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Gender Inequality and Economic Growth in the Nigerian Civil Service

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Abstract*: Gender inequality is generally perceived as a deterrent to economic growth and as a result much of effort by the United Nations, World Bank, NGOs, Nigerian government and governments around the world have been enunciated to cauterise it. While several policies have been put in place to promote gender equality in Nigeria, progress in this area is rather slow. The need to achieve gender equality is crucial. Therefore, the paper empirically examines the influence of gender inequality and female labour force participation in the civil service on the economic growth of Nigeria. The data cut across 35 states in Nigeria from 2008 to 2016. The model is estimated using a panel data Fixed Effect estimation. The findings suggested that the economic cost of an increase in men's employment at the expense of women's employment may have a negative impact on economic growth. Thus, the pursuit of equi-gender representation is an important measure towards, women empowerment, reducing their dependency, elevating their socio-economic status, and achieving economic growth.

***Keywords*: gender [in]equality, economic growth, female participation, labour force, civil service, equi-gender representation.**

I. INTRODUCTION

"Women bear the burden. Women pay the price. But women are not just victims; they are agents of progress and change. Empowered women and girls are the best drivers of growth, the best hope for reconciliation, and the best buffer against radicalization of youth and the repetition of cycles of violence. There have been important advances since the Beijing Conference. More girls have attained more access to more education than ever before. Maternal mortality has been almost halved. More women are leading businesses, governments and global organizations. At the same time, progress remains unacceptably [slow], and our gains are not irreversible. We must build on the Beijing foundation and complete our work.

I challenge all stakeholders to work together to achieve gender equality during the timeframe set by the new development agenda. Our goal must be: 50:50 by 2030."
– *Ban Ki Moon, Opening session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2015.*

The need to ensure equal access to employment opportunities, economic resources, civil rights and governance has received considerable attention as a key prerequisite for achieving gender equality [1]. The United Nation Sustainable Development Framework [1] on human rights put gender equality and women's economic empowerment at the core of its economic outcomes hence recognising the potential of gender equality as *a sine qua non* for achieving economic growth. Many African nations are in line with this view as seen with the introduction of initiatives such as the Protocol on the Rights of Women 2003, African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), the protocol on democracy and good governance by Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) adopted in 2001. Many of these initiatives have created policies and strategies that are aligned to the Millennium Development Goals number 3 (MDG3).

Although modest progress has been made in achieving MGD 3, literature have shown that women are still discriminated upon and exposed to various economic disadvantages. For example, the overall global convergence towards gender equality in education between 1990 and 2012, has not been translated in terms of economic opportunities and outcomes for women [2]. The long-standing unfair distribution of economic and financial resources in developing countries have positioned women at a disadvantaged state in terms of employment development, hence impeding their opportunities to explore their full potential [3]. [4] reported that the even though the population of women in the public sector employment is 58% larger than the average total employment among OECD countries, women still hold fewer positions at the senior level. Literature shows that this employment gap holds alarmingly in the public sector, especially in Nigeria.

The public sector is the largest employer of labour in Nigeria and data have shown that women are mostly

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[1] United Nation Women Training Centre defined gender equality as a state of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities between women and men such that rights, responsibility and opportunities are not determined by sex. This has implications on women empowerment, eradicating poverty amongst women, and sustainable economic growth and development [2].

employed in the junior cadre level [5]. Women make up approximately 34% of total employment in the junior cadre between 2010 and 2015 while men dominated the senior cadre by 50% to 65% within the same time period [6]. Statistics shows that Federal Civil Service employment was skewed in favour of men with women constituting about 21.2% to 35.3% of the total employment from 2011 to 2015. The proportion of women in decision making role in the senior cadre was as low as 24.6% in 2011 and 27.9% in 2015 [6], thus, limiting women's influence in high-level decision-making process.

In 2008, women's efforts towards ensuring better and equal opportunities through the enforcement and domestication of Convention of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Bill [2] was stalled at the Nigerian National Assembly [7]. However, the 2017 World Economic Forum global ranking on gender equality gap for Nigeria increased from 122 (out of 144 in year 2015) to 125 out of 145. This created a puzzle where in spite of many articulated policies and programmes by the Nigerian government to empower women, why is Nigeria still far behind in reducing gender disparity in its workforce? And what are the implications to its economic growth?

