



## **Challenges of Gender Mainstreaming Awareness in Abia State Civil Service**

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### **Abstract**

*The concept of gender mainstreaming is gaining increasing recognition in the civil service as a strategy for achieving gender equality in the workplace. This study aimed to explore the challenges of gender mainstreaming awareness among civil servants in various departments of the selected state ministries. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study adopted the multi-staged sampling method (Purposive sampling technique and Snowball sampling). A set of inclusive criteria were laid down to guide the selection of respondents and participants for the mixed study. 400 respondents were purposely selected and questionnaires were distributed via the aid of a snowball sampling process in which 387 questionnaires were properly filled and retrieved. SPSS version 26 was used to analyzed the data gotten quantitatively. A survey was conducted among a sample of civil servants, and the results showed that while most respondents were aware of gender mainstreaming, there were varying levels of understanding and implementation across different departments and agencies. Some respondents believed that gender mainstreaming was simply about increasing the number of women in leadership positions, while others saw it as a broader strategy for addressing gender-based discrimination and promoting gender equality throughout the organization. The study highlights the need for further education and training on gender mainstreaming in the civil service to ensure that it is fully integrated into organizational practices and policies. It was also recommended the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming policies and initiatives in the civil service. For further research, the researcher suggested the examination of the relationship between organizational culture and the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in the civil service.*

**Key words: Awareness, Challenges, Civil Service, Gender Mainstreaming**

## Introduction

The challenges of gender mainstreaming awareness in Abia State Civil Service pose significant barriers to achieving gender equality and inclusivity within the organization. Despite efforts to promote gender equality globally, research has shown that gender disparities persist in various sectors, including the civil service (World Economic Forum, 2020). Gender mainstreaming, which involves integrating a gender perspective into policies, programs, and decision-making processes, is a crucial strategy for addressing these disparities and promoting gender equality (United Nations, 1997). However, the lack of awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming among civil service employees in Abia State hinders its effective implementation. The limited awareness regarding the concepts and principles of gender mainstreaming may lead to the perpetuation of gender biases and discriminatory practices within the civil service (Chigbu & Odigboh, 2019). This can result in unequal opportunities, limited career advancement for women, and a lack of policies and programs that address the specific needs and challenges faced by women in the workforce (Ajaero & Akanwa, 2018).

While gender inequality still puts women at a disadvantage, discriminatory gender practices and policies can also have negative effects on men and boys (United Nations Development Program - UNDP, 2015). No culture can flourish over the long term until men and women are given the same opportunities, resources, and decision-making power in their personal and communal spheres of influence. Investment in girls' and women's education and access to resources pays dividends for future generations' health and education (United States Agency for International Development - USAID, 2010). To achieve gender equality in the workforce, gender mainstreaming can be used. The purpose is to promote gender equality and combat prejudice by the equitable participation of women and men at all stages of policymaking, regulatory development, implementation, monitoring, and assessment. The method collects gender-related worries in order to provide targeted replies when appropriate (Staudt, 2018), rather than only recognising the challenges individually.

Gender equality is crucial to society's development, however in Nepal, the gender gap remains in every industry. Women still have a lower literacy rate than males do (56.4 vs. 75.1%). The higher a woman's level of education, the less likely she is to participate in politics. To illustrate how challenging it is for women to obtain paid employment, consider that 64% of all women labour for themselves or their families without income. Women in Nepal have it tough, according to data

compiled by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2014. Nepal ranks 98 out of 187 countries on the United Nations Development Program's (2013) gender disparity index. Eighty-four percent of women who have suffered physical abuse in their marriage place the responsibility on their husband, according to the Nepal Demographic Health Survey (NDHS), which was cited by the Nepalese Ministry of Health and Population in 2012.

Despite the fact that more women are entering formerly male-dominated occupations, they still make up a small percentage of senior executives (Obamiro & Obasan, 2013). Researchers have pointed to a number of socioeconomic reasons as examples of the challenges women face in and out of leadership roles. The fundamental goal of several recent programmes has been to make life easier for low-income women in leadership positions. One such project is the National Empowerment and Development Strategy plan (Ogundele et al., 2011). Although many ideas are conceptually similar to this one, putting them into effect is not always straightforward. This is especially true in traditionally male-dominated industries including mining, aviation, construction, and manufacturing, say Kolade and Kehinde (2013). It is often believed in Nigeria that a woman must choose between a successful job and a pleasant family life, as though the two are mutually exclusive (Agi, 2014). Few studies look at how an organisation is built in a way that might impact how it is implemented (Watts, 2009), even if the majority of research on gender focuses on effective techniques to move closer to equality or at least progress the cause ahead. These forms of research reveal gaps in our understanding of how decision-makers in organisations feel about gender mainstreaming. More research and writing on the issue of how Nigerian organisations may effectively include women in their initiatives is required, as stated by Mordi et al. (2011). The goal of this psychological study is to collect people's impressions about gender mainstreaming in Nigeria.

