

Towards the emergence of women political Leaders in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper starts with overview of the related concepts i.e., empowerment, women, politics, etc, shows the demands of empowerment on man, necessity for empowerment, x-rays the situation, pointing out the problems and presents the pedagogy for women empowerment stressing on the strategies,

stating too how not to empower women

Keyword: Women, politics, leadership, empowerment, pedagogy, strategy.

Introduction

Women constitute half of the world's population and as such they have always contributed to the wellbeing of this population. In Nigeria and many other developing countries, women have continuously played vital key roles-wife, mother, home manageress, producer, community organizer, cultural, sociopolitical activist. In spite of all these sacrifices of the womenfolk, they have been assigned to a subordinate position due to roles some cultures prescribe to sexes. Little wonder, they have suffered from various forms of segregation, discrimination, exclusion, violence and for feminists and pro-feminists' inequality.

Since the colonial period, political activities have been perceived as 'dirty' due to the unwholesome attitudes and activities of the politicians in the process of organizing political structures, struggling for power, getting at power

and exercising of this power. We have noticed unprecedented use of violence before the elections in the form of clashes between political opponents, kidnap of people, political violence - ritual murder; and during the election in shoot-outs to rig the election; and even after the elections in houses of assembly, house of senate or representative. On account of this, a widespread clamour for a radical transformation of the political culture and behaviour of our politicians has been made. The attempt made by IBB in 1991 - 1993 when he banned old breed politicians from contesting for elective posts did not yield any dividend for these old breed politicians still operated under cover. The trend of events has shown that without proper and radical transformation of both the context and factors of political socialization, that much would not be expected.

Some people in the bid to help evolve a pragmatic and sustainable ways of transforming the political behaviour of our people have asked for radical change or development of both the context and factors of political socialization; so as to make our politics nationalist, people-oriented; and centred and progressive. Some others have asked for women political leaders.

All the articles by feminists and pro-feminists which proliferated our newspapers, magazines and academic journals advocated a common cause - empowerment of women. Most of those articles were sentimental and grounded on emotion. My questions are, were women depowered? Are they powerless? You see for the case of empowerment to be made questions that are necessary and critical need be asked, and reasonable analysis made as answers couched along ideological leanings and contingent level of understanding cannot satisfy anyone.

The last decade of the 20th century saw the quest for women empowerment spearheading every other kind of empowerment. It is associated and connected with the quest for relevance. Little wonder, women's rights were said to be human rights, and women empowerment is increasingly being recognized as a precondition for and as an indicator of the level of success in the attainment of sustainable human development. Enemu, F.C. (1999:226). Continuous discourse on upgrading the level of gender awareness, being gender sensitive or even applying of gender construct in policies were made.

Like every other human phenomenon empowerment on which our topic revolves has

its dangers and prospects: it is pertinent therefore for us to examine and get at the true nature of empowerment, and see its demand on the human person; the necessity of empowerment; the situation in Nigeria today; political career in Nigeria; how not to empower women; how to empower women in view of the expectations for future leadership roles.

Definition Imperative

The word ‘empowerment’ made many women uncomfortable, a few confused, and some men nervous, and left a few with geese pimples. According to Jane Smith (1999:9),

Empowering people means encouraging them to become more involved in the decisions and activities that affect them. It means providing them with the opportunities to show that they can come up with good ideas and that they have the skills to put these ideas into use.

For Susan Rodekhr (1984), it means acting as agents or advocates to the process of redefining,

experiencing and realizing one's own power. From the positions of the scholars above, it does look like the essence of the idea - empowerment includes: building, cultivating and activating of the human powers, talents, and initiative, focusing, directing and managing of these powers in such a way as to be beneficial to the agent (individual) and the society. The concept of empowerment is tied (up) with the concept of 'freedom to', freedom as self-determination, and by encouraging the idea of personal and social responsibility it is a moral notion. It involves encouraging people to take decisions concerning their lives and welfare without referring to anyone.