To fill this research gap, this paper investigates the impact of gender inequality[3] on economic growth with specific focus on the civil service due to its significance in women employment in Nigeria[4]. The motivation of this study hinges on the recommendation by [8][5] and the above-mentioned puzzle where although the composition of women and men are quite similar in the Nigerian workforce, their chances of employment opportunities, career growth and prospects seem less compared to men [6]. Despite the progress seen over the years in various societies, many studies suggest women are grossly marginalised and faced with continuous disadvantage and discrimination in many areas of economic life [9], [10], [11] and [12], thus, gender equality in employment remains an important issue that warrants further research.

The structure of the paper is organised as follows. The next presents a brief overview on the Nigerian public sector to set context of the study. Issues on gender and inequality will also be discussed as part of the literature review. Then, we explain the data and the empirical model used to examine the relationship between gender inequality and economic growth. Specific emphasis will be on the impact of female labour participation in the Nigerian civil service, accounting for their employment category. The last section provides the conclusion and pertinent policy suggestions.

[2] CEDAW bill is an international bill that stipulates the rights of women. It consists of a prologue and 30 articles, that outlines the components of discrimination against women and sets up a framework for national action to abolish such discrimination.

[3] According to CEDAW, "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field" can be seen as discrimination against women.

[4] The latest official census (2006) estimated Nigeria's population at over 140 million with female constitute 49% and male 51%. [6] also reported that while about 50% of women are in the workforce, more women are employed in the public sector than any other sector (*see also* [23].

[5] They recommended that inequality-growth relationship should be investigated from a specific perspective and such investigation should be on a national or regional basis.

II. GENDER ISSUES AND EMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

The socio-economic and political spheres in Nigeria is primarily dominated by men as a result of existing patriarchal societal structures, misuse of religious rights, cultural stereotyping [7]. Women are deemed insignificant in economic decision making and social development [13], their participation in the senior cadre in the public sector is not encouraged and they are marginalised [14] with most of their work not being unrecognised [15], [16], [17], [18]. [19] reported that some women face greater vulnerability in the labour market due to their low level of education and training, thus, making it difficult for them to fit in certain occupations. Between 1970 and 2009, the involvement of women in the Nigerian formal sector had dropped from 57 percent to 53 percent.

In recent years, the Nigerian government amongst other African nations has shown positive response towards MDG3 (on the elimination of all forms of societal discriminations based on gender) when it first adopted and passed into law the National Policy on Women in 2000[6]. The government subsequently enacted many other policies in an effort to protect the rights of women and to ensure gender equality[7]. While Nigeria has seen an increasing number of female participations in employment, politics and civic activities, women are still grossly underrepresented in offices that requires important decision-making roles [20]. [21] reported that women are grossly underrepresented in boardrooms around the world; particularly in developing countries where women constitute a large percentage of the working poor and are often affected by long-term unemployment. This raise an important issue whereby achieving equip-gender representation[8] in the employment market is not only about the magnitude/size of the gender group, but also the quality of employment.

To examine the role of gender [in]equality in employment in Nigeria, one would have to study its public sector[9]. The

[6] This law is in line with the provision by the Global Instrument on the Convention of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

[7] Other than the Chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, some of the policies on gender equality and women empowerment are: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015, goal number 5, National Policy on Reproductive Health, 2010, The National Gender Policy 2006, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy 2004, National Gender Policy and Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria 2003, National Policy on Women, 2000 and National Policy on Women trafficking.

[8] *Equi-gender representation* is defined based on the UN "planet 50-50" by 2030, whereby countries are expected to achieve equal gender representation across all spheres of the economy as against the Beijing platform for action that requires about 30% of women representation in some sectors of which countries that attain this are said to have achieved gender equality. https://www.unwomen-metrony.org/campaigns-1/2017/2/13/ogilvy-mather

[9] Past literature has also shown that the public sector is not but just an employer of women, it provides women with the opportunities to be in a professional occupation which improved the strategic position of women in the society [26]. [27] also stated that women employment retention is greatly influenced by the public sector as it provides women with the required conditions to continuously stay employed even when family responsibilities are high. [28], [29] sees the public sector as a milieu or an environment where social policies and measures are strongly observed.

