

Gender, Democratic Governance and Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Women constitute about half of the world's population and have contributed monumentally to the promotion of the human race (Enojo, 2012). In Nigeria, for instance, women, have always played five major key roles either as a mother, producer, home manager, community organizer, and or social, cultural and political activist. Despite their numerical strength, endowed resources and crucial functions, the divisions of roles between the male and female sexes, as prescribed by most cultures, assign the subordinate position to women and consigned them to the background of history. As a consequence, women in different occasion have for long suffered various forms of discrimination, exploitation, inequality, exclusion and structural violence thereby limiting the democratic space, governance and national development. The aim of this paper is to encourage and empowered women as a precondition for and as an indicator for sustainable national development. The objectives include identifying and analyses the possible causes, factors and conditions which impend women participation in democratic leadership and development. Our finding shows that most women are either ignorant of their potentials or failed to accept their roles as prescribed by nature as veritable agents of positive and constructive change. Aside this factor is the issue political violence, money-bag, god-fatherism and lack of internal democracy associated with the Nigerian politics. Finally, that gender differences are created and sustained by society through its traditions, customs, conventions, norms and regulations (Ukamaka, 2012). The conclusion is that traditional stereotypes that characterize women as submissive, illogical, passive and emotional are not empirically founded and is therefore referred to as preposterous thesis. We therefore recommend that women should be encouraged to fully participate in democratic governance and sustainable national development in Nigeria, if we are to be to move our political and economic interest to greater heights without prejudice or ideological cover.

Key Words: Gender, Democratic Governance, Politics and Development

INTRODUCTION

Democracy without any strength of imagination is the most accepted form of government in the world today. Consequently, there is virtually any leader who does not wish to be seen to be having some degree of democratic credentials or addressed as a democrat. In fact, nearly all regimes described themselves as democratic. Democracy to a greater extent holds a strong appeal among the ordinary people. Governance on the other hand is the fragrance of democratic leadership as it provides the template for an evasive examination of democracy and development especially with specific reference to voice and accountability, political stability, absence of violence and terrorism, government

effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (Enojo, 2012). To that extent, democratic good governance has become a mantra for politicians, bureaucrats, and employees of NGOs. However, there are fundamental crises of governance at all levels in Nigeria. The most graphic illustration of this is the tendency for the ruling elites at all levels to rule without some notion of governance as a social contract which is implicit in the mandate freely given during elections (Egwu, 2012). The primary explanation for this is that, gender, democratic governance and sustainable development in Nigeria have been treated with levity or exclusive preserve of the ruling class. This has also made women to be vulnerable to unguarded attacks from within and outside their home individually or collectively. Consequently, the fundamental objectives and direct principles of the state policies between 1999-2012, in Nigeria were a crude record, not of history, but of human fantasies arising from emotional need and desire for primitive accumulation of wealth and that, the electoral, economic, political and social reforms had not been of history, achievement and ethics (Agarah, 2012). At the core of gender, democratic governance and national development in Nigeria is the legacy of party system without ideologies, weak institutions, dysfunctional elites, poverty, insecurity and unemployment. However, the cultures that compose it have ancient root; and that root is gender inequality, colonialism and imperialism. The pre-occupation of the World Bank with issues of gender and good governance, which translate to a concern with democratic development, is a positive response to the episodic history of development and democracy in post-independence in Africa. The post-independence political leadership jettisoned democracy, reinforced gender inequality, and resorted to the abuse of the public space. They observed the constitution only in the breach and replaced a culture of gender equality with a culture of corruption and frugality (Enojo, 2008). In the process, they perverted and subverted the process of due process and development, and resorted to the abuse of laid down procedures for personal gains. Without any strength of imagination or contradiction, this situation has derailed the democratic experience and negatively affected the issues of gender and democratic development in Nigeria and elsewhere without regards.

The paper focuses on the synergy between gender equality and democratic governance in Nigeria in particular and the world in general. The paper discusses the issues of lack a clear-cut ideology, poverty, unemployment, inflation, insecurity, corruption and lack of a clearly robust internal democracy in our political parties as the direct failure of our democratic experiment, but was quick to state that the deliberate exclusion of women from active politics at all levels may have probably accounted partly for the sordid development. We, further identifies gender inequality as the basic factors and conditions responsible for poor democratic governance in Nigeria's 4th republic.

Our findings shows that there is a strong organic linkage between gender participation in politics, good governance and development, and that, the consequence of excluding vibrant or women with integrity and democratic credentials from the mainstream of political participation, socialization and development leads to bad leadership, national insecurity, poor delivery of public goods and distrust. We therefore asserted that for Nigeria to have a robust, virile, effective and efficient democracy and good governance, our institutions should be responsive, attentive and assertive to all related issues of gender equality and their full participation in political and economic development, our political class should be ideologically rooted and gender friendly, and the electorate

should participate in the political process not hiding under any ideological cover of gender inequality, ethnicity, religion or prejudice. This ideal situation is however viewed from the vintage of the American, Britain and other Western democracies where the political atmosphere is conducive for both sexes to participate in political engineering and contribute to the national development without resorting to political corruption, violence and assassinations.

Cultural changes taking place in all areas of the human existence, affect the political, economic and social activities (Akpotor, 2009). To a greater platform therefore, the prevailing economic and cultural condition determines to a very large extent the degree of political development, social stability and economic advancement. Drawing heavily from the above therefore, political participation, socialization, society and ideologies cannot be separated from one another (Egwu, 2003). However, those who think about political affairs and the natural society fall intellectually and temperamentally into two main schools of thought. One believes that the most essential requisites for human rights and welfare in any society are law and order. The other believes in the ultimate value of individual liberty, seeing that ‘if liberty and equality does not exist, in and for all, it does not exist’ (Elejo, 2012). Without prejudice to any court or legal investigation, in the absence of fear, there is certainly no danger, and that, liberty does not exist in the absence of equality and justice. From the fore-going, it is therefore imperative and clearly obvious that the issue of gender inequality is not only theoretically fundamental, but empirically significant, and cannot be swept under the carpet or given academic definition on the altar of mundane culture, primordial custom or prejudice. Conventionally speaking, and drawing heavily from the aforementioned, it is natural that, since men began thinking about gender inequality and democratic governance, they have oscillated between two diametrically opposed interpretations. For some, gender related topics are essentially a struggle, and a battle between men and women pursuing political power and interest. History reveals that economic and political power enables those groups and individuals who hold it to maintain their domination, control and exploitation by striving to resist and destroy the weak (Egwemi, 2011). Men are those ‘few’ but with political and economic power, while women are the ‘majority’ or ‘the masses’ without political and economic power, but are constantly exploited, defrauded and maltreated probably because they are the most economically and socially vulnerable in most African countries. We regards gender related issue as an attempt to establish social order and justice, with the hope that it would be detrimental to the women folks. The reason is that power, order and equity protects the general welfare and the common good from the pressures and demands of specific interest groups (Elejo, 2012). For the former, gender prejudice serves to maintain the privileges of a ‘minority’ over a ‘majority’. In this case, the females are the majority; yet, they are the vulnerable, abjectly-poor, oppressed, and less privilege in every society who (some men feels) only impressed men with their appearances and not their results or achievements (derived from hard work) as claimed by men (Ejojo, 2012). This is not only an insult, but at the same time, re-writing evolution history, or not recognizing the true and basic values, characteristics, and potentials of womanhood. We suggest women should be evaluated base on their intellectual view points, personal and collective achievements as it relates to development.

