

**GENDER ISSUE AND ITS IMPLICATION
FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN
NIGERIA**

Deborah Adetoro OGUNJIMI

Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Lanlate Campus,
School of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Social Studies.

Abstract

This paper examined the current development in gender issues and its implication for national development in Nigeria. Despite a lot of development on these issues it is noted that an assessment of the status of woman in Nigeria shows no significant departure from the past practice and position of woman in relation to gender, where women social roles have been valued as inferior to those of men. So this further informs the yardstick for the distribution of power, position, prestige and wealth in Nigeria. Attempt is therefore made to examine critically steps to be taken to improve on women rating in the country. In this presentation the various developments on gender issues, causes of gender imbalance were examined.

Introduction

The economic, social and political development of females have been imbalanced in comparison to the male folk. It is generally believed that changes in a system often generate effects in both positive and negative angles for the system. Thus the changes that have emanated from the education and civilization of women have culminated in some positive and negative effects in respect to genuine emancipation of Nigerian women and the emergence of women movements. It has

become necessary to effect a proper analysis of these problems with a view to proffering solutions.

The Female gender

The female gender or women constitute over 50 percent of the world's population. In spite of this advantage in terms of population, women are disadvantaged and enjoy few privileges and rights relative to the male gender or men. This poor global record of women's status is worse on the African continent. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki>

The United Nations defines women as the feminine component of the human species who apart from serving as a vehicle for nurturing human life, are also producers, consumers and an equally endowed agent for fostering a wholesome political, social and economic development in the society. The participation of women in every aspect of national life contributes to development (Dauda, 2004). We must note that sustainable development strictly depends on the ability to optimally use our vast natural and human resources without any gender bias (Egwemi, 2006).

Be that as it may, it is also true that women have been discriminated against in all spheres of life. The "gender-blind policy environment" in Nigeria has created hindrances to women's participation in societal pursuits. Against this background of gender discriminatory practices, advocacy has been for the "engendering" of policies such that women can actively engage themselves in and contribute to the development of their societies (Dauda, 2004). The matter of equal or better representation of women is considered very important for the proper development of my country. The seriousness devoted to it is reflected in the Declaration of Affirmative Action by the United Nations Conference on Women (1995), in Beijing, where it was decided that 30% of all positions in government owned concerns and agencies should be given to women (Dauda, 2004).

In Nigeria as Dauda has argued 'appropriate legislation related to the Beijing Declaration is yet to be considered and put in place' (Dauda, 2004 :83). The process of enlightening and encouraging women to participate has been undertaken largely by women's organization (Dauda, 2004). The role of women in development issues has been minimal especially in developing countries. In fact as the UNICEF

has noted "there is a dreadful apartheid of gender going on in the developing world (Awake, 1998).

The factors which has hindered the advancement of women include cultural practices such as early marriage (Obanya, 2003), domestic violence (Ojo, 2006), superstition and preference for boys (Awake, 1988) and use of language (Onyeizugbo, 2003). Various Developments on Gender Issue

Feminist Movement in Nigeria

Since the beginning of this century many women individually and in groups have come to the realization that for the women to be liberated from the shackles of under-development and inequality, which have plagued virtually almost all societies in African women's movements, must emerge to talk in one voice against this disparity in the social existence of human beings. Women believe that for this of patriarchy to be eradicated they must be organized so the clamor today among women for liberation, women education, emancipation equality of women to men, fight for women rights e.t.c can be contribute to the influence of women's liberation movements. (Feminist move (was inaugurated in 1982)

International Treaties

With the efforts of feminist movement, Nigeria has acceded to many regional and international treaties on women's equality and development.

These includes

- "The international Bill of Human rights" stipulates in Articles 1 and 2 of equal rights of man and women.
- Nigeria participated and ratified the convention on political Rights of women in 1980

In 1986, Nigeria ratified the 1979 international treaty which requires state s to implement the convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women on which the UN General Assembly demanded accountability from all its members. Article 2 of the convention is a Condemnation of any form of discrimination and demanded equality of men and women in the national constitutions

- Constitutional Provision

The 1979 constitution of Nigeria spelt out in categorical terms in section 39, the equality of men and women, prohibiting and discrimination on the basis of sex, so also the 1999 constitution.

With all these developments

- Practical situation in Nigeria portrays that public authorities still enforce discriminatory policies against women. For instance, women are still denied the right to sign surety for a bail:
- Government had acceded to these conventions as far back as many years ago, majority of the citizens are not aware of their existence;
- There still remains unequal treatment and inferior status for women which can be tantamount to dehumanization.