Gender disparity persists today despite decades of effort by women's groups advocating for equal rights and the efforts of governments, the United Nations, and other international and regional organisations. Global economic and power imbalances are exacerbated by the fact that millions of women and girls face obstacles to education and employment (UN, 2008). Despite widespread encouragement for gender parity, the Nigerian bureaucracy stubbornly resists change. For some men, the possibility of a fairer society means giving up the power and financial incentives that come with being a male, and this reluctance stems from the vast discrepancy in public service personnel between men and women. Some males may be against gender equality because they believe in inherent masculine superiority (Kohei, 2011).

There is little information available about the opinions of the senior male decision-makers in Nigeria's male-dominated industries on GM (Kolade & Kehinde, 2013). Gender mainstreaming practises have been reluctant to catch on in male-dominated Nigerian organisations (Kolade & Kehinde, 2013), in contrast to the rest of Europe. Gender mainstreaming is more likely to be effective if it is targeted to address specific challenges and seize promising possibilities (Ejumudo, 2013). Nwagbara and Eneji (2019) note the importance of evaluating such elements as facilitators of Gender mainstreaming in the context of the Nigerian workplace. Organisational development (OD), executive sponsorship, and organisational learning (org learning) must all be in step with Gender Mainstreaming's ultimate purpose of producing results that promote gender equality (Staudt, 2018). Institutional backing, such as policies and practises that uphold a gender-enabling culture, is consistent with the aims of mainstreaming (Alonso, 2017).

By restricting women's mobility, patriarchal societies normalise and sometimes encourage sexual assault and other types of violence against women and those who advocate for the complete elimination of patriarchy often use this line of reasoning (Flory, 2014). Cultural norms continue to shape the debate over whether or not women should take charge. Women are still underrepresented in political roles, despite the growing number of legislations protecting their rights. Women are discouraged from running for office because of long-held gender norms. There was a lot of lip service paid to women's empowerment in the political sphere and under democratic governance, but the reality fell far short. Economic Commission for Africa - ECA (2005) notes that achieving gender parity in education and governance does not ensure that women would be empowered in other spheres of society, including the economy and politics. Women in Africa should feel included and valued in the democratic process, just as they do in many other wealthy countries. However, this won't happen (Nebolisa, 2009) so long as women are underrepresented in political leadership roles. Due in large part to a lack of attention from and engagement from the government at all levels, gender equality in Nigeria has made dismal progress. In the struggle for gender equality, there is no winner if women are singled out or disregarded. More has to be done to raise awareness of the idea that gender equality is a social problem that affects and requires the participation of both men and women. Men must learn the significance of gender equality and the ways in which they may help affect change (UN, 2011).

Furthermore, inadequate policies and guidelines on gender mainstreaming in the civil service contribute to the challenges faced. The absence of clear policies and guidelines diminishes the commitment to gender equality, making it difficult to prioritize and integrate gender perspectives

into decision-making processes and organizational practices. This further exacerbates the existing gender disparities and perpetuates gender-based stereotypes and biases within the civil service (Chigbu & Odigboh, 2019). Resource constraints, including financial, human, and technical resources, pose significant barriers to effective gender mainstreaming. Insufficient allocation of resources for training, capacity building, and awareness-raising activities can impede the integration of gender perspectives into the civil service's policies and practices (Ajaero & Akanwa, 2018).

Additionally, the lack of comprehensive and gender-disaggregated data further hampers efforts to address the challenges of gender mainstreaming in Abia State Civil Service. Without reliable data on gender disparities, it becomes challenging to identify and monitor progress, assess the impact of interventions, and make evidence-based decisions that promote gender equality and inclusivity. Hence, the need for the study in accessing the challenges of gender mainstreaming awareness in the civil service in Abia State.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to identify and examine the challenges of gender mainstreaming awareness in the civil service in Abia State.

- I. Examine the effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming in the civil service in Abia State, Nigeria.
- II. Identify the factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants in Abia State, Nigeria.
- III. Identify the challenges civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service in Abia State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

- I. What is the effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming in the civil service in Abia State, Nigeria?
- II. What are the factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants in Abia State, Nigeria?