No doubt, this hypothesis has generated a reasonable level of excitement in academic circles. And so, the conclusion of human nature and political competition became

complex, absurd, involved and yet, vary from society to society. Gender inequality and exclusion from political participation negates the fundamental pedigree, core objectives and values of democracy and governance. Consequently, we could not avoid the ugly spectacle of an economic and political system in which the luxury of few men is parallel by the misery of the many women. To a very large extent, the crux of the problem or challenge as to whether we should be regarded as an individualist or as a collectivist concerns for our concepts of the general will. The purpose of Rousseau's inquiry whether a legitimate and stable basis of government in civil society can be found by considering human beings as they are and laws as they may be. Then follows what appears to be a clarion and revolutionary call to ordinary men, to all those who form 'the people' and suffer most from the misery that civilization has brought about. 'Men are born free; and everywhere he is in chain' (reference to Rousseau). The call, however, is less revolutionary than it appears, because Rousseau is not concerned with removing the bonds (chain) of society, but only with seeing how they can be made more legitimate. To be perfectly honest, men have always reinforced these inequalities over the years without reference to the Beijing (China) conference or the affirmative action of 35% political representation in our governments at all levels.

To begin with an idle provocation and statement therefore, a critical look at the constitutions of many political parties in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa, there is no section which deals with the issue of how electioneering campaign funds should be raised or should not be raised, or is there a limit to campaign fund donations. Again, we all know that democracy is the most expensive form of government, and huge amount of money is involved or required, yet we are aware of the nature of the African political economic and the formation of 'the African State' or the challenges of the super-structure and the sub-structure. In Nigeria for instance, 'if you want power, wealth and resources, enter politics'. Drawing from the above, the gate of democracy and democratic space is only limited to few men. So far, let us mention but a few manifestations of gender bias against women which include the following: economic exploitation and impoverishment; discriminatory laws and customs; and forms of violence against women. All these not only reduce female potentials, but equally limit their participatory roles and contributions to national development in any democracy.

Furthermore, gender inequality encourages and promotes poverty, injustice insecurity and unemployment. In Nigeria and elsewhere, this phenomenon materializes the upper class, vulgarizes the middle class and brutalizes the lower class. It reinforces the three aspects of poverty; the poverty of ideas, courage and material well-being (Anikpo, 2010). And it does not matter whether the poverty is extreme, absolute or relative. In so far as what happens in the political, cultural and social realm is direct reflection of the position of the economy, gender inequality and all barbaric forms of discrimination against women must change, if democratic governance and sustainable national development would be achieved evenly, collectively, holistically, and without disrespect to the value, integrity and dignity of motherhood and sisterhood. There is nevertheless a rule distorting authentic principle, such as our culture, and human nature, the level of political participation, culture and socialization. Gender inequality had proved fatal against development and its manifestation is absolute. Recognition of similarity serves as proof, that truth need not be tested; but it could be demonstrated and verified. Our paper therefore, deals on certain intrinsic qualities, potentials and behavior of women and

declares that, if women are allowed to participate and contribute positively in civil society, formal and informal economy, there would be an improved and accelerated national development, and consequently, eliminates extreme hunger, abject poverty, injustice and the insecurity challenges posed by the Bako-Haram would disappeared.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Science man may have found a cure for most evils; but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all, the apathy of human being especially how women are dehumanized by men and selectively excluded from the main stream of political participation which includes, the distribution of political and economic powers. Both David Easton and Harold Lasswell agreed that politics is everything. For Easton (1953) Politics deals with the authoritative allocation of scarce resources within the society, as for Lasswell (1950), politics is concerned with who gets what, how and when. However, we must not forget that, one must have access to political power to be able to determine how a given resources would be allocated. Across all societies, particularly in developing world, worsening poverty accompanied by the parallel widening of income, cultural and gender inequality, are arguably the most serious and common threat to democratic governance, sustainable and national development and international peace and security (Diamond 1988). Gender inequality encourages assault on human dignity (Graf, 1988). Inevitably, it creates multiples effect or structural violence when combined with other threats like xenophobia, false consciousness, dogmatism, imposition of wrong models and externally designed ideologies (Ekeh, 1989).

The Medium Term Strategy of UNESCO (for 1999-2012), implies the creation of an environment that is consistent with human dignity in which all those marginalized would find opportunity for genuinely becoming part of the society. It further implies the elimination of gender inequality, poverty and its attendant ills, more equitable sharing of both prosperity and knowledge by both men and women. All these appear to have been observed in the breach. Daily, there exist one form of gender inequality exhibited against women by men without due consideration. Except for a few isolated cases, where there have been documented societies, there's little violence against women. It's endemic in almost every place we look. The following forms of violence will illuminate the discussion: Physical abuse, psychological abuse restricted access which represent success of power; and commodification of women.