In the words of Ellen Johnson (1990), it means "Broadening of choices, the expansion of options and alternatives available to people in determining the course of events which will shape their own lives and determine their own destinies."

It suggests activation of man or something with unlimited or latent potentials to manifest. In our context, making womenfolk who are tissues of possibilities and with unlimited potentialities to open up and become enriched or developed all

the more hence more promising. The feminist Dictionary gave legal teeth to it; for it, empowerment means giving legal backing to. Some scholars argue that it must entail having control over resources such as land, money and assets. This connotes the ability to influence events and actions in social relationship.

Empowerment entails fundamental and radical alterations in power relations in the society with regard to the distribution of societal resources and in cultural mores between the genders. It must involve dismantling of obstacles to proper integration of the women folk in the administration of societal resources; dismantling of some obnoxious traditional practices and cultural norms. According to Sandbrook and Halfani (1993:80) empowerment is a multi-dimensional process involving the transformation of the economic, socio-political, psychological and legal circumstances of the powerless.

Empowering women in a positive sense does not mean that women will dominate men, will challenge men, it might mean women competing with men not to get equality but to induce and

put equity in place. It means giving women the necessary help in order to develop themselves and contribute their quota to societal development. A lot of forces have changed the structure and character of our households and the family; some archaic structures which can no longer move on with these forces shaping the world need be destroyed. Okagbue (1996:331) stated: “customary norms are no longer always appropriate and their observance may simply serve to entrap women in subservient positions”. These norms should be stifled and made dead.

EMPOWERMENT: ITS DEMAND ON HUMAN PERSON (IN OUR CONTEXT WOMEN)

Empowerment discourse was triggered off and almost went off gear in the present time. It was as a result of scientific development and part of the democratic globalization process. The feminist movement was ignited by the French revolution, which brought about the alteration of laws of inheritance to favour female children. From then onward, feminists have asserted with continued vigour, emphasis and persuasion that women and men are equal. What actually does

equality mean? Is it ever possible to have this equality? Russell (1976:60) stated: “The demand for equality between men and women concerned itself from the first not only with political matters but also with sexual morality. Modern feminists are no longer so anxious to curtail the vices of men.” They ask rather that what is permitted to men shall be permitted also to them. Their predecessors sought equality in moral slavery, where as they sought quality in moral freedom.

Is the kind of equality, feminists agitated to have that of equality in marriage? It does not seem. Dukor (1998:85) states: “Current trends in feminist drives connote both this idea of equality in moral freedom and equality in economics, material and intellectual sphere. Any position which will get the consent of all cultures as it pertains to these spheres with regard to equality will be controversial and difficult. It is safer to think of equality only within the sphere of moral freedom and within marriage.

There is no scientific or mathematical equality between the male and female gender. There is no link too between moral equality and other spheres of life; though equal moral freedom for both genders stands a chance of

influencing equal opportunities for both genders in different areas in life. Among the people advocating social equality is Nwankwo Nkechi. She (1996: 446) said. it is reasonable to believe that having a legislation to back gender quota rules and equal opportunities for women in every sphere will change the situation in Nigeria.

There is a confusion of concepts here; gender quota rules and gender equal opportunities are incompatible issues. The former is mathematical and scientific and can be changed or modified, but the latter is moral. The later is tolerable, as it can enhance improvement of the womenfolk, but the former can bring about a class war between the genders.

Empowerment is a process which can only begin in an atmosphere that is conducive, where everyone feels accepted, loved and important, in a climate in which expectations are high, and where everyone is ready to sacrifice something in order to get at the best. It requires a system in which self-confidence of individuals can be built up for adequate and optimum capacity utilization, hence empowerment is tied up with the social process. It stands to reason ^{that} it cannot thrive

in an atmosphere full of rancour, cynicism, rejection, suspicion, skepticism, mistrust, abuse; where some obnoxious, customary and traditional norms which entrap people (women) are still in practice.