### III. What challenges civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service in Abia State, Nigeria?

#### **The Concept of Gender Mainstreaming**

According to the United Nations (1997 report), the purpose of gender mainstreaming is to ensure that the perspectives of both men and women are considered throughout the creation of policies, programmes, or projects. The concept of "gender mainstreaming" refers to a method that aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by acknowledging and addressing the distinct problems that men and women have in the same context. According to the European Commission (2020), it is essential to study and investigate the consequences of policies, programmes, and initiatives from both a male and female point of view in order to prevent the perpetuation of gender-based inequities and the reinforcement of gender stereotypes. In order for us to accomplish this objective, we need to adhere to gender-sensitive planning, budgeting, and monitoring practises, as well as actively include and involve both women and men in the decision-making processes that we undertake.

The United Nations and other international organisations have recognised the importance of gender mainstreaming and made it one of their guiding principles (United Nations, 2015). As a result, gender mainstreaming is now an essential component of sustainable development. Although gender mainstreaming has made significant progress, the question of whether or not it is actually effective is still open for discussion among academics and professionals alike (Banerjee, 2016). The term "gender mainstreaming" refers to an initiative that strives to eradicate gender-based inequalities in all facets of society by taking into account the distinct perspectives and experiences of both men and women. In spite of the growing consensus that it is an essential component of sustainable development, additional research is necessary to assess how effectively it operates.

According to Alonso (2017), the term of "gender mainstreaming" (GM) is problematic since it implies that all conversations pertaining to gender should be brought into the mainstream. As opposed to merely recognising the challenges one at a time, this method aggregates gender-related concerns with the intention of developing tailored remedies when appropriate (Staudt, 2018). The process of reorganising, refining, creating, and assessing policy processes with an emphasis on gender equality and mainstreaming is what gender mainstreaming (GM) refers to, according to True (2010). These stages, when taken together, ensure that policies are based on evidence and target gender equality from every conceivable viewpoint (Alonso, 2017). According to Alonso (2017), policymakers in organisations are often the ones that advocate for changes to be made in the manner in which policies are produced.

### **Theoretical Background: Gender Shema Theory**

Gender Schema Theory (GST) is a social-cognitive theory that suggests that individuals develop cognitive structures or schemas based on their gender and that these schemas influence their perception, interpretation, and memory of gender-relevant information (Bem, 1983). According to GST, children begin to develop gender schemas early in life by observing and imitating gender-appropriate behaviors and by being rewarded or punished for gender-inappropriate behaviors. These schemas become more elaborate and complex over time and serve as a filter for processing gender-related information. Gender schemas guide individuals in perceiving and interpreting information consistent with their gender and in remembering gender-congruent information better than gender-incongruent information (Martin & Halverson, 1981).

GST has been supported by research showing that children as young as two years old have gender schemas and that they use them to categorize gender-related information (Martin & Halverson, 1981). Additionally, studies have found that gender schemas can influence memory and attention. For example, adults who were given a list of gender-neutral occupations and were told that they

were either all male or all female recalled the occupations consistent with the gender schema better than those inconsistent with the schema (Hamilton & Gifford, 1976).

In the context of gender mainstreaming, Gender Schema Theory can help to explain how individuals perceive and respond to gender-related policies and practices in the civil service. For example, individuals with gender schemas that prioritize traditional gender roles may be more resistant to policies promoting gender equality, while those with more flexible gender schemas may be more receptive to such policies. Gender Schema Theory also highlights the importance of challenging and changing gender schemas that perpetuate gender inequality. Gender mainstreaming can be seen as a means to challenge traditional gender schemas and promote more inclusive and equitable ways of thinking about gender. By integrating gender considerations into all policies and practices, gender mainstreaming can help to break down gender stereotypes, challenge gender biases, and promote more inclusive and equitable outcomes for all individuals. Overall, Gender Schema Theory highlights the importance of understanding how individuals perceive and interpret gender-related information, and the need to challenge and change gender schemas that perpetuate gender inequality. Gender mainstreaming can be seen as a crucial means to achieving this goal in the civil service and beyond.