Society establishes gender roles for us. The different was of males and females interacting fit nicely with differences in men and women's value system. Women value being sensitive and maintaining good relationships, that is, attachment over achievement; men value gaining status by following –the rules, that is achievement over attachment. Since our values competition and individuals being successful on their own, women's orientation towards caring for other and or cooperatively building the community is considered (by the male dominated society) to be of lesser importance. These value differences are reflected in the gender roles established by our culture, such as; males are urged to excel. This implies, they are encouraged and supposed to grow up to be powerful; they don't show their weakness; they are valued; they are preferred; they are encouraged more and prepared better for careers than females are; they are expected to be tough, independent, demanding aggressive, good problem – solver. Thus, men are

expected and prepared to strive for superiority. In fact, to be –a man the rules are; be different from women, be important – superior to others; be tough – self-sufficient, or do not be a quitter; and powerful be strong and dominate others even by means of force, crude, cruelty, or violence (Angier, 2009). These are few factors that deliberately excluded or discourages women from political participation and socialization processes.

Women on the other hand are encouraged to be good mothers. Women need, therefore, to first attract a man to depend on; they are expected, by our culture to be giving, emotional, unstable, weak, and talkative about their problems; they are valued for their looks or charm or smallness but not their strength or brains; they are considered unfeminine (–bad). If they are ambitious, demanding, and tough or rough; they are expected to follow –their man and give their lives to –their children, and what count in this culture is how attractive you are, especially if you are a woman (Angier, 2009). These few factors has reinforced men’s strong hold on political participation and socialization. Consequently, men blame others for their failure while women blame themselves. The summary therefore is that money makes man a catch while pretty face and great body makes women a catch. Within the two career families of today, the women are not inferior, however, attitude is muted and concealed, but the archaic sex role expectations are still subtly there. The old rules still serve to –put down women and keep them in their place (Obasanjo and Mabogunje, 1991). Our culture continues to pressure us to conform to these gender roles and do what we are –supposed to do. The cultural, family and friends’ expectations become internalized as our own self-expectations; built may result if we do not follow these prescribed roles. Notice how people react to man a who decides to stay at home and take care of the kids? Gender roles limit what both males and females can do. In effect, these sex roles enslaves us, forces us to be what others want us to be. We could be freer to choose our own life goals and roles if gender inequality is discouraged.

Finally, gender inequality can be summarized as follows: women are not paid for their house work and family labour. Also, their role in informal economic sector tends to be ignored in the computation of the gross national product (GNP). This is economic exploitation. When marriages do not result in children, it is often the wives that are blamed and consequently, subjected to inhuman psychological pressure and dangerous medication (except with the recent cure/management of infertility in marriages, through In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF). Traditional widowhood practices in most communities are such that compound the tragedy of the unfortunate women and also seriously endanger her health. Women are grossly underrepresented in public life and decision making positions in most states in Nigeria. All these self-imposed abuses, makes women over play their femininity by accepting that they are the weaker sex. Its implication on sustainable and national development is obvious, and of course one of such is lack of deep interest in politics. However, there are some explanations why gender inequalities exist in the world. Three reasons are provided in the section that follows:

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NATURE OF HUMAN BEINGS

The conclusions of human nature, political competition and gender inequality are complex, absurd, involved and vary from one writer to the other. The paper seeks to present only the principal and last established conclusions. Their sometimes strange or

paradoxical nature should not be surprising in attempting to penetrate to the every heart of the human mystery. Analysis must necessary avoid false simplification. The reason for gender inequality has generated a reasonable level of excitement in academic circles. This is a statement of fact and it is neither brash nor dismissive, but rather sober and thought provoking. Gender inequality is primarily the result of psychological frustration and it is more or less related to conflict of early childhood that lies buried in the subconscious.

Theories about the importance of early childhood have a psychological foundation. The human baby is born at a much less advanced stage of development than any other mammal. Therefore, instead of remaining enclosed in the maternal womb, he/she receives external stimuli sooner, and he must use his intelligence at an earlier stage. He also becomes a social animal much sooner. Mother-child relationships are social relationship among the human species, whereas among other animals, they remain purely physiological and mechanical relationship, for a far longer time. (Sigmund, 1961).

We must keep in mind the extreme importance psychoanalysts attached to the first years, even to the first months of life. In the first stage of his existence, a child lives in a state dominated by pleasure and freedom. His whole life is based on the infantile sexuality, diffuse, not centered on any particular organ of the body –polymorphous^{ll} and expressed in many different ways. In a child, this search for pleasure encounters no restraints. For an adult, he comes to face with gender inequality, poverty, inequality, class relations, unemployment and under-employment because he or she is helpless and powerless in the hand of nature.

Although, he cannot always oblige to others to give him pleasure, such as suckle him, carry him, rock him, caress him, crying, moving about, sleeping, screaming, evacuating whenever he wishes. Thus, the life of an –infant^{ll} is dominated by the –pleasure principle^{ll}. Man will always retain nostalgia for his lost paradise (Psychoanalysts believes that the myth of the golden age and paradise lost found in so many societies, expresses the yearning for one's earlier childhood. For instance see Genesis).

But man is eventually forced to leave this paradise and this consequently produces the first shock. The first traumatic experience of his existence, which marks him for his life to integrate with society, he must replace –the pleasure principle^{ll} with the –reality principle^{ll} which is to say, he must give up certain pleasure or limit it very severally. He is obliged to comply with a whole series of constraining rules, obligation and prohibitions. he must learn to stop following his instances , his impulses , his preference , and his desires. To live like this mean the human nature has not develop beyond the state of nature which Hobbes described as man is essentially selfish. He is moved to action not by pleasure is too strong to simply disappear desire and passion; . But the need for pleasure demand and the desire for pleasure produce –frustration^{ll}, which are the foundation cause of gender inequality and political competition. Men see women as not just opposite sex bus as weaker sex which must be dominate oppressed, and pleasure when seeking for pleasure. Women then became not just an object for pleasure but symbol of domination.

THE HUMAN NATURE COMPARED

Cause of anything could be either material, efficient, formal or final, consequently, the drives to live, dominate and propagate, is common to all human kind (Ziegler 1987). Causes of gender inequality are to be found in the human nature. Perhaps, the popularity of this theory is a legacy of the Christian tradition, for it has been an orthodox Christian view. Christian teacher have held that human nature is not basically good or even (by itself) capable of becoming good. One particular way in which human nature manifest itself is the inability of human beings to live in harmony with one another. According to Christian teaching, every person has inherent evil desires, sometimes called –original sins, a metaphor derived from the Bible story of Adam’s fall from grace (Genesis, 3). These desires make people want what they have no business wanting and prompt them to use violence if that is possible or necessary to fulfill these desire (Ziegler, 1987). Gender inequality exhibited against women is in the Christian view, only a manifestation of this basic individual nature.