Empowerment will equip women with some form of powers for future responsibility. This is because it will create a kind of cultural attitudes, perception, spirit and worldview which forms the ethical, metaphysical and spiritual foundations of every future act. What then will be the appropriate venue and content of this empowerment? Due to the social and moral demands empowerment will likely make on women, proposing a model will be putting the cart before the horse.

Empowerment respects the end of human life; it respects the dimensions of human sociality; i.e. spirituality and justice. Any empowerment therefore which does not respect these values is pseudo or negative. Empowerment is as a result of an authentic socialization, hence breeds social stability and respect for human rights. Empowering one is a step to empowering others. Again, only one with potentials can be empowered, an imbecile cannot be empowered. To empower women, there is need for a programme and pedagogy. Let us now

go on to the relevance of empowerment.

NECESSITY FOR EMPOWERMENT

What is the relevance of empowerment? Does empowerment have an objective reality in man? Does man seek it because it is rooted in his very nature? Does he seek it for prudential reasons? Some thinkers would answer in the negative; people like Thiram Arnold in America, and Vilfredo Pareto in Europe and many of the leaders of states and nations in Nigeria and other third world nations who have refused to perform. For them, empowerment is sought for their individual selfish aims and interests and not for any human objective, else, why should People's Democratic Party (P.D.P) in Nigeria rig without thinking 'all' the seats in the federation, in spite of the people's disrespect, and disregard for the party? Obasanjo's government has failed to link empowerment with moral responsibility. It does seem the negative empowerment Babaginda, Jimmy Nwobodo gave this government in P.D.P's Jos convention in 1999 was not converted into a positive one for four long years. Again, this government negatively through corruption and rigging empowered itself in the 2003 madness and foolery called general

elections. What do we expect? A multiplication of lies deprivation, mischief and corruption as noticed in the first tenure.

Every man craves to live in a society where there is rule of law, where law prevails against the rule of man. Where the universal moral law - good is to be done and evil avoided should operate and guide human relationships, for the actualization of human welfare and happiness. In short, to live in a society where human rights are respected and duties to one fulfilled. That means in a place freedom reigns, one will equally have obligations and responsibility. For to be human, is to be responsible.

Nothing is truly human if it is not grounded on freedom, knowledge and voluntariness. Aghamelu stated:

The point is that once
deprived of the
opportunity of
appropriate pedagogy,
the human act
degenerates into
animality since every
motivation to act will be
dictated (six) by
violence and ignorance.

Due to the fact that there is every tendency of some factors becoming obstacles to the realization of the goal of real empowerment, there is a demand on human beings to be virtuous and maintain a living conscience, that is, to be truly human.

Empowerment can be said to be the intellectual seed in the society, hence it needs a vision characterized by human essence. Its goal must conform to its nature, that points to the urgency of moral responsibility, which is best translated in reality by the virtues of love, charity and prudence.

It is the empowered people who have been disposed for leadership, as they are those qualified to aid others develop themselves in the bid to move the society forward. Empowerment then encourages the development of the spirit of altruism (and benevolence). Altruism is a value, not dependent on any material gain.

Empowerment involves the entire personality and as such has a spirit; that shows that it is spiritual. If it is spiritual then, it has to be focused on the truth, the good and beauty. If it does this it will then promote dialogue in the human society, by implication it will enhance understanding.

God had already commanded man in

Genesis' account to 'subdue the world', this can only be done by cultivating himself and utilizing the potentials he has, that is by being empowered. Man remains the subject of every empowerment. Let the empowerment sought by our womenfolk not be the type presently prevalent in Nigeria, negative brand of empowerment without any sense of responsibility.

THE SITUATION

All through the ages of human civilization, the subjugation and oppression of women has remained an invariable constant, it is ageless, for once women were regarded as chattels in some cultures; it is deep rooted and systematic. In Short if not for feminist movement, it would have turned into a global dilemma.

