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WOMEN IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MATHEMATICS: A STRATEGY FOR POVERTY ERADICATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

MRS KONYEME JOSEPHINE ESE

STRACT

Science and technology are the incontrovertible bases of socio-economic development. Poverty and technology are inversely related. All over the world, Science and technology are the bedrock for national development. The more women are involved in science and technology, the greater the pace of national growth, development and thus poverty eradication in Nigeria. According to popular saying "If you educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman you educate a nation". This paper reviews the status of women in science and technology and suggestions were proffered to ameliorate the situation.

RODUCTION

Science and technology has been known to be the foundation for the development of any nation. It is obvious that for a country to advance, there is the need to increase the scientific and technological knowledge and competence of the citizenry, especially for the men who contribute immensely to the income of the family.

Poverty itself has been identified as one of the major problems facing humanity especially people in the third world countries. This is more pronounced in Nigeria where poverty is endemic and high. Hence poverty in absolute terms means a condition in which a person or group of persons are unable to satisfy their basic and elementary requirements (needs) of human survival in terms of food, clothing, foot wear, energy, transport, health, education and recreation (FRN 2002).

Poverty according to Olowononi (1997) is an annual income below which one automatically becomes poor. Poverty can be said to mean an inability to provide a socially acceptable standard of living. In 1985 there were 35 million Nigerians below the poverty line. By 1996, the figure has risen to 67 million, (Federal Office of Statistics, 1996).

This shows that poverty in Nigeria is on the increase. Nigeria as a country, is still ranked among the poorest nations in the world with most Nigerians living below the United Nations stipulated relative poverty level. (Eno, 2000). Poverty has devastating effects like, misery, stress, tension, hunger, loss of identity, diseases, crime, armed robbery, health and prostitution.

It has been established that women constitute about 50 percent of the Nigerian population (2006 census) and most of them lack necessary education in science and technology. Various studies have been carried out on women involvement in science and technology and more are still going on to harness the potentials of women. Such studies among others include Okeke (1986), STAN (1992), Balogun (1994), Onocha (1988), Mordi (2000), and Ogwuazor (2001). There is therefore a need to develop local and national co-ordinated programmes to promote women's interest in science education in Nigeria. The ability to earn a living will increase. It will also increase individuals' independence, self-esteem and enable women contribute to development of the society, thereby helping to encourage individual substances and the eradication of poverty. This paper will review Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) and its failure, and women's participation in Science and Technology as a vehicle to poverty eradication.