Human beings, like other animals have instincts. Instincts are inherited (as opposed to learned) behavioral patterns. Their presence has been convincingly demonstrated in animal. A bird raised in total isolation from other birds will still try fly south in autumn (Lorenz, 1962). However, the instinct Lorenz finds in human beings in the aggressive instinct. This means that human when frustrated react with anger and start to fight. This aggressive behavioral pattern is inherited and not learned. Consequently, many kinds of immeasurable psychological changes take place when one becomes angry. Among them is an increase in the pulse rate of blood pressure; a rise in the level of blood sugar (Awake 2005). All these changes are the same in all human beings and indeed in all mammals. Lorenz (1962) and Storr (1970) respectively argues that, this aggressive tendency, is the product of evolution and functional because it survive from generation to generation. Consider wife battering and other physical abuse, when things are not moving on well for men.

This view is supported by the observation that aggressive instinct manifests itself stronger in the centre of an animal’s home territory and grows weaker as the animal moves away from that centre. This is even true especially when we consider how men violate their wives, oppressed young women and exploit the helpless but could not do same to outsider. Most men who beta up their wives are weak before other men and women.

Lorenz observed two set of animals, the first consist of those that are not particularly dangerous to each other physically, for example rabbit. The second group consists of those animals that are considered dangerous to each other because they are equipped with fangs and claws, examples are wolves and dogs. The result show that rabbits display aggressive as much as wolves but there is no danger that fighting will have fatal consequences. The natural defence of the rabbit against all dangers is to run away and in fight between rabbits, the weaker rabbit runs away from the stronger.

However, if rabbits are confined in an un-natural way, say cages, they will tear each other to pieces (Natalie, 1983). When wolves’ fights, the possibility of fatalities are there, yet, they rarely occur. Wolves show aggression but do not kill each other any more often than

rabbits do. The reason, according to Lorenz (1962), is that along with its aggressive instincts, the wolf has evolved an inhibiting mechanism that controls or checks the aggressive instincts at the crucial moment. This inhibiting is triggered by a movement that Lorenz calls an –appeasement gesture, which implies and enable the losing wolf turn over on its back, exposing its throat in such a way that it would be easy for the winner to kill it. The appeasement gesture is a sign that the loser accepts an inferior status and by doing so, saves its own life. Similarly, African women do not fight back when beaten up by their husband because of culture, tradition and norm. This situation is considered as a fun by most men.

In conclusion, human beings, belong to the group of animals that are considered harmless to each like rabbits. Human beings have not evolved the prohibiting instincts, as have the wolves. Human beings are more dangerous to each other than wolves are to each other. There exist two accounts to the human feature. As victors, human beings have the ability to kill helpless victims. As losers, they have the ability to give up even when defeated. The hope for the future humanity lies in political culture and socialization. The paper wants to argue that the components of the culture are values, beliefs and emotional attitudes about how government ought to be considered and also, about what it should do.

ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION AND IMPOVERISHMENT

Political participation and socialization are functions of the amount of wealth at the disposal of each individual, and this varies from society to society. However, there is one point that has been neglected, when discussing the plight of women as regards their low political activities. To be perfectly honest therefore, women are marginalized in almost everything in Nigeria and elsewhere, and one of such areas is the fact that women's positive contributions (economically and socially) are never well articulated or statistically computed, and just their electoral votes are never counted or given recognition it deserved in Nigeria and elsewhere, women's efforts are never counted. To put it mildly, the vital contributions which women make to the economies of all human societies are very often unrecognized, unrewarded and constantly entail arduous exertions. For instance, women are not paid for their housework and family labour and their role in the informal economic sector tends to be ignored in the computation of the gross national product, GNP. It has been noted, with respect to the rural women, that they, bear excessive burden in fetching and carrying water, (fire) wood for fuel, and weeding, harvesting, transporting, storing and food processing.... (They) are the most disadvantaged people in the world. They undertake three-quarters of all agricultural work in addition to their domestic responsibilities. Even when women secure employment in the formal sector, they have to contend with the challenges of balancing their family responsibilities with their official duties and with other covert and overt acts of discrimination and sexual harassment. We remember vividly the challenges young women faced in the banking industries in Nigeria in an attempt to 'meet targets'. They also face the proverbial 'glass ceiling' above which they hardly ever rise in their careers (Enemuo, 1999). Consequently, their inputs in politics are never counted, or viewed important.

Drawing heavily from the above, it is obvious that, the women are poor and neglected in instances. Studies have indicated that women suffer poverty on a more widespread basis

than men, and that their experience of poverty is quite different as a result of expectations about gender roles. Thus the term ‘feminization of poverty’ is sometimes used to denote the propositions that more women are likely to experience poverty as poverty levels increase, that women stand a greater risk of poverty than men and that there are specific impact of poverty on women to the point that it negatively affects their political pedigree and participation. To that extent therefore, their political significant would be viewed as inferior, since they do not have enough monies as their male counter-part during party primaries elections. The implications are many and different. Firstly, since people lack ideology, the wealthy politicians would be voted into power, probably, because huge amount money was spread around, secondly, due to lack of internal democracy, lack of political culture and socialization, many electorate would not even think constructively when the ‘cast their votes’. We should not forget that, party ticket is always for the highest binder in Nigeria. The issue of Godfathers, thuggery, and of course, political violence and assassinations which are the manifestation of or the function of dirty ‘money and intrigue’ among men without the ‘fear’ of God or respect for democratic principles and values. The very nature of women as ‘mothers’ naturally disqualified them from violence. The central point here is that since wealth comes from politics (as against the super-structures over laying the sub-economic structures), it is then obvious that those who have access to politics would also have access to the nation’s wealth, and since most women are far from the corridors of power, wealth sharing (or distribution of primitive wealth) and participation through political power and relations are the exclusive preserved of the few men who are into politics. With this attitude alone, women became vulnerable to poverty, arising from the widening gap of the wealth accumulation and distribution. The danger here is that, most women became poorer and poorer in a cyclical virtue. This episodic character is consolidated through lack of democratic governance or leadership by political leaders at levels in Nigeria without democratic credential or ideologies.