Nigerian public sector is made up of the federal, state and local government as employers of labour which constitute the largest employer of labour in Nigeria [22]. [23] reported that the public sector constitutes 62.1 percent wage jobs in Nigeria while [24] reported that they are more women employed in the public sector than any other sector. The public sector makes up for 30 percent of women involved in paid employment and 8.1 percent in the private sector. While the importance of the public sector to female employment is undeniable, gender inequality has plagued this area of development since the creation of Nigeria in 1914 [25]. This problem persisted until today resulting to the prevailing underrepresentation of women in the public sector.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature on the link between gender [in]equality and economic growth is somewhat divided. Studies that showed positive links between gender equality (in employment and education) and economic growth often argue along the endogenous growth literature. In their theoretical model, human capital is deemed an important source of economic growth [30], [31], [32], [33], and [34]. Stemming from the neoclassical Solow's growth model, the incorporation of human capital in growth models- complementing physical capital and supply of labour, has ensured that the discourse on the determinants of economic growth remained relevant and on-going. As the endogenous growth model often focuses on investment in human capital, it further identifies elements that may distort the harnessing of human capital as sources of growth of which one of the elements of interest is gender inequality.

As early as the 1970s, studies have connected the link between gender [in]equality and economic growth in industrialised democratic countries [35]. The finding suggests a positive relationship between high per capita income and low rate of gender inequality after controlling for life expectancy, differences in the female labour force and the population of women, disparity in education and GNP per capita. The gender element was initially brought into growth discourse partly due to the argument that women have higher propensity to save compared to men in their household consumption [hence increasing the country's GDP] [36]. It was also initially driven by concerns on humanitarian grounds that gender inequality may be detrimental to economic growth because it may breed poverty and disempowerment on a specific gender group [37] and [38].

Later studies are more appreciative of women and their role as skilled human capital. [38] argued that with greater decision-making power, granting women equal access to land and credit market would lead to reduction in inequality, which alleviates poverty and subsequently increases economic growth. Under this premise, gender inequality is seen as a distortion to the pool of human capital that will affect economic growth and development. This distortion was pointed out in [39], whereby the average quality of human capital is reduced by gender inequality[10].Therefore, it is imperative to ensure equal access to employment opportunities be it women or men. This has further spurred many research interests that links gender inequality to labour force participation.

Empirical studies often establish the link between gender inequality and labour force participation by focusing on inequality in education. [40] brought to limelight the need for women inclusion in the development of Pakistan. The study showed that gender equality in education would improve female labour force participation which has shown to impact positively on economic growth. Gender inequality in education affects competitiveness in the labour market because it reduces women's opportunity to participate and contribute efficiently to economic growth [41], [42] [43].

This strengthened our assertion that women participation in the employment market is not merely about the magnitude/size of the gender group, but also the quality of employment. Therefore, equal access to employment opportunities should also account for the level of skills and productivity of an employee. More than often in numerous studies, education level is considered as a proxy for skill sets required in the labour market. The relationship is often depicted in the common literature that follows a U-shaped female labour force function in economic development. This function implies that female participation rate declines in the short run due to the income effect structural shifts of the economy. The initial decline in female participation in the labour market is due to a transitional period where they move away from the labour market to obtain higher skills (through learning and development). This is analogous to the fact that women are moving away from low paid jobs; which in the long run leads to an increase in economic growth and women empowerment across countries [44] and [45]. Thus, having women in low skill jobs irrespective of their educational advancement or qualifications for more skilled role would result to a setback in economic growth in terms of productivity.

Increasing the productivity of labour has been a key indicator of growth [46] and [47]. The opportunity cost of women's withdrawal from the labour market to upskill themselves (as depicted by the U-shaped hypothesis) in the long term increases their overall productivity. [48] therefore examined the effect of gender inequality on the level of output per worker. The study augmented the Solow's model of growth by incorporating gender variables as independent production factor of input. Their empirical result shows that lower levels of output per worker by state are common in countries with higher level of gender inequality. [42] reached a similar conclusion for India when she suggested that states with higher rate of gender inequality gaps are less developed in comparison to states with lower gaps. The study further showed that gender gaps in employment and managerial positions has an adverse effect on the economic growth of Indian states from his panel data analysis and instrumental variables. Other studies that have reported similar findings are [49], [43] and [50].

[10] The assumption is that, when the intrinsic cost of skill investment is the same for both genders, an imposed restriction on opportunities of a particular group (i.e. female) may increase the cost of investment in human capital due to lower number of skilled labour available. Therefore, it is implied that fostering equality among skilled labour is expected to improve the pool of human capital quality and consequently the economic growth.