The issues are: what is the political situation in Nigeria like? And how have women fared in Nigeria and in Her political dispensations? The political activities in Nigeria since independence have proved beyond doubts divisive, parasitic and destabilizing. It is, full of rancour; greed, and deadly. Unpromising, according to Niyi Oniororo

..., it is politics of
negativism, otherwise

called politics of “If I do
not win, I kill,”
otherwise called
“politics of
recrimination,”
otherwise called
“politics of “self
aggrandizement,”
otherwise called
“politics of money,”
otherwise called “The-
more-you-look-the-less-
you see” politics,
otherwise called
“politics of grab-grab”
or “politics of the
stomach.”

It does seem that military regimes are more
development oriented than political regimes, as
the latter are now obstacles to development.
Think of the Shagari, and Obasanjo regimes. In
short, it does seem that not all who found
themselves the political terrain are concerned
with political life let alone the good life of the
people. Robert Dahl puts it poignantly;

Some people are
indifferent to
politics...others are

deeply involved. Even among those who are heavily involved in politics, only some actively seek power. And among the power seekers, some gain more power than others.

In a political system the actors play diverse roles, some are policy makers, others are brokers and still a few are kingpins. In the understanding of Curry and Wade they are:

- (a) The politician, described as a policy maker concerned in the authoritative allocation of rewards and costs for a whole society.
- (b) The beneficiary, described as a member of one or more groups and whose role within the system is to establish demand priorities that maximize his welfare.
- (c) The fiduciary, described as one who represents beneficiaries as a group agent and who therefore functions as a political 'broker', and
- (d) The spectator, who is the ordinary voter and, therefore, neither a fiduciary, beneficiary nor politician.

We have two phases historically speaking in Nigeria, the colonial and postcolonial eras. During the colonial period, women were considered as helpmate to men; hence they did not feature prominently in the economic and political spheres.

Majority of them were housewives, and a few took to jobs like sowing, weaving e.t.c. A few who were educated received just the kind that prepared them to teach in Sunday schools. Aideo (1992) points out that the girls were not allowed to enjoy the opportunities the boys enjoyed, as the boys were prepared to become professionals, the girls were prepared to become subservient, wonderful and obedient mothers and wives.

It was the envisaged further economic exploitation of the women by the colonial overlords that made the Aba women to riot in 1929. Later on independence movements of the 1950's and 1960's saw the emergence of militant women. Madam Tinubu, Kuti; Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, Mrs. Adunni Oluwole, Mrs. Ramsome Kuti e.t.c played key roles in politics then. They organized a women political party but the truth is that it was a weak party without the muscle to make any noticeable impact. With the independence though, women were completely

edged out of the political arena.

Although women were edged out all was not well for the colonizers exploited Nigerians to a point of stupor. They manipulated not only our resources but Nigerians in governing of the state. These colonizers brought western education with them, this exposed the natives, gave them dangerous ideas and they fought for their emancipation. They demanded not only equal right to employment with the colonizers but even self governance. The state of affairs then helped in shaping the political orientation, attitude, perception and culture.

After independence natives took over from the colonizers. But they were still answerable to the Queen. The socio-economic structure of Nigeria was not changed. Due to the fact that Nigeria was ran by Royal Niger Company, Nigerian state developed as a tool of capitalism. Our people who took over from the colonizers lacked the material base, out of confusion, weakness, wickedness, lack of vision and foresight, thought that they have arrived and used their new positions to accumulate wealth and became indigenous bourgeoisie who helped the colonizers under develop Nigeria. Spoils of power were jealously guarded and shared among politicians in the spirit of business gangsterism.

Ake Claude argues thus.

The battle for control of the government and for hegemony is all the more grim because...governmental and state power have tended to become the means of production for the African bourgeoisie". Powers of control and regulation were excessively enlarged and misused in exploiting the masses and the state. In the words of James Mayall, there was (political harlotry and) political hypocrisy.

He () remarks:

Corruption is endemic over much of the Third World and its denunciation is the common coinage of political battle. Yet a change of regime, loudly trumpeted in the name of purification, generally results in a change of beneficiaries, not the restoration of the rule of law.