On the whole, it has been estimated that ‘women constitute 70 per cent of the world’s 1.2 billion poor’. The economic plight of women has worsened greatly in countries that adopted the World Bank economic reforms. Aside this, the ‘Global Economic Recession’ greatly affected the women more than the men. While the federal government of Nigeria gave a ‘Ball-out Concession’ to the owners of Banks and other service providers, mostly populated by men, women who are mostly in the informal economy, were either neglected or totally ignored. The direct consequent is more or severe poverty leading to low political power to participate in politics. The sad experience came after the long economic darkness arising from the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in Nigeria and else where. According to the report of a Commonwealth study group, it was women in these adjusting countries who have had to ‘find extra work to supplement family incomes... who have re-arranged family budgets; switching to cheaper foods... (and) who have been most severely affected by cuts in health and educational facilities and by rising morbidity and deaths among their children (Enemu, 1999). Apart from the foregoing, many factors can be cited as responsible for the poverty of many women. Among these is the concentration of women in low-paying jobs as a result of limited education and stereotyping of certain jobs as suitable for women. For instance, women constitute the majority of nurses, secretaries, cleaners, waiters, typists, etc. which attract relatively low pay when compared with the salaries of medical doctors and management staff which men dominate. Another major cause of

poverty amongst women is lack of access to critical factors of production. It is known, for instance, that women are discriminated against in granting of loans by banks and other financial institutions often as a result of lack of collaterals and gender bias. Even women who are engaged in farming are disadvantaged because they cannot claim title to land in most cultures, particularly in Africa. This apparent lack of concentration of their economic and political forces, leads to their crude exclusion from political participation and development everywhere. The consequent is obvious, and it's more denial of fundamental human rights'.

DISCRIMINATORY LAWS AND CUSTOMS

African societies are not 'very' friendly with the development and encouragement of women's participation in politics, which would bring about sustainable development and good governance. The reason is not far from our type of cultural heritage and primordial customs or norms. The customary practices of many contemporary societies are biased against women and serve to subjugate them to men and to undermine their individual self-esteem. Using Nigeria as an example, it is a fact that the Nigerian communities approve such practices as preference for the male child, payment of bride price, female circumcision or female genital mutilation (FGM), negative attitude towards childlessness, degrading widowhood practices and inheritance practices that discriminate against women. The traditions of some communities also approve giving away girls in marriage early and without their consent.

The overall impact of the negative cultural norms has been to engender very low regard for women, entrench a feeling of inferiority or 'complex' in the individual woman and place her at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* her male counterpart. As a result of gender-biased cultural norms and practices: to the extent that most women's ideas and philosophy are seen as 'second-hand' version of 'adulterated beliefs'. Their interest in political development and participation is therefore devalued. Consequently, women become conditioned into accepting social debasements of the type associated with widowed rites and self-imposed abuses of the type that denies female children good food. Even in urban centres and in civilized circles, the stereotype gender roles make women overplay their femininity by accepting that they are the weaker sex, over-emphasizing the dainty nature of their comportment, viewing the ambition of some members of their sex as ominous and regarding exceptional achievements as untoward competition or 'behaviour' with men (see Enemu, 1999). In Nigeria Upper chamber (the senate), from 1999 to 2013, the list of women senators does not represent their value, integrity, numerical strength and contribution to national growth and development. For instance, in the 1999 election there were: Khairat Gwadabe, Florence Ita-Giwa, and Stella Omu (only three females senators); in the 2003 election, there were: Joy Emodi, Gbemi Saraki, Iyabo Obasanjo, and Daisy Danjuma (only four females senators); in the 2007 election there were: Joy Emordi, Gbemi Saraki, Zainab Kure, Iyabo Obasanjo, Chris Anyanwu, Patricia Akwashiki, Grace Bent, Nkechi Nwogwu, and Eme Ufot Ekaette (only nine women senators); and finally, in the 2011 election there were: Zainab Kure, Chris Anyanwu, Nkechi Nwogwu, Nenadi Usman, Helen Esuene, Oluremi Tinubu, and Aisha Allanes (only seven female senators) (Aliu, 2010). From the discussion so far, there is no equity as far as gender representation is concerned, and this poses a danger for the women. We saw a sharp decline in the 2011 election, which is a signal that we are yet to claim justice and

equity in gender representation. The wide gap between men and women in the 'senate chamber' will produce two results; firstly, issues relating to women's plights will be treated with levity, as we have seen in the current debate in the senate over what should be the exact age for a girl-child to be given out in marriage. At the end of the debate, 18 years was agreed as against Ghana, 23 years. The situation drew a lot of condemnation from the general public. Secondly, a robust debate will not be achieved, and consequently, issues will be viewed from a male-dominated angle, thereby leading to a biased assessment of political inputs and outputs of the entire system.

The widespread preference for the male child means, in part, that families often prefer to send the boy to school and not the girl since she is expected to stay at home to help nurture her siblings and to be married off soon. It is therefore not surprising that women constitute the majority of the illiterate population of most communities. Girls given out early in marriage do not only have their education aborted but are additionally exposed to early pregnancies and *vesico vaginal fistula*, a disease which leaves its victims deformed and unable to control urination. When marriages do not result in children, it is often the wives that are blamed and consequently subjected to inhuman psychological pressures and dangerous medication. Traditional widowhood in most communities are such that compound the tragedy of the unfortunate women and also seriously endanger her health (Enemuo, 1999). And since health is wealth, it therefore implies that it is only the living that could contribute to political and economic development of any nation. In this regard, women are selectively excluded.

It is important to note that religious precepts are sometimes used to subjugate women. The Holy Bible is sometimes quoted as requiring women to be submissive to their husbands. What is usually conveniently forgotten is that the Bible also enjoins men to love their wives sacrificially just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her. Husbands are also enjoined to treat their wives with understanding and to give honour to them. Islamic injunctions are usually cited as justification for confining women in *'purdah'* as is done in parts of northern Nigeria and to give away girls in marriage and thereby deprive them of education. These practices have been questioned and have been shown to be out of consonance with the provisions of the Sharia and the example of Sheik Usman Danfodio who established the Sokoto Caliphate (see for instance, Enemuo, 1999). All these no doubt, prevent women from participating actively in the political development of any nation.

EXCLUSION FROM PUBLIC LIFE

Given that most women have been denied good education, that they command very limited economic resources and that the prevailing cultural norms see their place as being in the home, it is not surprising that women are grossly under-presented in public life and decision-making positions in most modern states. Indeed, it has been estimated that women make up less than five percent of the world's heads of state. In the case of Nigeria, the situation is considered to be worse. According to Udegbe, the representation of women in positions of leadership in the three tiers of government in Nigeria in the last three decades has been low, hovering around 2%. She notes further, that appointment of women into political offices has been characterized and motivated by tokenism and that

women in positions of authority _find themselves working in groups that are in essence predominantly male', thereby aggravating their feeling of _marginality'.