Critics of GST argue that it places too much emphasis on the cognitive processing of gender information and ignores other factors, such as socialization and cultural influences, that contribute to gender development (Bandura, 1999). Despite these criticisms, GST has been influential in shaping our understanding of gender development and has provided a framework for exploring the ways in which gender schemas influence our thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

### **Research Methodology**

The study employs a descriptive survey design involving conveniently selected 400 civil servants of Abia State Civil Service Commission. The questionnaire had a total of 18 questions and were



determined using a modified version of a four-point rating scale: Strongly agreed (SA) - 4 Points; Agreed (A) - 3 Points; Disagreed (N) - 2 point; and Strongly Disagreed (D) - 1 Points. The study adopted the multi-staged sampling method (Purposive sampling technique and Snowball sampling technique). Here, the sample size is guided based on a set of criteria hence each respondent had to purposely meet the basic requirements. Also, the researcher selects one or a few participants who meet the criteria and asks them to refer other participants who also meet the criteria.

▪ **Inclusive Criteria**

- ✓ He or she must be between 18 years of age and above
- ✓ He or she must be a civil servants of Abia State Civil Service Commission
- ✓ He or she must at least be a staff with minimum of 5years experience.
- ✓ He or she must be an open-minded on issues of gender mainstreaming
- ✓ The selected respondents must be an inhabitants of Abia State

Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire distributed in Abia State Civil Service Commission (ministries Agencies), 387 copies were properly filled representing 87%. Hence, the total number of questionnaires properly filled and used for this study was three hundred and eighty-seven (387) as displayed in *table 1*.

**Table 1: Population Distribution of Selected Civil Servants of Abia State Civil Service Commission (ministries Agencies).**

S/N	SELECTED MINISTRIES	STATE	DISTRIBUTED QUESTIONNAIRES	RETRIEVED QUESTIONNAIRES	RETRIEVED (%)
1	MINISTRY OF FINANCE		12	11	2
2	MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE		20	20	5
3	MINISTRY OF WORKS		20	19	4
4	MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY		12	12	3
5	MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES AND WATER SUPPLY		12	12	3
6	MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY		20	20	5
7	MINISTRY OF LANDS SURVEY AND URBAN PLANNING		24	23	5
8	MINISTRY OF HEALTH		20	20	5
9	MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CHIEFTAINCY AFFAIRS		24	23	5
10	MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES		24	23	5
11	MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT		24	23	5

12	MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS	36	35	8
13	MINISTRY OF SPORTS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	28	27	6
14	MINISTRY OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND COOPERATIVES	24	23	5
15	MINISTRY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	24	23	5
16	MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, CULTURE AND TOURISM	28	27	6
17	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND SOLID MINERALS DEVELOPMENT	16	15	3
18	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	32	31	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>400</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>Average% = 87</b>

**Source:** Field research (2023)

## Findings of the Study

### *Socio-demographic information of the Respondents*

**Gender:** Revealed that majority (60.2%) of the respondents were male while 39.8% were females.

**Age:** Showed that respondent within the age of 18-30 were more (37.5%). Followed by those within the age of 31-40 years (30.2%), 41-45years (16.8%) and then 51 years and above (15.5%).

**Marital Status:** Revealed that more than half (59.2%) of the respondents were married, 22% were single, 8.5% were in other forms of relationships, 6.2% had separated from their marriages, while 4.1% were widows/widowers.

**Education:** A larger percent of the respondents (41.1%) had S.S.C.E., 34.4% had first degree, 19.9% had FSLC and below, 3.4% had post graduate degrees while 1.3% had other educational qualifications such as professional certificate, skill acquisition certificate etc.

### *Analysis of Research Question*

**Research Question One:** What is the effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming in the civil service in Abia State, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Mean analysis of is the effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming in the civil service**

S/NO	Effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming in the civil service	SA	A	D	SD	Sum	Mean	RMK
1	Awareness is an essential factor that can have a significant impact on the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in the civil service	249	82	49	7	1347	3.48	Agreed
2	Increased awareness can lead to a better understanding of the gender disparities that exist within the civil service	247	87	40	13	1342	3.47	Agreed
3	Exposure to western feminism movement influence gender mainstreaming policies in the workplace	214	105	56	12	1295	3.35	Agreed
4	Awareness can also lead to a culture shift within the civil service towards greater gender inclusivity and diversity	149	76	109	53	1095	2.83	Agreed
5	Increased awareness can encourage civil servants to take steps to address gender equality in the civil service	144	70	129	44	1088	2.81	Agreed
<b>Aggregate</b>		<b>201</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1233</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Source: Field research (2023)

Table 4.2 showed the effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming in the civil service. The result revealed an aggregate mean rating of 3.19. Awareness is an essential factor that can have a significant impact on the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in the civil service; Increased awareness can lead to a better understanding of the gender disparities that exist within the civil service; Exposure to western feminism movement influence gender mainstreaming policies in the workplace; Awareness can also lead to a culture shift within the civil service towards greater gender inclusivity and diversity; Increased awareness can encourage civil servants to take steps to address gender equality in the civil service. However, the strongest effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming was “Awareness is an essential factor that can have a significant impact on the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in the civil service” (3.48) while the least effect was “Increased awareness can encourage civil servants to take steps to address gender equality in the civil service” (2.81).