Presently in Nigeria, the climate of politics is changing gradually. Some women vied for different elective posts, though only a crop of them won in the elections. Although some still see the connection between female suffrage and the general status of women as real, many still see it as symbolical. It was only after independence that political career in Nigeria became an affair of Nigerians; before it was only an affair of the few enlightened political activists who lobbied and agitated for positions in the colonial governments. Another phase was predicated on the constituted rights of citizens and the disposition of the military class, propelled by the quest to loot public treasuries in the guise of serving the people. The politicians offered a sense of power by politics, exercised influence over men, had a hand on the pulse of historic events, became men of the moment and substance but equally had a firm grip on the state's purse which they misused with reckless abandon and alacrity. It is not surprising Margaret Peil remarked:

Since Nigerians
tend to see politics as an
open ticket to wealth and
fame, it has attracted
people from a wide

variety of
occupations: teacher
s and farmers,
businessmen and
academics, trade
unionists and
professionals.

PATH TO POLITICAL LEADERSHIP: PROBLEMS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The efforts of United Nations Organisation, the government and some non-governmental organizations to reduce or eliminate the various kinds of discrimination against women have not succeeded in removing the inequalities which have existed over the years. On account of the fact that many societies are patrilineal, many societies have been and remained a male-dominated. Enemuo (1999:228) remarks: "In varying degrees, they harbour beliefs, more and practices which objectively permit or promote the economic exploitation of women and their political marginalization."

Apart from economic exploitation, women folk suffer from inferiority complex of diverse

magnitude, injustice and various forms of violence.

Women bear excessive burden in running the home, most of them have been reduced to hewers of wood and drawers of water, yet their efforts and sacrifices are not valued, unrecognized and unrewarded. Even when they are employed in the formal section they have to combine the stress of office with their domestic responsibilities. There is equally a 'blanket ceiling' above which they would not rise in their careers. Of course, some of them are denied employment simply because they are women and will sooner or later go on maternity leave. Women lack access to the critical factors of production.

There are discriminatory laws of inheritance and succession and land tenure denying women legal ownership of land and even access to credit. Before some banks will grant loan to a woman, the consent of her husband is sought. Little wonder, the feminization of poverty. More women experience poverty than men. Irrespective of the economic plight of women they go on to find extra work to

supplement family incomes... who have re-arranged family budgets; switching to cheaper foods...[and] who have most severely affected by cuts in health and educational facilities and by rising morbidity and deaths among their children. (Cited by Soetan, F (1995: 79-80))

It is not uncommon to observe some women who on coming home from work rush to the market to sell one thing or another to earn more money. There is no doubt that at sometimes we suffer inferiority complexes. We are sensitive to a lot of things, criticism, competition e.t.c; our response to flattery if it is unchecked can be a sign of inferiority. According to Adler inferiority is intrinsic in human nature. For Freud the basis of life is sexual, so inferiority complex has got to do with sex; negative emotions aroused by a sensed or feared defect of one's sexual organs or sexual powers, more precisely when the libido fails to reach its (finality) final point one becomes or feels unfulfilled. Dicaprio (1974:257) states.

Life as an uphill
struggle from birth
onwards, with many

skills to learn and
many obstacles to
overcome. In the
course of the
struggle, the
individual often
experiences
insecurity because of
his inability to adapt
to or cope with the
situation.

It is a normal feeling of weakness or inefficiency experienced by every child, but reinforced by defective health or deformity or even in the morbid quest to have superiority over others. According to Drever (1952:134)

... inferiority complex is
one arising from conflict:
because the impulse to
seek recognition
(positive self impulse)
and fear of the hurt
arising from frustration
frequently experienced in
similar situations in the
past, resulting in
defective, compensatory

or often aggressive
behaviour unconsciously
determined.