Africa's colonial experience contributed significantly to the current political marginalization of women on the continent. Prior to colonization, women in many African communities occupied site of power of specific spheres of social life. There were indeed a number of places where they occupied the pre-eminent political position. These situations got reversed under colonialism. Two African women that attracted our attention are the _Inikpi' of Igala nation and the _Queen Amina' of Kaduna Dynasty. In the thinking of the European colonialists and colonists, only men can be active in the public sphere and earn a living to support their families. Accordingly, it was mostly African males who were given some education and who got recruited into the colonial armed forces, the civil service and merchant houses, albeit as subordinates. This practice served to reinforce and generalize patriarchal values in Africa. Besides, it marked the beginning of the under-representation of women in the formal agencies of government, a situation which has been continued in the post-independence period (Ugbede,1998).

As is commonly known, colonialism restructured the traditional African economies and communities to make them ready markets for European manufactures and sources of cheap raw materials for their factories. Among other things, the attainment of these objectives required the promotion of the production of export crops by men who were thereby granted economic power in relation to women who were concentrated in the production of food crops. Control of greater economic resources from cash crop production and merchandising by men greatly facilitated their domination of the political scene immediately after independence. On the whole, the exclusion of women from leadership positions has robbed mankind of their unique potential for governance. It has led to gender insensitivity in the design and implementation of public policy and helped to perpetuate gender inequality in different aspects of social life (see for instance, Enemuo, 1999).

THE CHALLENGES OF GENDER AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

The fundamental issues and challenges of gender, democratic governance and development in Nigeria are politics, power, the civil society and the nature of class formation in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. We need to explain these concepts so as to be able to justify their roles in widening the gaps between men and women in political participation.

Development in human society is a many sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies an increased skilled or capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. On the other hand, development at the level of social groups implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationship (Rodney, 1972). Walter Rodney argues that, much of human history has been a fight for survival against natural hazards and against imagined human enemies which includes all forms of societal prejudice against women. However, Rodney observed that at the level of individuals, some of these characteristics mentioned above

are virtually of moral categories and as such could be difficult to evaluate. Evaluation depends on all or some of the following, the age and time in which one lives; one's personal code of what is right and what are wrong, social background, social class or origin, creed and religion. Achievement is based on the state in which one lives and not gender based. Today, we have about four female presidents elected by their citizens (Mrs. Ellen Johnson, Sirleaf in Liberia; Michelle Bachelet in Chile; Angela Merkel in Germany and Arroyo Gloria in Philippines). Development in any country is predicated upon the equal participation of both men and women in politics, economy and other endeavours. Men and woman alike belong to several groups. Their class, position and pedigree qualifies them and not what sex they belong (Akpotor, 2009).

Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in an historically determined system of social production, by their relations to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour and consequently, by the dimension of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the modes of acquiring such wealth in a given socio-economic formation (Lenin, 1871). The paper asserts that classes exist in formations where production relations are based on private ownership of the means of production. This is one of the driving forces behind elites and political participation in Nigeria, and one factor responsible for women's low political participation. It also promotes and sustains different ideologies and value system such as gender inequality. However, today, women and men work as Ministers, Bank managers, corporate heads, engage in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation because of their educational attainment, advancement and achievement.

During the primitive communal times, classes did not exist because, there were virtually no visible means of production, which means that classes only exist in a capitalist economy (Okwudili, 2003). Where the means of production, distribution, consumption and the exchange of goods and services are left in the hands few of men, there is bound to be poverty, inequality, injustice and unemployment. Both men and women should control their destiny, which is allowing each and every individuals to have voice on who governs them.

Deriving from the above assertion, we have adopted the structural functional approach in this paper. Structural functionalism has been found particularly useful in the comparison of political systems. According to Almond (Almond, 1964), one of the chief proponents of the approach in political science, every political system performs certain functions. Taking Easton's systems analysis as a starting point, Almond looks for the functions which could be included among the input and output functions of all political systems. On the input side are the functions of (1) interest articulation and (2) interest aggregation. Second, on the output side are the functions of (3) rule making, (4) rule-application and (5) rule adjudication. The functions of (6) political communication is undertaken to inform all within the political system and outside of these diverse activities. Additionally, every system performs (7) systems maintenance and adaptation functions through political socialization and recruitment of people (Almond, 1964).

According to Almond, the functioning of any political system may also be viewed in terms of its capabilities defined as 'the way it performs as a unit in its environment.' The concepts of *regulative*, *extractive*, *distributive* and *responsive* capability are employed as

criteria to assess how a system is performing within its environment, how it is shaping its environment and how it is being shaped by it (Almond, 1964).

Almond's formulations have been faulted on three grounds by this study. First, it has been noted that it is not easy to distinguish between the 'deliberate aims of the participants and what takes place because the system seemed to achieve certain aims.' Second, the identification of functions is alleged to rest on the interpretation the analyst places on observed developments. Thus there cannot be complete objectivity. In effect, the number of the identified functions can be more or less than the seven listed by Almond. Third, the approach has been seen as culture-bound since the functions attributed to the political system are too closely modeled on Western political systems. However, Almond's structural-functional approach has been recognized as the major existing tool for genuine comparative analysis of political systems and has been described as a 'fairly realistic interpretation of the nature of political life.'

The model is predicated upon the assumption that political violence occurs principally because of the breakdown of consensual norms and the inability or unwillingness of the agencies of social control to restore these norms. The central thesis of this line of thought the study notes, is that political violence flows directly from the political system and is most likely to occur; When there are instances of political alienation; When the ruling elite lack the cohesiveness to exercise their reform or when they lack legitimacy; When there are large-scale changes in society's social structures and processes occasioned by rapid industrialization, urbanization or modernization which will lead to the creation of new classes or groups with conflicting interests.

The import of this theory is predicated on the simple assumption that, the selective exclusion of women from the main political process, means that, women inputs would not be felt in the political calculation. And since you cannot win war with borrowed soldiers, their core values and interests would not be represented when it mattered most for women to distill their voices in any socio-economic formation on political participation platform.