It is against this background, we hope to analyze way towards the putting in practical of those ideas that would authentically lead to the actualization of the Womanhood in Nigeria women.

Causes of Gender Imbalance

There are opposing views concerning the causes of gender imbalance and consequently the requirement to overcome the imbalance.

1. Traditional stance:- The traditionalists advocate that the situation as it is now or as it was is quite normal. It was alright before the emergence of feminist movements. It claimed that women and men are not equal, women are inferior to men. They are passive, submissive, and have difference roles to perform. (Adwww. Questia. Com/feminism and History on line at the Questia library).
2. Liberal stance:- Insisted contrary to the above that the stereotyping of sex role is a social injustice. It claimed that any women who wants to be a housewife and mother and stick to them is in the right direction but it becomes evil if she has to be forced against her will to stick dogmatically to these roles, she must not be excluded systemically from other jobs on account of her sex that is the rights of women in economic, social, legal and political sphere be equaled their worth and should be

appreciated on the basis of abilities and performance. The liberal does not condemn all traditional sex roles nor does she require the abolition of all traditional family values though she calls for other options as style of living. (Adwww. Questia. Com/feminism and History on line at the Questia library).

3. Contrary to the view of the liberal is that which argues that freedom can be realized by the reformation of the system. Most prominent in this regard is the radical feminist school of thought that argues that the only way to freedom is the total over-throw of the political system. The marriage institution and family units are examples of political institutions. This is the radical feminist position when advocates complete revolution of the system and not mere reform. Thus biological differences between men women, men's physical strength, weakness of women occasioned by child bearing made women dependent and men dominant and this result in oppression. For females to be liberated, biological differences must be transformed with the aid of technology through means of contraception and artificial reproduction" which will free them from inequalities. Within this radical proposition, freedom and equally negate the choice of a traditional female roles.

The Principle of Genuine Human Realization

Based on the contradiction and confusion apparent in the above theories of gender issues our aim is to apply the principle of genuine Human Realization to direct attention to those values that could result in the genuine actualization of personhood in gender.

The Implication for National Development

The implication of this paper on gender issues is that for the authentic abolition of the dehumanization and the equivalent underdevelopment of the Nigerian women, the government, men and women have various roles to play.

The Role of Government

- * Government has developed a blue print on the education of women to encourage formal education and to promote their entry into professional courses.

- * In 1989, Government established the National Commission for women to promote and supervise the advancement of women development.
- * In January 1995, Ministry of Women Affairs and social welfare were created.
- * Different programmes were put in place for women i.e Better life for Rural women, Family Support Programme (FSP), FEAP, SEAP, Poverty Alleviation Programmes, Maryam Babangida initiated better life for Women. Maryam Abacha initiated Family Support Programme: The current First Lady, Mrs. Stella Obasanjo initiated a programmed aimed at assisting children; while Amina Titi Atiku Abubakar has a programme for the eradication of women trafficking Mrs. Patience Goodluck Jonathan also put up a programme “Women for change and Development initiative” (W4CDD). At state levels, the wives of governors also initiated series of programmes all aimed at uplifting the lives of women. The wife of the present governor of Oyo State initiates, food Bank, summit on Education and child rights, ABC clinic, widow and aged clinics, all are manifestation of government effort for the upliftment of women. With all these women are still been discriminates against, so there is problem in practicalizing all the theories
 - So Government should embark on identifying gender based difference, disparities in roles, constraints, needs and opportunity and consider the strategies of other counties.
 - To be able to put into practice government’s intention for gender balance, Nigerian government could borrow a leaf from the Norwegian governmental practices that has yielded positive results in terms of women’s liberation, Although, out all their strategies can be suitable for the Nigerian situation but some can be useful.
 - Employing the quota system for government appointments. The Norwegian quota system states that there must be a proportion of 40-60 gender balancing in every government board.

Government should establish government inspected facilities for child care where they can be kept during working hours so that women will have time to participate adequately in public life.

- Men in Norway are granted paternity leave when wives are not at home, so that they can take care, Nigeria can also adopt this.
- Government should include women at all decision making levels such as imposing quotas and targets.
- Let there be free education for the female gender up to university level.
- Leadership training and the fostering work condition conducive to working partnership between women and men should always be done.
- Men should be ready to make sacrifices and assume more duties in child caring.
- Women should always struggle for liberation through:
 - * Stoppage of "Men taking decision while women take the consequences"
 - * Come together in unity to voice out issues that affect them.
 - * Realize that the feminist position of child bearing is a unique duty that confers on women a rare dignity.

