Building Industry in Nigeria Slows Progress on The Realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5 of Vision 2030

job roles in Nigeria. This means that men are stereotype for some building construction roles in Nigeria, leading largely to under presentation of women in building construction sector.

Table 2 perception on level of women's representation among decision making bodies private and public regarding building construction project in Nigeria.

	Items	HR	MR	RR	NR	X	ST	Decision
1.	Representation of women in public and private building project decision	10	24	32	43	2.110	.57	RR
2.	Women's representation in project management decision	3	17	36	53	1.851	.53	RR
3.	Men & women are equally represented on wage distribution on same job roles	12	21	29	47	2.147	.58	RR
4.	Women are represented on choice of leaders in building construction works	6	11	31	61	1.927	.54	RR
5.	Women are represented on private & public contract award	14	22	34	39	2.147	.57	RR

Criterion mean = 2.500; weighted mean = 2.042

SD = .56; overall Decision =Rarely represented.

Source field survey 2026.

Rating scale used : Highly represented (HR) = 4

Moderately represented (MR) = 3

Rarely represented (RR) = 2

Not represented (NR) = 1

Std = Standard Deviation

Mean Threshold 0.000 – 1.499 = Not represented: 1.500 – 2.499 = Rarely represented (low) 2.500 – 3.499 = moderately represented (moderate) and 3.500 – 4.00 = Highly represented (High).

Table 2 above presents the representation level of women among decision making bodies both private and public regarding building construction projects in Nigeria which include; private and public building project decisions, project management, wage distribution on some job roles, choice of leadership and authority in building construction works and private and public contract awards. The criterion mean was set at 2.500. The rating scale of not represented (1) to highly represented (4) was used. Five items were used to ascertain the level of women representation about decision making regarding building construction projects. All the five items were rarely represented as the waited $\times$ is less than criterion mean of 2.500 ($2.036 < 2.500$). Therefore, women are poorly represented in decision making level about construction projects in Nigeria.

Table 3. Perceived level of women's redistributive justice in building construction decisions in Nigeria.

	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD	X
1	Women and men have equal control over construction productive resources	8 (7.3)	9 (8.3)	54 (49.5)	38 (34.9)	1.88
2	Men and women are equally involved in top government decision making process on construction project	3 (2.8)	6 (5.5)	69 (63.3)	31 (28.4)	1.826
3	Women enjoy opportunities training & empowerment as a result of their natural vulnerability	2 (1.8)	3 (2.8)	51 (46.8)	53 (48.6)	1.596
4	Men and women are equally accessible to public construction in project award	4 (3.7)	6 (5.5)	55 (50.5)	44 (40.3)	1.725
5	Men and women are equally considered in resources allocation	5 (4.6)	6 (5.5)	52 (47.7)	46 (42.2)	1.725

Table 3 above shows the perceived level of women redistributive justice in building construction in Nigeria. Most respondent disagreed with the five listed perceived women's redistributive justice in Nigeria.

The percentages of recipients or respondents who disagreed with the listed items ranged from 28% to 63% as recorded for the perception that men and women are equally involved in top government decision - making process on construction projects, women and men have equal control over construction productive resources, women enjoy opportunities, training and empowerment, men and women are equally accessible to public construction projects awards and men and women are equally considered in resource allocation (see table 3) majority of the respondents disagreed with the listed items. This shows that they enjoy poor redistributive justice in building construction projects in Nigeria.

Gender Discrimination in Building Industry in Nigeria Slows Progress on The Realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5 of Vision 2030

Table 4 perceived causes of gender discrimination in building construction sector in Nigeria.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	Std
1.	The gruelling manual labour involved in the industry calls for the involvement of men.	47 (43.1)	46 (42.2)	6 (5.5)	10 (9.2)	3.19	0.91
2.	People's expectation that men are breadwinners of the family places pressure on men to take on highly demanding construction roles.	67 (61.5)	26 (23.9)	5 (9.5)	11 (10.0)	3.37	0.97
3.	Men are typically stereotyped as the fitters, masons bricklayer and project managers where as women are often side-lined into administrative or less labour intensive roles.	45 (41.4)	47 (43.1)	6 (5.5)	11 (10.0)	3.16	0.93
4.	Men are universally expected to embody physical strength and resilience while serving the primary breadwinner, resulting in a workforce where women severely under represented.	53 (48.6)	36 (33.0)	10 (9.2)	10 (9.2)	3.74	0.93
5.	Nigeria is a patriarchal society which is centred on the belief that supports and promote the idea of superiority of men over women	41 (37.6)	51 (46.8)	6 (5.5)	11 (10.0)	3.12	0.91
6.	women are naturally vulnerable (weaker vessels) and therefore not confident to perform some construction roles.	67 (61.5)	25 (22.9)	10 (9.2)	7 (6.4)	3.49	1.21

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the respondent on their perceptions about the causes of gender discrimination in building construction sector in Nigeria. The majority of the respondents agreed that most of the listed variables are responsible. 85.3% agreed that the gruelling manual labour involves in the industry calls for the involvement of men, 85.4% agreed that expectation of people as the breadwinner of the family put pressure on men to take on highly demanding construction roles, 84.4% of the respondents agreed that some construction roles are typically stereotyped for masculine, 84.4% agreed that customs & norms based on patriarchy in Nigeria is the origin of women discrimination in Nigeria and lastly, 84.4% agreed that the fact that women are naturally vulnerable (weaker vessels) does not give them confidence to perform some building construction roles. Conversely some respondents disagreed with the listed options. For instance, 14.7% disagreed with item one (1) 14.6% item two (2) 15.5% item (5) and 15.6% disagreed with item six (6). This result shows that the specified items have significant impact on women discrimination in building construction industry in Nigeria.

Discussion: This study appraised gender justice in building construction in Nigeria and found that women are not recognised in some construction roles. This agrees with the observations of Inasshaka et al (2020) and Adenuga Oderinde (2019). Also the fact that women are poorly represented both in the private and public regarding building construction in decision agrees with Chukwuanu in 2024 and lastly in this study women receive poor redistributive justice and are not compensated for their natural vulnerability. This agrees with Ogbefi et al 2026 who observed that women face exclusion from major decision-making process and opportunities and hence have poor gender justice in many areas including building construction sector in Nigeria.

Majority of the respondents agreed with the listed options as the causes of gender discrimination in building industry in Nigeria which include stereotyping of job roles as purely for men which agrees with the observation of Chukwuanue M. (2024) and Nwanko 2025. This belief is based on tradition & norm that some construction jobs are traditionally masculine National institute of health 2021 Diva Podesta (2023) among others observed the same thing in their studies.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there is gender injustice in building construction projects in Nigeria as women are not recognised in some construction job roles and neither represented in decision making nor compensated for their vulnerability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from this study the following recommendations are suggested.

1. There is an urgent need for government to review and amend discriminating laws and enforced gender equality legislations in Nigeria.
2. There should be advocacy for equal representation of women in decision making in both the private and public and among professionals.
3. Enhance funding and resource allocation; increase budget allocation for gender-specific programmes to address resource gap in economic empowerment sustainable funding models to include international donors to supplement government resources.
4. Promote women's representation in governance and decision making. This could be done by understanding gender quota within public institutions. Women's participation in leadership role would facilitate the development and prioritization of gender-sensitive policies.

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