NATURE OF THE AFRICAN STATE AND THE CRISIS OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

The African socio-economic formation is different from that of the advanced industrial capitalist societies of Europe and America. The African socio-economic formation is characterized by uneven and combined development of the different modes of production. There is the capitalist sector which exists in combination with the pre-capitalist sector at various states of disintegration. While the capitalist enclaves (urban areas) are engaged in the production of exchange values, the pre-capitalist formations are engaged in the production of subsistence. The relation among producers is mechanist, while specialization in production is rudimentary. Consequently consumption, exchange-production and exchanged-relations is limited and markets not fully develop (Ake, 2002).

The State in Africa like in every other society is the organized instrument of the ruling class. However, the specific characteristic of the state in Africa is the result of the specific historical condition of its emergence and development. That historical condition

is colonialism (Agara, 2009). Colonialism shaped the nature of the state and society in Africa as well as the dynamics of the ruling class. The historical specificity of the colonial state in Africa ruled out certain similarities between it and the state in the advanced capitalist societies of Europe. In the advanced capitalist societies of Europe, the state was the classic state in the sense that it was the instrument of the capitalist class which emerged with it from the feudal mode of production, to maintain its domination over the other classes in the capitalist society. On the other hand the task of the colonial state was two fold and different. According to Dudley (1998) and Ake (1989) the task are to:

- To conquer and subdue the people of the African colonies in such a way as to make it easy and cheap to exploit their material and human resources.
- To establish capitalist relations of production in the African colonies in such a way as to guarantee super profit to the capitalist in Europe.

While the state in Europe maintained domination over the non-capitalist classes of Europe, the state in Africa exercised domination over the African people as a whole. And while the European state regulated the operation of the capitalist mode of production in favour of the bourgeois class, the state in Africa had first to create the capitalist mode of production, make it dominant in the society and make it yield profits for European. This changed the character of the state directly, actively and more extensively in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the people than was the case in Europe. Furthermore, civil society associated with the institution of state power and which support and reinforce these institutions had either not emerged or well developed. Thus civil society in Africa is not attentive and assertive. In Europe, civil society and the capitalist mode of production emerged before the capitalist state (Ake, 2002:11).

Consequently, the state in Africa lacks autonomy because its power base is not in society. Thus the state is not in a position to mediate class struggle, since it is itself involved in the struggle on the side of the dominant faction of the ruling class. In such a situation the realization of the law of value is hampered and the development of productive forces is slowed and primitive accumulation reins with massive intervention of force in the labour process. At the political level, the struggle for the control of state power becomes warfare. Power is overvalued and security lies only in getting more power. Might is co-extensive with right. The implication of all this for development is obvious, and one of such is military intervention in politics. To fully grasp the nature of politics in Africa, it is first important that we understand the nature of class forces that constitute the state. Capitalism in post colonial Africa is largely an enclave capitalism restricted mainly to the urban areas, within these enclaves there exist a small crop of indigenous fractious capitalist class which is conscious though fragmented. The fragmentation of the indigenous capitalist class reflects the weak nature of the civil society. It is this weakness of civil society with among other things that allow for the introduction of primary loyalties and ethnic particularize into political competition (Nnoli, 2003:78).

The weakness of civil society which has resulted in the non-autonomisation of the state limits the changes of mediating contradictions between members and fractions of the capitalist class. Consequently, the contradiction within this factitious class has made intra-class political competition very grim and placed high premium on political power,

to the detriment of governmental and political stability. The tone of class struggle is at by the limited development of civil society and consequently the limited autonomisation of the system and mechanism of domination (Ake, 1989:67). This situation creates fears in women.

The weakness of civil society and the resultant non-autonomisation of the state have accentuated the usual contradictions, rendering them particularly difficult to mediate. This is particularly true with the persistence of primary Loyalties and ethnic solidarity has made the coherence within the dominant class more difficult. Furthermore, the weak nature of civil society makes for the nominal existence of Law; the Law does not pertain to all, it openly expresses the interest of any faction of the dominant class in government, and in this circumstance, competition, whether economic or political is often normless. In so far as contradictions cannot be mediated and differences are made absolute, there is high premium on political power as the means of welfare and security, so that political competition becomes exceptionally intense and tangentially normless. Under this kind of environment, women would definitely find politics as dirty and unhealthy thereby consolidating their exclusion.

In Africa, the weak nature of civil society means that the ruling class cannot establish its hegemony on the society. No wonder most civil society in Nigeria finds almost impossible to campaign against ritual exclusion of women from politics. The fight should not be only on the pages of paper, action is equally important. The consequence of this is decisively obvious; dominance of the fractious ruling class can mainly be maintained through force. This means that the coercive apparatuses of the state, namely the Army and the Police becomes pervasive in society, this becomes more so because of the high premium placed on politics and unrestrained nature of political competition. Within the African state, the resources of physical coercion become a tool of a particular group, especially the dominant fraction of the ruling class. Since political competition is grim and normless. A situation in which Ralph Miliband (1973:90) referred to society as a battle field occurs; this is a process where-by class struggle is conducted by conservative forces in civil society which does not ultimately require direction and political articulation.

This is a situation of raw power, as security and right depends on the control of power. The struggle for power is everything and pursued by every means. The implication of politics turning into a battle is the militarization of society by the fraction of the ruling class in government. Militarization is a process in which high value is placed on war and accords primacy in state and society to the armed forces. It exalts the function the application of violence and an institutional structure the Police and Military establishment. It implies both a policy orientation and a power relationship (Ake, 1989:98). Because of the Lucrative nature of state power both for welfare and security purpose the struggle for it, it so grim that those who control instrument of warfare are always in the force when moments of intercourse are confliction. Thus the consummation of the politics of warfare is the military itself. Hence in socio-economic formations with weak civil society everything revolves around including military rule in Nigeria. This fact explain why every election conducted in Nigeria is complimented with violence and assassinations. It is therefore important to note, the states in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular are controlled, organised, centralised and manipulated by few men from the

period of colonialism to the present imperialist stage. The implication therefore is that, majority of women are excluded from political development.

PERSPECTIVES ON CIVIL SOCIETY

For precision in the analysis of political inequality and instability, especially women's exclusion from main-stream politics, a firm grasp of the concept of civil society is essential. Hegel was the first major philosopher to assume a contrast of private with public or constitutional, this corresponded to the contrast of the state with civil society. A state according to Hegel comes into being when there arises a genuine public authority, recognized as higher than the civil society which embodies private interest.