Mini Survey programmes for Women in Ibadan /Ibarapa Division

Woman must be involved in the formulation and implementation of any government programmes.

Lagelu Local Government, with Headquarters in Iyana-offa one of the oldest Local Government, in Oyo State. It has been in existence since the old Oyo State as one of the 24 Local Government before the carrying out of Osun State from Oyo State and presently it is of the five front Local Government in the presently 33 Local Government of Oyo State.

Polls within the 11 Ibadan/Ibarapa Local Government and among the Ibadan less city/rural Local Government.

Although it is both rural and city Local Government as part of it spanned from Iwo Road under the bridge down to Iyana church/ lalupon.

Women in the Local Government

Women and children in the Local Government make up for more than sixty percent {60%}.

Minority are of their population are Educated while the majority of the population {women} one Semi-illiterates or Stark illiterate.

They are petty traders and farmers doing minial jobs and one the less privledge in the society.

The Local Government has planned to be giving women folks the best they can, for them to enjoy the dividend of democracy.

1. There is a monthly meeting held every 2nd Thursday of the month where they deliberates and report issues on how to move further and especially on how to forge further in dwindling economic condition of the country. These programmes spans from health, education, agriculture, commerce and others spheres of life.

The plans as followed by the Local Government in that every quarters of the year there is always a training programme for women in different trades as planned by the Department of Education and social services of the Local Government.

December been the last month of the year is always slated for joint Get together for women folks of the Local Government, not only them the aged, the widows, widowers, people with disabilities and venerable people in the society.

The training programme is to fated round the three zones of the Local Government with different locations and communities were chosen as venues for the quarterly programme {1} Zone one Lalupon/ Ejioku zone {2} Zone two Oyedeji zone {3} Zone three Olorunda/ Iwo Road Alegongo.

1. Time of Studu August 2013 - August 2015
August 13-08-2013
Programme – Health {HEALTH CARE AND ENVIROMENTAL}

Initiator – The Chairman

Lagelu Local Government

Through the wife of the Local Government chairman

Hon. {Alhaji and Alhaja} Olafisoye Akinmoyede

And co-ordinated by the Department of Education and Social Services Lagelu Local Government.

Facilitator – Environmentalist Ojetunde A. Director of Environmental health sciences Lagelu Local Government Iyana offa
What the programme is all about is training the women and children in Oyediji Zone of the Local Government on how to sanitize and purify their waters/well and other water sources for a better domestic use.

People were properly trained on how to manage and/take good care of the water resources and this has considerable increase the health condition of the Oyediji and environs and it has reduced outbreak of diseases and common diseases.

Chemicals were distributed to the participant for the chlor-nation of the wells and rivers with sieve distributed to them and new rubber/ plastic buckets / kegs were given to them for processing their drinking water.

1. 10/12/2014 ,End of year party was organized for women and children Initiator were as in the previous case

A get together party for the target groups so that they can fraternized with each others.

Facilitator – staffers of the Department of Local Government department of Education and social services.

People had a time of relaxation and many gifts of food items, cloth and clothing's with cash were distributed to the participant by the Local Government authority and it also serve as poverty allocation programme.

Venue - Local Government

Teachers tower

Iyana offa

Date 14/01/2014

Venue – Lalupon City Hall

Agricultural training in rearing Snails and Poultry Initiator –The chairman and his wife

/The Department of Education and social services

Facilitators – Director of Agricultural and natural resources, agricultural department Lagelu Local Government Mr. Tunde Omolewu {J.P}

1. Training women on how to rear, breed Snails and Chicken.
Training in snailry and poultry as a domestic trade which is of less financial implication in a small space within their neighbourhood
2. Many of the participants at the end of the day were able to learn how to rear these things with a less capital and less effort. This increase their financial status and served as a boost to their diet. #20,000 was given to each participant.

Date 13/05/2014

Venue – Monatan high School {school hall} olorunda zone

Training of women on beads making, stove tread, candle e.t.c

Initiator – The chairman and his wife

Facilitator - NYSC member in the local government.

Training of women on how to improve their economic background through self-sustenance t small scale industries {self –sustainability} in the trades of beads making, starch making, soap making stove tread making and candle making.

At the end of the training programme the women were able to be trained in the act of making these items and their economic base were increases by the local government with #20,000 to each of the fifty participants.