It is a manifestation of inadequacy in one's life; and expression of this unfitness psychologically. There are two types of inferiority complex: normal and abnormal type. The former is normal and common to everyone, on its account people labour, toil and make efforts to improve themselves. At childhood according to Way (1962:28), "The child's first impression of the world is bound up with a feeling of his own weakness and uncertainty." The individual makes efforts to actualize himself and replace the 'minus' in his life with a 'plus' as pointed out by McBride. For Adler (1973:50),

The individual is
first described at length
as finalistically oriented
towards a goal of
perfection, security,
completion, as striving
for overcoming and

superiority.

It is only against this background that the individual experiences a minus situation - which is reflected in the feeling of incompleteness, insecurity, of inferiority*. Inferiority complex is an attitude and disposition of someone towards an existing problem. When it no longer aids one to develop and realize himself, but becomes an obstacle it is then abnormal. This is because everyone is inferior to some other one in the wide world. Am I to feel inferior because my punch does not weigh 2 kg like that of Tyson? No. Excessive over compensation can bring about inferiority complex. Ofodum (1994:43) states:

Abnormal inferiority or inferiority complex is when the individual shows a constant manifestation of not being at home with people or unnecessary feeling of

being uncomfortable
before people or to any
sort of social
interaction.

What matters at times in life is not what comes your way, but what you do with what comes your existential path. Inferiority complex becomes abnormal when one reacts negatively to life and not positively, when he puts “a minus instead of a plus to his life.” So state McBride (1953: 41).

Women in Nigeria suffer from inferiority complex, at times it turns morbid. Apart from normal inferiority, which everyone suffers, women in Nigeria suffer abnormal inferiority, some of them suffer from organic inferiority, in the language of Freud, they suffer denial of a penis; and a lot of other cultural norms and traditional practices which go a long way to undermine women’s self-esteem. In Nigeria, for instance, there is preference for the male child, women with male children or at least a male child are in great pains as she is seen as one yet to arrive, to be fulfilled. There are legal laws against the development of women i.e. connected with inheritance, ownership of land and some properties. There are discriminatory laws against women: degrading widowhood

practices, marriage customs. There is still female mutilation of the genital in many societies. What of childless women? They go through hell, both in the hands of a merciless society and their fellow womenfolk. All these weight down the women and entrench a feeling of inferiority in them. Giving birth to a male child compensates a woman for her lack of a penis; it is not surprising seeing them assert authority at that point in time. An unmarried mother is a monstrosity.

Gender-biased customs and traditional practices impose abuses on womenfolk, and many women unconsciously and unreflectively accept it and get conditioned. Olusegun Obasanjo et al (1991:44) remarked:

Even in urban centres
and in civilized circles,
the stereotype gender
roles make women
overplay their femininity
by accepting that they
are the weakest 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
with men.

References are made to the scriptures to ensure that women are all the more psychologically intimidated and dominated. In the Northern part of Nigeria, the female children are not educated; they are rather given out early to men who have many wives already, and eventually confined in '*purdah*' even in this 21st century all in the name of religious practice. Bilikisu Yusuf: (346-347) points out that this practice is out of consonance with the provisions of the Sharia (and the mind) and the example of Usman Dan Fodio. Amale (1991) points out: Men always face severe difficulties when they consider the possibilities of women gaining position of influence. They harbour the inevitable fear that this will make the men fall from the exalted stature they have exploited for long.

By implication, men suffer from inferiority complex which manifests in the quest to lord it over the womenfolk. Let the inferiority complex generated in the womenfolk not be abnormal. Chukwukere (1992) states that

notwithstanding the level of education and enlightenment that the relation between the husband and wife has remained a power based one. The man expects obedience from the wife; this obedience can be got by even denying her of sexual rights or even by physically manhandling her.