The state as Hegel conceived it is no utilitarian institution engaged in commonplace (i.e. every day) business of providing public service, administration Law, performing Police duties, and adjusting industrial and economic interests. All these functions in Hegel scheme belongs to civil society. The state may indeed direct and regulate them as need arises, but it does not itself perform them. Civil society depends upon the state for intelligent supervision and moral significance. Hegel's account of civil society was in fact a careful, even an elaborate, analysis of guilds and corporations, the estates and classes, the associations and local communities that made up the structure of the German society with which he was familiar.

However, a much less philosophical account of civil society was presented by one of the greatest scholars on the subject, Antonio Gramsci's, in his Prison Notebook which was published after World War II and the Collapse of Italian fascism. In the book Gramsci explains why on the one hand bourgeois rule in the advanced industrial countries assume a more consensual character and has earned Legitimacy from the ruled with naked force becoming less and less a feature of the rule, on the other hand bourgeois rule in the underdeveloped countries is marked by constant deployment of force in its naked form. To Gramsci, the explanation for these two different forms of class rule is rooted in the concept of hegemony (Gramsci, 1963:63).

The core of the concept of hegemony is cultural and ideological Gramsci used the concept of hegemony to mean the method by which the ruling class obtained consent of the governed to their domination. The role of winning the consent of the governed is performed by the intellectuals – who diffuse the world view of the dominant class to all aspects of society so that it becomes a –common sense notion of society, not questionable. The intellectuals articulate the collective consciousness of their class in the political, social, and economic sphere and each social and economic sphere and each social class creates its own intellectuals. Thus every social class has its own intellectuals who give it homogeneity and awareness of its functions in the economic and political fields. The intellectuals of the dominant class disseminate the world view of its class to the extent that it becomes an unquestionable common sense notion. They preserve the hegemony of their class over society by means of justifying ideology of which they are the carrier. The intellectual's gives legitimacy to existing hegemonic structures rendering it acceptable to allied and subordinate groups, universalizing its dominance. Gramsci therefore considered that the ruling class does not resort to force to maintain its rule over

society, rather it maintain its rule by massively and predominantly imposing its will on society through the exercise of its intellectual and moral leadership.

Gramsci situates hegemony in the sphere of civil society. He uses the concept of civil society to refer to the intermediary sphere between, and includes aspect of substructure and superstructure civil society then stands between the economic structure and the state and it the –ensemble of organisms commonly called private. The informal associations which constitute civil society are the church, family, trade unions, schools etc., they constitute the domain in which the bourgeoisie propagate their world view to exercise the function of social control. The private associations diffuse the world view of the ruling class into common sense notion, consequently the function of social control takes place not at the political but at the ideological: –civil society had above all a cultural function and through the hegemony of the ruling class thus presented the ethical content of the state. –The ability of the ruling class to maintain its power without resort to force thus laid in the concept of hegemony.

Having located hegemony or social control in the sphere of civil society, Gramsci locates domination having to do with depression at the state. The state then, is separate from civil society because is functions mainly by repression and it is manifested in institutions of force like the Police, Military, Prison, Courts etc. In the advance industrial countries which are also the –Key stone of bourgeois edifice, civil society is fully developed, assuming a complex structure. The principle of the impartiality of the executive who vacate office when tenure is over and of division of powers also ensure the consent of the governed and further gives civil society a more complex structure. The real nature of power is masked behind a façade of juridical notions of the rule of law. The complexity or denseness of civil society makes it resistant to crisis and depressions and any form of consciousness is refracted by civil society. The greatest of economic crisis is rebounded by civil society without any repercussion on the political, in effect; civil society acts as a buffer to the state.

In contradistinction to the advanced industrial countries, civil society is embryonic in the less developed countries; relations with the state are direct not refracted by a developed civil society. The most minimal of economic crises has immediate repercussions in the political field because of the absence of a developed civil society. Immediate contact is marked by violence. We therefore refer to this as ‘creating a theatre of absurd’ by men who were bent on maintaining their grip on power because of their selfish interests.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women are regularly exposed to various forms of physical, psychological, sexual and emotional violence. This can be traced to the unequal power relations in society between men and women and the pervading patriarchal norms and support the inequality. According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM, violence against women can be grouped and listed as follows:

- a) Physical abuse: battering, sexual assault and abuse, molestation at home, educational institutions, workplace, community and society as well as rape, infanticide, female genital mutilation, incestuous relationships, denial of

reproductive rights. This alone affects their interest in politics and political participation, leading to their exclusion from national development. The import here is that, women's in-puts are controlled and limited unjustly.

- b) Psychological abuse: sexual harassment, portrayal of women as sex objects by the media, the judicial system and institutions of society as well as their treatments as perpetual minors. The effect on women as far as political participation is to view all men as agents of frustration, anger and violence, thereby limiting their chances in political development. Furthermore, it creates fears for women to fully participate in democratic engineering.
- c) Restricted access to sources of power (economic, political and social) and to education, landed and moveable property, healthy nutrition, decision making and legal support. This of course, limits their competitiveness in political struggle and attainment.
- d) Commodification of women, trafficking, forced prostitution and commercialization of women's bodies (Enemu, 1999, the emphasis are mine).

The conclusion therefore is that, due to the challenges women faced, it is obvious that they cannot positively participate in political development, the consequence is that, their core 'interests' and 'values' would not be articulated or represented at the national level. The paper recommends the following:

- a) Women should strive to be more politically integrated, this can be achieved when they unite and speak with one voice on issues that affect women directly.
- b) Women should be more ideologically rooted, visionary and analytical when presenting their issues at both level, so as to be taken seriously and get national respect and supports.
- c) Women should encourage themselves in venturing into politics by donating money for electioneering campaign of fellow women contesting elective post, and by removing prejudice. To this end, there is a need for women to organise themselves into groups, and have a broad objective concerning women empowerment and liberation of women without regard to ethnicity, religion, class, or education.
- d) Women should pay more attention to Girl-Child vocational education. This would reduce unemployment, poverty and frustration and raise their dignity and honour. Furthermore, it would raise the level of their purchasing power parity, give them enviable class position in society and make them economically strong and sophisticated as potential political forces.
- e) Women should be more interested in politics, take active part in civil society and positively express their ideas in the mass media, and finally, constructively address gender related issues to their own advantage from women's angle.

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