**Research Question two:** What are the factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants in Abia State, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) analysis of factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants**

S/N	Factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants	SA	A	D	SD	Sum	Mean	Rmk
6	Gender biases and stereotypes are major factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants	143	82	102	60	1082	2.80	Agreed
7	Lack of education and training is a main factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants	131	124	101	31	1129	2.92	Agreed
8	Personal values and beliefs is a major factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants	121	78	120	68	1026	2.65	Agreed
9	Workplace culture biases and Resistance to change are major factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants	148	119	74	46	1143	2.95	Agreed
10	Government policies and regulations is a chief factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants	71	92	148	76	932	2.41	Disagreed
11	Gender representation in leadership is a main factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants	130	90	118	49	1075	2.78	Agreed
<b>Aggregate</b>		<b>124</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Source: Field research (2023)

In *table 4.4*, the result of factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants. The result proved that all the items except item 15 had mean rating above the criterion mean and an aggregate mean of 2.75. Therefore, the respondents agreed that “Gender biases and stereotypes are major factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants; Lack of education and training is a main factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants; Personal values and beliefs is a major factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants; Workplace culture biases and Resistance to change are major factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants; Gender representation in leadership is a main factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants. However, the respondents disagreed on the fact

that Government policies and regulations is a chief factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants.

**Research Question Three:** What challenges do civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service in Abia State, Nigeria?

**Table 4: Mean and SD analysis of challenges civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service**

S/N	Challenges do civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service	SA	A	D	SD	Sum	Mean	RMK
12	Gender biases and stereotypes affects how civil servants perceive gender mainstreaming initiatives and can hinder their effectiveness.	118	71	140	58	1023	2.64	Agreed
13	A lack of leadership support can make it difficult to implement gender mainstreaming initiatives effectively.	127	61	128	71	1018	2.63	Agreed
14	Political factors, including changes in government and shifting priorities, impacts the implementation of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the civil service	129	85	109	64	1053	2.72	Agreed
15	Without clear accountability mechanisms, it is challenging to ensure that gender mainstreaming initiatives are implemented effectively.	100	133	88	66	1041	2.69	Agreed
16	A lack of awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming is a significant barrier to its implementation because most civil servants are not familiar with the concept and don't understand how to apply it in their work	145	152	53	37	1179	3.05	Agreed
17	Most civil servants are resistant to new initiatives and are hesitant to change the way they work hence a significant challenge to implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service	189	94	57	47	1199	3.10	Agreed
18	The ministerial organizational culture is not supportive of gender equality and makes it difficult to implement gender mainstreaming initiatives effectively	167	121	21	78	1151	2.97	Agreed
<b>Aggregate</b>		<b>139</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>2.83</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Source: Field research (2023)

Table 4.6 presented the result of the mean analysis of challenges civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service. The result pointed out that the items had an aggregate mean rating of 2.83. This implies that the respondents agreed that: Gender biases and stereotypes affects how civil servants perceive gender mainstreaming initiatives and can hinder their effectiveness; A lack of leadership support can make it difficult to implement gender

mainstreaming initiatives effectively; Political factors, including changes in government and shifting priorities, impacts the implementation of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the civil service; Without clear accountability mechanisms, it is challenging to ensure that gender mainstreaming initiatives are implemented effectively; A lack of awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming is a significant barrier to its implementation because most civil servants are not familiar with the concept and don't understand how to apply it in their work; Most civil servants are resistant to new initiatives and are hesitant to change the way they work hence a significant challenge to implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service; The ministerial organizational culture is not supportive of gender equality and makes it difficult to implement gender mainstreaming initiatives effectively. However, "Most civil servants are resistant to new initiatives and are hesitant to change the way they work hence a significant challenge to implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service" was the least agreed upon.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **❖ The Effect of Awareness on Gender Mainstreaming in the Civil Service**

The effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming in the civil service includes: Awareness is an essential factor that can have a significant impact on the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in the civil service; Increased awareness can lead to a better understanding of the gender disparities that exist within the civil service; Exposure to western feminism movement influence gender mainstreaming policies in the workplace; Awareness can also lead to a culture shift within the civil service towards greater gender inclusivity and diversity; Increased awareness can encourage civil servants to take steps to address gender equality in the civil service. However, the strongest effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming was "Awareness is an essential factor that can have a significant impact on the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in the civil

service” while the least effect was “Increased awareness can encourage civil servants to take steps to address gender equality in the civil service”.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that aims to ensure that the needs, perspectives, and experiences of women and men are integrated into the policies, programs, and activities of organizations. It is an important concept that has gained momentum in recent years, as organizations seek to promote gender equality and empower women. In the civil service, gender mainstreaming has become a key priority for many governments, as they recognize the importance of creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce. However, the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the civil service depends on the level of awareness and understanding of the issue among civil servants.

The effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming in the civil service is significant. When civil servants are aware of the importance of gender mainstreaming and understand the ways in which it can be implemented, they are more likely to incorporate it into their work. This can lead to better policies, programs, and activities that are more responsive to the needs of women and men. Additionally, when civil servants are aware of the importance of gender mainstreaming, they are more likely to be supportive of initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women.

One of the key benefits of awareness of gender mainstreaming is that it can help to change attitudes and behaviors among civil servants. Many civil servants may have unconscious biases that affect the way they approach their work. These biases may lead them to overlook the needs of women or assume that certain roles or activities are more suited to men. However, when civil servants are made aware of the importance of gender mainstreaming, they are more likely to challenge these biases and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace.

Another important factor that affects the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the civil service is leadership. When leaders at all levels of the civil service are committed to promoting gender equality and empowering women, they are more likely to prioritize gender mainstreaming and ensure that it is integrated into all aspects of their work. This includes ensuring that gender considerations are taken into account when developing policies and programs, as well as providing training and support for civil servants to help them understand and implement gender mainstreaming.

This finding is in congruent with the findings of Slegh et al. (2014). According to their survey, approximately forty percent of men and sixty-one and a half percent of women in Congo had a moderate attitude towards gender equality, while at least eighteen percent of men and six percent of women had a high equitable attitude towards gender equality. According to the results of the survey, a similar percentage of men (32.6%) and women (33.9%) held a negative attitude on the subject of gender equality. Slegh et al. (2014) came to the conclusion that despite the efforts that have been made to eliminate it, gender imbalance still exists.

In conclusion, the effect of awareness on gender mainstreaming in the civil service is significant. When civil servants are aware of the importance of gender mainstreaming and understand the ways in which it can be implemented, they are more likely to incorporate it into their work. This can lead to better policies, programs, and activities that are more responsive to the needs of women and men. Additionally, when civil servants are aware of the importance of gender mainstreaming, they are more likely to be supportive of initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women. Therefore, it is important for governments to invest in awareness-raising initiatives and provide training and support for civil servants to help them understand and implement gender mainstreaming.



### ❖ **Factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants**

The factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants includes: “Gender biases and stereotypes are major factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants; Lack of education and training is a main factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants; Personal values and beliefs is a major factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants; Workplace culture biases and Resistance to change are major factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants; Gender representation in leadership is a main factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants. However, the respondents disagreed on the fact that Government policies and regulations is a chief factor that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that aims to ensure that the needs, perspectives, and experiences of both women and men are integrated into the policies, programs, and activities of organizations. It is an important concept that has gained momentum in recent years, as governments seek to promote gender equality and empower women in the civil service. However, the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the civil service depends on the awareness and perception of civil servants towards the concept. In summary, the factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants:

1. **Training and Education:** One of the primary factors that influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants is the level of training and education they receive on the topic. Civil servants who receive adequate training and education on gender mainstreaming are more likely to understand its importance and how

it can be integrated into their work. On the other hand, civil servants who do not receive sufficient training may have a limited understanding of gender mainstreaming and may view it as an unnecessary burden.

2. **Leadership and Management:** Another important factor that influences the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants is the leadership and management within the organization. Leaders who prioritize diversity and inclusion are more likely to promote gender mainstreaming and ensure that it is integrated into all aspects of the organization. On the other hand, leaders who do not prioritize diversity and inclusion may view gender mainstreaming as an unnecessary distraction from their primary responsibilities.
3. **Organizational Culture and Values:** The culture and values of the organization can also significantly influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants. Organizations that prioritize diversity and inclusion are more likely to have a positive perception of gender mainstreaming, while organizations that do not prioritize these values may view gender mainstreaming as an unnecessary burden. Additionally, organizations that have a history of discrimination or unequal treatment of women may have a negative perception of gender mainstreaming.
4. **Personal Beliefs and Attitudes:** Personal beliefs and attitudes towards gender roles and gender equality can also significantly influence the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants. Civil servants who hold traditional beliefs about gender roles may view gender mainstreaming as unnecessary or may resist efforts to promote gender equality. On the other hand, civil servants who support gender equality may be more likely to view gender mainstreaming positively and work towards integrating it into their work.