Studies have emphasised that the role of women in social and economic activities is crucial to economic growth and development, therefore, suggesting that resource should be geared toward abolishing inequalities. Eliminating gender inequality through government regulations across societies and utilising the potentials of women efficiently will minimise social tensions and improve the sustainability the economy [51].

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Data and Model

This study uses an adaptation of the Neo-Classical Solow's Growth Model and collated time series data from several issues of the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria, and Central Bank of Nigeria Annual Report on 35 states in Nigeria from 2008 to 2016. Using a standard Cobb-Douglas production specification:

$$Y = AK^{\alpha} L^{\beta} \quad (1)$$

with
Y = Output
A = Multifactor productivity
K = Stock capital
L = Labour
Taking ln for both sides:

$$\ln Y_t = A_t + \alpha \ln K_t + \beta \ln L_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (2)$$

Solow's growth model has been used extensively to examine the economic growth of both developed and developing countries around the world. Although it is an extension of Harrod-Domar Framework, it forms a central base for most economic growth theories in developing countries. The model takes into consideration the role of capital accumulation, labour and the state of technology in affecting economic growth. The model also assumes diminishing returns in marginal product that sets the path of long-run growth. The model incorporated savings as part of its framework, thus a decrease in savings will result to a decrease in investment and capital. This relationship continues till capital growth rate equals labour growth rate.

Multifactor productivity which captures technological progress is treated as an exogeneous variable in the model. And the economy will only attain a steady growth path when labour, capital and output are all progressing at the same rate.

To investigate the role of gender inequality on economic growth in Nigeria, the study focuses only on the Nigerian Civil Service sector. Reason as mentioned, is that within the public sector, the Nigerian civil service[11] is considered the most important institution or body of employees tasked with the responsibility of designing, organising, planning, formulating and implementing public policies, carrying out government functions and programmes [52]. The role of the civil service makes it indispensable in the area of national development.

Based on literature review, the standard Solow representation in (1) is augmented to account for human capital. The labour component of the growth model is decomposed based on skill level in the Nigerian civil service by accounting for female labour participation at the junior cadre (JFP) and senior cadre (SFP) from 2008 to 2016. Since this study focuses on the role of female participation in the Nigerian economic growth, only female labour participation data is deployed. Labour force constitute of women and men between the ages of 15 to 64 years old. The data were sourced from several issues of the National Bureau of Statistics: Statistical Report on Women and Men.

$$\ln Y_t = \ln A_t + \alpha \ln K_t + (\beta_1 \ln JFP_t + \beta_2 \ln SFP_t) + \varepsilon_t \quad (3)$$

The key indicator of the study, gender inequality, is proxied using gender employment gap[12] where we accounted for the difference between male and female labour force employment rate in the Nigerian Civil Service for both senior and junior cadres between the ages of 15 to 64 years old separately. The yearly differences of male and female labour participation for junior and senior cadre are represented as DJMFP and DSMFP respectively.

$$\ln Y_t = \ln A_t + \alpha \ln K_t + \beta_1 \ln JFP_t + \beta_2 \ln SFP_t + \beta_3 \ln DJMFP_t + \beta_4 \ln DSMFP_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (4)$$

Solow growth model uses production output as its dependent variable. However, this study uses a panel data of different Nigerian states and state-level outputs are not available. Instead, total state generated revenue[13] (TSR) is used as a proxy for output. The output of the public sector is somewhat associated with revenue generation and as [53] Annual Revenue Statistics demonstrated, tax revenue as a percentage of GDP is used as a component of GDP. Central Bank of Nigeria Annual Report shows revenue generated by the public administration as a component of output (GDP) under services. In absence of any other state level output (GDP) indicators for Nigeria[14], this is the closest proxy to economic output available for the model. The data was sourced from several issues of the Central Bank of Nigeria Annual Report.

Labour productivity (LP) which gives an indication on how well labour contributes to output is therefore computed by dividing yearly state generated revenue by the total number of yearly civil service employment by state respectively. For the capital indicator, state government expenditure (SGE) which is a summation of fixed and recurrent expenditure was employed in the study. Data was sourced from several issues of the Central Bank of Nigeria Annual Report.

$$\ln Y_t = LP_t + \alpha \ln K_t + \beta_1 \ln JFP_t + \beta_2 \ln SFP_t + \beta_3 \ln DJMFP_t + \beta_4 \ln DSMFP_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (5)$$

$$\ln TSR_t = LP_t + \alpha \ln SGE_t + \beta_1 \ln JFP_t + \beta_2 \ln SFP_t + \beta_3 \ln DJMFP_t + \beta_4 \ln DSMFP_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (6)$$

[11] The Nigerian civil service is structured into administrative, executive and professional class which makes up the senior cadre, the clerical and auxiliary class makes up the junior cadre.