Date 09/09/2014

Venue – Oyedeji Government College Oyedeji {school hall}

Training on production of confectioneries, making, baking of

cake, puff puff, meat pies, egg buns, chinchin, sousage rolls e.t.c

Initiator - The chairman and his wife

Facilitator – Staff members of Department of Education and Social Services in conjunction with the NYSC members of Lagelu Local Government

Training women on how to produce the mentioned confectioneries by themselves to increase and improve their economic and financial status so that they could be self reliance in sell in their neighborhood. At the end of the day, participants were taught and they went home with the known how to prepare at least one of the items or more. They were giving ₦20,000 each of the fifty participants for the start kick-off of the business.

Date 9/12/2014

Venue - Conference Hall Lagelu Local Government, Iyana Offa.

Programme – End of Year party for women, children, widowers and widows, vulnerable and disabled people.

Initiator - The chairman and his wife

Facilitator – department of Education and Social Sciences

The programme is to bring people across the local government area for felicitation and fraternization as part of dividend of democracy. Cash and other gift items were distributed to the participants like food items, clothing, toiletries e.t.c

People felt relieved and had a sense of belonging as part of the system of Lagelu Local Government.

Date 13/11/2014

Venue – Teachers Hall Lagelu Local Government Secretariat
Iyana Offa

Topic – Facing the new year with a new health awareness and preparedness. {HEALTH CARE AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES COME 2015}

Initiator - The chairman and his wife

Facilitator – Staff members with Education and Social Services Department

Dr. S.A Adejare {P.H.C Coordinator/Medical Officer of Health} Oyo West Local Government Ojongbodu, Oyo.

Mr. Ojetunde A. {Director Environmental Health Service} Lagelu Local Government

Mrs Esan {Chief Nursing Officer}

Mrs Busari {Acting, P.H.C Co-ordinator} premium health care department Lagelu Local Government, Iyana Offa.

Aim – To intimate and Lecture the women participants numbering above 1,400 in general Health principles.

Effectiveness

At the end of the day, these participants were able to learn the proper health policies and methods as to work with through the new year 2015 and beyond to forestall out break of diseases, to cater for and attend to little sickness that may occurred in the day to day running of their families.

Many unknown things were communicated to them on how to keep an hygienic surroundings and how to be healthy.

Date 27/5/2015

Venue – Special Schools at Lalupon Children's day Celebration

- Audience:-
1. Handicap Children
 2. Vulnerable Children
 3. Pupils at Organized NGO some.
 4. Disable women in the society across the Local Government area
 5. Widows and aged women

Initiator – Chairman and His Wife

Facilitators:- The Director of Education and the members of staff of the department, The medical crew of the local government, headed by Mrs Esan the chief nursing officer of the local government, NUT officio and other teachers.

To celebrate the children day as it is all over the world selected as their day.

At the end of the programme all participants went home happily. There were merriment and a lot of foodies were distributed to the participants.

Elderly worth women mix with youths and students of different predicament and it ended on a good note which left the remembrance of the day to linger in them for a long time.[Source –Education and social services /community development department Lagelu local government area of Oyo state, Nigeria]

Economic and social ventures have a positive effect on rural areas of Ibarapa Division of Oyo state in that they are seen as places in which the needs of those living there are met and that they are attractive, thriving and interesting places to live and work.

The women development programmes organized are focused on improving quality of life and encouraging diversification of economic activities such as giving out of working instruments to hair dressers, tailors, caterers, Grinder, etc.

Traditional Agricultural practices are no longer the sole economic employers in rural areas and this programme offers considerable capacity for those wishing to grow a small business or to begin something completely new.

Many women have been encouraged by the opportunities arising from the rural development funding streams and have become involved in the implementation of a varieties of projects through the office of the governor's wife to the office of the wife of local government chairman.

1. Creation of mini clinics for widows and the Aged
2. Establishment of ICT center for women in public services
3. Empowerment of women of different cadres in the society.
4. Access to basic medical care.

Women in Ibarapa division are giving the chances of attending mini clinics created for widows and Aged women free of charge, ICT

centre for women in public service in a small range was established also and some women took the advantage to be computer literate.

Women that are Hairdressers were giving two weeks training and saloon kits (Hairdriers and washing basin, etc)

All these effort have been progressing and still in place up to date in Ibarapa Division.[Source-Education and social services/ community development department, Ibarapa East local government area of Oyo state, Nigeria]

Conclusion

This paper has been able to view what female gender is, causes of gender imbalance through different stances, its implication on national development and some viable solution were proffer that will make woman useful and participatory. For there is this popular adage, which says that to educate a man you educate an individual, but to educate a woman you are educating a nation. The man should see their woman counterparts as partners in progress and not as subject to be relegated to the background or as rivals.

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