Consistently, the finding is in consistent with the findings of Elene, Nina, Maia, and Mariam (2013) It was discovered that young people reported high levels of traditional gender role attitude. This represents a belief in gender stereotypes regarding the value of sons and daughters, the gender role in the home, and women's personal lives. In addition, it shows that young people have high levels of traditional gender role attitude.

In conclusion, the awareness and perception of gender mainstreaming among civil servants is influenced by a variety of factors. These factors include training and education, leadership and management, organizational culture and values, and personal beliefs and attitudes. To promote gender equality and empower women in the civil service, it is important for governments and organizations to invest in awareness-raising initiatives, provide training and education on gender mainstreaming, and create a culture that prioritizes diversity and inclusion. Additionally, efforts should be made to address personal beliefs and attitudes that may hinder the integration of gender mainstreaming into the civil service.

❖ **Challenges civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service**

Challenges civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service includes: Gender biases and stereotypes affects how civil servants perceive gender mainstreaming initiatives and can hinder their effectiveness; A lack of leadership support can make it difficult to implement gender mainstreaming initiatives effectively; Political factors, including changes in government and shifting priorities, impacts the implementation of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the civil service; Without clear accountability mechanisms, it is challenging to ensure that gender mainstreaming initiatives are implemented effectively; A lack of awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming is a significant barrier to its implementation because most civil servants are not familiar with the concept and don't understand how to apply it in their work; Most civil

servants are resistant to new initiatives and are hesitant to change the way they work hence a significant challenge to implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service; The ministerial organizational culture is not supportive of gender equality and makes it difficult to implement gender mainstreaming initiatives effectively. However, “Most civil servants are resistant to new initiatives and are hesitant to change the way they work hence a significant challenge to implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service” was the least agreed upon.

Gender mainstreaming is a critical strategy that aims to ensure that gender equality and diversity are integrated into the policies, programs, and activities of organizations, including the civil service. However, despite its importance, civil servants often face significant challenges in implementing gender mainstreaming. In this research, some of the key challenges civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service.

1. **Resistance to Change:** One of the main challenges that civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming is resistance to change. Many civil servants may be resistant to change, particularly if they have been working in the same organization for a long time. Gender mainstreaming requires a significant shift in mindset and approach, and some civil servants may not be willing to adopt new ways of thinking and working.
2. **Lack of Awareness and Understanding:** Another significant challenge that civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming is a lack of awareness and understanding of the concept. Many civil servants may not fully understand what gender mainstreaming entails, or they may not be aware of its importance. Without a clear understanding of gender mainstreaming, civil servants may struggle to integrate it into their work.
3. **Institutional Barriers:** Institutional barriers can also pose significant challenges to the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the civil service. These barriers may include

policies, procedures, and organizational cultures that do not support gender mainstreaming.

Civil servants may face challenges in implementing gender mainstreaming if they are working within an organization that does not prioritize gender equality and diversity.

4. **Lack of Resources:** Another challenge that civil servants face in implementing gender mainstreaming is a lack of resources. Gender mainstreaming requires resources such as time, funding, and expertise to be effectively integrated into policies and programs. Without adequate resources, civil servants may struggle to implement gender mainstreaming effectively.
5. **Resistance from Colleagues:** Finally, civil servants may face resistance from their colleagues when trying to implement gender mainstreaming. Some civil servants may view gender mainstreaming as unnecessary or may not fully understand its importance, which can make it difficult to gain buy-in from colleagues.

This finding is in corresponding with the findings of Nanda et al. (2012), conducted a survey in Vietnam with both parents and their sons in order to have a better understanding of gender roles and what constitutes masculinity. A total of 1,425 men participated in the survey. According to the findings, an overwhelming majority of men (81%) believe that males should have the final say in all matters pertaining to the family, whilst an overwhelming majority of women (78%), care for the home and make food for the family. More over sixty percent of the men who participated in the poll agreed that a woman's major job after marriage is to produce children for her husband's family, and sixty-one-point seven percent of the men claimed that at the time of marriage, a woman becomes a member of her husband's family. According to the findings of the study, about three quarters of men (73%) were informed with the legislation governing abortion, 37% were knowledgeable about the law protecting daughters' inheritance rights, and 62% were knowledgeable about the law prohibiting violence against women. According to the research

conducted by Nanda et al. (2012), one of the findings was that men valued the traditional gender roles and that a stronger mobilisation of resources was required to promote gender parity.