[12] "The indicator measures the difference between the employment rates of men and women aged 20 to 64".

[13] States ability to generate revenue internally determines its economic development and sustainability (Asimiyu and Kizito).

[14] Other proxy for output such as GDP by state, gross value added by state and state wealth or income, etc. are not available.

We took the natural logarithm of the variables except for LP which is a ratio using Stata 14 and a panel data regression as our estimation technique.

We then determinie between fixed effects and random effects techniques which estimation method best explains the model using Hausman test. This test is used to examine if unique errors (U_i) are correlated with the regressors.

Table-1: Hausman Test

	Coefficients			
	(b)	(B)	(b-B)	sqrt(diag(V_b-V_B))
	fe	re	Difference	S.E.
LP	0.0547564	0.041723	0.0130334	.
lnSCE	0.2073074	0.2584707	-0.0511633	0.0029466
lnJFP	0.05763	0.064085	-0.0064549	.
lnSFP	0.0038833	0.0109778	-0.0070945	0.0094804
lnDJMFP	-0.0398718	-0.0377119	-0.00216	0.0034126
lnDSMFP	0.0327739	0.004596	0.0281778	0.0144966
b = consistent under Ho and Ha; obtained from xtreg				
B = inconsistent under Ha, efficient under Ho; obtained from xtreg				
Test: Ho: difference in coefficients not systematic				
= 147.99				
Prob>chi^2 = 0.0000				
(V_b-V_B is not positive definite)				

The null hypothesis for Hausman test states that the preferred model is random effects against the alternate hypothesis that suggested fixed effects as the preferred model.

Based on the result as seen on table 1 above, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate.

The model is estimated using panel data regression to estimate the relationship between the explanatory variables and response variable (TSR). The data cut across 35 states in Nigeria from 2008 to 2016. The results can be seen on table 2 below.

Table-2: Panel Data Regression Fixed Effect Analysis

Robust						
lnTSR	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
LP	0.0547564	0.0214491	2.55	0.0160	0.0110661	0.098446 8
lnSGE	0.2073074	0.0296722	6.99	0.0000	0.146867	0.267747 7
lnJFP	0.05763	0.0261944	2.2	0.0350	0.0042738	0.110986 3
lnSFP	0.0038833	0.0284968	0.14	0.8920	-0.0541628	0.061929 3
lnDJMFP	-0.0398718	0.0233125	-1.71	0.0970	-0.0873579	0.007614 2
lnDSMFP	0.0327739	0.0314136	1.04	0.3050	-0.0312136	0.096761 3
_Cons	3.227318	0.0987753	32.67	0.0000	3.026119	3.428517

N =148
Prob >F = 0.0000

In order to control for heteroskedasticity, we robust our FE (Fixed Effect) analysis. From table 2 above, our Fisher-Snedecor's F distribution shows that our model is acceptable and all the coefficients of our regressors are not equal to zero.

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results show that female labour force participation at the senior cadre (SFP) and its gender inequality variable (DSMFP) are not significant. While female labour force participation, junior cadre (JFP), gender inequality indicator junior cadre (DJMFP), state government expenditure (SGE) and labour productivity (LP) are significant at 95% and 90% level. All of the significant regressors exhibits a positive relationship with TSR except for DJMFP. The discussion is explained below.

A. Female Labour Employment in the Civil Service and Economic Growth

Female labour participation, junior cadre (JFP) is significance at 5% confidence level. This implies that when JFP increases by an employee, it leads to an increase in revenue generated by 0.06 or 6%. Thus, employing more women into the junior cadre of the Nigerian civil service contributes positively to the economic growth of Nigeria.

Women have constituted a fair population of employees in the junior cadre when compared to men's employment within the junior cadre, and a better representation of women employment when compared to women's employment in senior cadre from 2010 to 2015, however, men remain the dominant population in the civil service overall, especially in the senior cadre [6].