On account of the state of affairs already pointed out, one does not need a social scientist to tell him that women were and are grossly underrepresented in public life, in decision making bodies, and in politics because they have not come of age. Today an improvement has been made, women are educated and we have many women professors, doctors, lawyers, a few vice-chancellors, and less than 3% women heads of government in the wide world. Udegbe (1998:13) sees the case of Nigeria as disgusting. Nigerian women in leadership positions are not above 2%. She writes: that appointment of women into political offices has been 'characterized and motivated by tokenism.' More so, they find themselves working in male dominated environment. This aggravates their feeling of 'marginality'. N'Dri Therese Assie-Lumumba (1996) traced this to the colonial policies where only men were active in the public sphere and earn a living to support their families. This policy

and others of its like reinforced patriarchal values. The restructuring of our local economies by colonialism, made greater economic resources from cash crop production and merchandising to be in the hands of men and as such gave men the ability and claw to dominate in the political scene after independence and even prior to independence. It was the statement of under representation of women in public sphere, politics and their domination by men.

Women worldwide are exposed to a lot of dangers more so in third world nations. They are face to face with violence of all sorts: physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, e.t.c. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) grouped this violence thus:

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.

Psychological abuse: sexual harassment, portrayal of women as sex objects by the media, the judicial system and institutions of society as well as their treatment as perpetual minors. Restricted access to sources of power (economic, political and social) and to education, landed and

moveable property, healthy nutrition, decision-making and legal support.

Commodification of women (sic) trafficking; forced prostitution and commercialization of women's bodies, (cited in Gbemi Egunjobi (1998:14)). Some of these acts are not seen as violence, they are sanctioned by custom and tradition of some areas. A study of violence will reveal a daily occurrence. Sexual harassment is on the increase; some women are used as sex objects to get political posts and even employment both in public and private offices. Rape is becoming an invariable constant in our nation. It is difficult to study as the women raped are not disposed to open up, or relate their experience to a third person.

Let us now go on to discuss women empowerment, as the path for the emergence of women political leaders in Nigeria.

.WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women empowerment is a just cause just like every other empowerment of the human person. When one is empowered, he is aided to cultivate himself-and his environment and become more resourceful to himself and others. Empowering women stand a chance of helping

them overcome the traumas which ignorant adherence to customs and traditional practices forced them into.

Eno-Irukwu, one time National Coordinator of the Better Life Programme poignantly points out that: “Our women need power and authority to act, to break loose from the shackles that have kept them down for years. Empowerment will equip and release women to fully participate in development activities of the nation.

(cited in Ngozi Ojiakor
(2001:220).

President Samora Moise Michael of Mozambique in his national broadcast in 1992 to his countrymen stated: “The emancipation of women is not an act of charity, humanitarian or compassionate attitude, rather it is a fundamental necessity.” James D. Wolfenschn, President of the World Bank in the Fourth World Conference on Women held at Beijing China from 4-15 September 1995 added.

It will require not
just the liberation of
women but also the
liberation of men in their
thinking, attitudes and
willingness to take fairer

share of their
responsibilities and
workloads that women
carry on their
shoulders...

And action must begin at
home.

In the view of the secretary General in the Conference above Gertrude Mongella: "To attain democracy, development and peace, there must be policies to eliminate gender inequality, balance in government-appointed bodies". If women are liberated from negative cultural norms, traditional practices and complexes alone, the job is not yet done. 'Freedom from' is only an aspect of freedom; 'freedom to' is positive freedom and is real freedom, for freedom is self-determination. This takes us to the pedagogy for women empowerment.

PEDAGOGY FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Empowering women as an agenda has gained momentum, and wide recognition; and has won the heart of many but there are some

vital and critical questions, which we need to address in sub-section 8 of the work. For now, our question is what should be done? This question is of great import as a lot of principles, policies and actions have been posited towards ending gender inequality by International organizations, such as United Nations Organization (U. N. O.), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, (CEDAW), government of nations, and non-governmental bodies. There are efforts to uplift and enhance the status of women; yet women are not yet in the position of enjoying the equal rights they have sought for and fought for long. The reason is simply, the goal sought was not clearly defined, and the possibility was not thought about, but one cannot rightly talk of desirability of something without first and foremost establishing its possibility. These conventions sought equal treatment for people in unequal situation. Justice remains the chief virtue of the human society; the ligament holding the parts together. It has been defined by some scholars as giving everyone his due, and treating equal equally and unequal unequally.