In conclusion, implementing gender mainstreaming in the civil service is not without its challenges. Civil servants may face resistance to change, a lack of awareness and understanding, institutional barriers, a lack of resources, and resistance from colleagues when trying to implement gender mainstreaming. However, these challenges can be overcome with effective leadership, training, and resources. Ultimately, a commitment to gender equality and diversity can lead to a more effective and inclusive civil service that better serves all members of society.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

On the basis of the results, this study recommended that:

1. **Training and Capacity Building:** Organize regular training programs and capacity-building workshops to enhance awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming among civil service employees in Abia State. These programs should focus on topics such as gender equality, gender-based violence, unconscious bias, and inclusive policies.
2. **Policy Development and Implementation:** Develop comprehensive gender mainstreaming policies that clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of civil service employees in promoting gender equality. Ensure that these policies are effectively communicated, widely disseminated, and integrated into the day-to-day operations of the civil service.
3. **Leadership Commitment:** Foster a culture of gender equality and inclusivity by encouraging strong leadership commitment at all levels of the civil service in Abia State. This includes promoting the participation of women in decision-making processes and ensuring that gender mainstreaming is prioritized in strategic planning and resource allocation.

4. **Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct targeted awareness campaigns to educate civil service employees about the importance of gender mainstreaming and its impact on organizational performance. Utilize various communication channels, such as newsletters, intranet portals, and social media, to disseminate information, success stories, and best practices.
5. **Gender Disaggregated Data:** Collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data to identify gaps and monitor progress in gender mainstreaming efforts within the civil service. This data will provide valuable insights into areas that require attention and enable evidence-based decision-making.
6. **Sensitization Programs:** Collaborate with civil society organizations, women's groups, and other stakeholders to organize sensitization programs on gender equality and mainstreaming. These programs can include workshops, panel discussions, and interactive sessions aimed at challenging gender stereotypes and promoting positive attitudes towards gender equality.
7. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the civil service. Regularly review and evaluate the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies, identify bottlenecks and challenges, and make necessary adjustments to ensure continuous improvement.
8. **Gender Focal Points:** Designate gender focal points within each department or unit of the civil service to serve as champions for gender mainstreaming. These focal points should receive specialized training, act as a resource for their colleagues, and facilitate the integration of gender perspectives into work processes and decision-making.
9. **Collaboration and Networking:** Foster collaboration and networking opportunities with other government agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners working on gender mainstreaming. This collaboration can provide access to expertise, resources,

and best practices, ultimately strengthening gender mainstreaming efforts in the civil service.

10. Encourage Employee Engagement: Create platforms for civil service employees to actively participate in gender mainstreaming initiatives. Encourage open dialogue, solicit feedback and suggestions, and recognize and reward individuals and departments that demonstrate outstanding commitment to gender equality.

By implementing these recommendations, Abia State Civil Service can address the challenges of gender mainstreaming awareness and create an inclusive work environment that promotes gender equality and empowers all employees to contribute to the state's development.

In conclusion, the challenges of gender mainstreaming awareness in Abia State Civil Service are significant but not insurmountable. Efforts to promote gender equality and inclusivity within the civil service can face obstacles such as lack of awareness, ingrained biases, limited resources, and inadequate policies. However, by adopting a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach, these challenges can be addressed effectively. The recommendations provided offer a roadmap for overcoming the challenges of gender mainstreaming awareness. Training and capacity building, policy development and implementation, leadership commitment, awareness campaigns, gender-disaggregated data collection, sensitization programs, monitoring and evaluation, gender focal points, collaboration and networking, and employee engagement are key areas to focus on.

It is crucial for Abia State Civil Service to recognize the importance of gender mainstreaming and its positive impact on organizational performance. By prioritizing gender equality and inclusivity, the civil service can foster a work environment that is fair, respectful, and conducive to the professional growth and development of all employees. Ultimately, the success of gender mainstreaming efforts in Abia State Civil Service will require the collective commitment and collaboration of all stakeholders, including civil service employees, leaders, policymakers, civil society organizations, and development partners. By working together, Abia State can build a civil service that is truly inclusive, where the contributions and potential of both men and women are recognized, valued, and utilized to their fullest extent.

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