From our analysis, female labour participation in the senior cadre and its gender inequality indicator are insignificant. This could be as a result of an overwhelming poor representation of women in the senior cadre in comparison to men. In the Nigerian civil service, men dominate the senior cadre by more than 50% and in some cases about 65% [6]. These statistics also showed that women representation in the senior cadre is less than women representation in the junior cadre which is consistent with [5] that reported that women are actively associated with the junior cadre.

Another factor that could warrant for this outcome could be the ghost worker[15] syndrome which has plagued the Nigerian public sector for decades [54], [55], [56] and [57]. This is an act of stealing from the State and Federal Government at large under the disguise of paying wages to employees that do not exist in person without due contribution to the productivity of the Nigeria civil service and public sector as a whole.

Our finding shows that having women in paid employment empowers women financially. [36] and [58], posited that ensuring the participation of women in paid employment would benefit the economy via women's contribution to saving, and spending behaviour. As advanced by [59], women participation in paid employment affords women an independent income stream that convalescent women's

[15] Ghost workers refers to fictitious and non-existing employees that are on payroll [54].

intrahousehold bargaining power and, improves their socio-economic status by allowing them to accumulate human capital.

B. Gender [In]equality and Economic Growth

Our gender inequality indicator for junior cadre (DJMFP) exhibits a negative relationship with economic growth (TSR) which is significant at 10% confidence level. This suggests that there may be a trade off in terms of economic cost of employment. An increase in men's employment by an employee would be at the expense of women's employment, which impacts negatively on TSR by 0.04 or 4%. Thus, having a negative implication for the State and its economic growth if the Nigerian Civil Service continues to favour men's employment over women. This may further worsen women's economic state, discourage them from exploring their potential, and deprive them of the opportunity to fully patriciate in the development of Nigeria.

A critical finding of concern is the fact that statistics have shown that women's share of employment in the Nigerian civil service, junior cadre, on average constituted approximately 34%[16] of the total share of employment in the cadre from 2010 to 2015 with a ratio of 3 females to 5 males which is slightly above the 30% recommendation from the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[17]. Even with such achievements in Nigeria, our results suggest that the deteriorating impact of gender inequality still persist.

C. Labour Productivity, Government Expenditure and Economic Growth

[42] argued that economic growth depends positively on the average worker's productivity. Our findings show that labour productivity and state government expenditure are significant at 1% which implies an increase in civil service employment by an employee will increase revenue generation by 5%. Likewise, an increases state government expenditure by a unit will increase revenue generation by 21%. This is an indication that an increase in government expenditure in the form of wages, social welfare, public facilities, services, health, education, training and better amenities would stimulates employees' productivity which in turn impact positively on economic growth.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the effect of gender inequality on economic growth in Nigeria. Using panel data regression from 35 states in Nigeria from 2008 to 2016, we discovered that gender inequality in the civil service impacts negatively on state generated revenue and economic growth at large. Although the study shows that women participation in paid employment impacts positively on economic growth, it is not a sufficient condition to escape poverty as women still make-up for a higher share of low-wage workforce [60]. Our result suggests that closing the gender gap in the workforce and promoting equi-gender representation that is proportionate to the population distribution of male and female in all sectors of the economy is a key prerequisite for empowering women, reducing their dependency, improving their socio-economic status and achieving economic growth.

Effective policy implementation is key. Even though the Nigerian Government has put forward policies in favour of gender equality since the 1999 Federal Constitution, these policies have not been sufficiently implemented across all sectors. Therefore, a different approach should be geared towards enforcing and implementing existing policies on gender equality that aims at improving women's employment in both the senior and junior cadre of the Federal Civil Service of Nigeria. For the case of Nigeria, government should focus on policies that will increase women's employment opportunities, benefits and career prospect at the senior cadre. Training and of up-skilling of women should be considered to efficiently utilise women's potential as an instrumental driver of economic growth.

In view of our finding on inequality, institutions that monitor labour standards should be in place, especially one that is inclined to fostering gender equality. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and its' Parastatals should be empowered with Commissions that will see to the effective compliance of gender equality policies in the public sector, and the management complaints on unfair employment practices and gender discrimination.

[16] Figure 17, Employment in State Civil Service. 2015 Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria [6].

[17] Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, "Despite the widespread movement towards democratization in most countries, women are largely underrepresented at most levels of government, especially in ministerial and other executive bodies, and have made little progress in attaining political power in legislative bodies or in achieving the target endorsed by the Economic and Social Council of having 30 per cent women in positions at decision-making levels by 1995." Although, this does not imply equality, it was seen as a benchmark towards empowering women.

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