Is justice reflected in
Okagbue's (1998:326) description of
CEDAW as?

An international bill of
rights for women and a
framework for women's
participation in the
development process ...
(which) spells out
internationally accepted
principles and standards
for achieving equality
between women and
men.

Osinulu (1996:336) points out:
"True equity can only emerge from
efforts directed towards addressing
and correcting these situational
imbalances."

Women alone cannot get at empowerment
let alone political leadership roles or positions. It
rather requires the cooperation and participation
of international organs, governments, (non-
government bodies), and the civil society. How
do we go about it? What strategic actions are we
going to take? How do we achieve in an

efficacious way a genuine, germane and authentic cum lasting women empowerment grounded,/founded on commitment, principles and ideals that worth it?

A fulfilling empowerment. Socialization and desocialization are the keys for real and lasting women empowerment.

With regard to socialization, two modes face us; the negative and the positive brands of socialization. What actually is socialization? It is the process by which man is brought into contact with other people and groups which then exert a kind of influence on one. It is the way one learns from infancy socially or culturally approved attitudes, dispositions, ideas and behavioural traits of a society. In the words of Lowry and Rankin (1977:96) socialization “transmits the basic knowledge of a society, which allows people to employ their skills intelligently in situations”.

Usually socialization comes through a primary, secondary and reference groups and culture. Negative socialization is pseudo or fake socialization, hence lacks the quality and potency to lead to empowerment of the human person. It

is the way of the beast, the worldly; it teaches that corruption is the essence of life. Corruption has eaten into the fabric of our nation and as such has attitudinal attraction; eventually it destroys the ideal of empowerment. Negative socialization could in our context mean women allowing themselves to be used as means, sexual objects in order to be placed in viable, high and enviable positions or even their using their fellow women as means to their own goals or ends. Voltaire said that nothing is evil in human life, only the mind or man says whether it is evil or good. Hobbes equally made no distinction between good and bad in human affairs. Machiavelli the father of modern politics said that the end justified the means. Their grandfather Protagoras opined that man is the measure of all things, the things that are, that they are and the things that are not, that they are not. (*Homo mensura omnes*). All these thinkers and philosophers erred in their postulations as their viewpoints will lead us to the state of anarchy or the Hobbessian state of nature where man is a wolf to his fellow man, and human life nasty, brutish and short.

In this kind of situation, it becomes the survival of the fittest, and man who is supposed to be an end in itself then becomes a victim of the system. He will no longer have good things

of life, no dream, no vision, hope and even a fulfilled life. Life will become meaningless. The Nigerian society witnesses negative socialization as a social reality. Our society has turned its back on human values and embraced materialism or else why did money politics distort the thought of political heavy weights in Nigeria; in Jos convention of P. D. P. (People's Democratic Party) in 1999?. Again, why did the returning officers, poll clerks and INEC officials rig the 2003 elections with reckless abandon?

P. D. P chieftains rigged the 2003 elections massively and foolishly, it is unprecedented in the annals of African history. Why? Nigerians allowed themselves to be ruled by materialistic values.

When a people bottle themselves up in materialism, moral negativity is enthroned, their energies are directed against life, hence a state of moral disperspective reigns supreme. On account of the messy situation generated by negative socialization, there is need for a way out. This will lead us to positive socialization.

Positive socialization could help man to become co-creators with God. It has the capacity to make man the salt of the earth and light of the world. It is indispensable for the enthronement of justice, love, peace, freedom and genuine

human empowerment. Positive socialization brings to the open, the obligations, duties and responsibility of every agent involved in the process.

Now let us examine the rules and duties of the agents involved in the socialization process; the government, the womenfolk, and the civil society. What role should the government play? The government should ensure that it designs rich policies which will go on to aid in giving women economic powers, so as to ensure that they can compete with men, and changing or modifying some of the obnoxious and discriminating laws which help in forcing women take a subordinate role in the society. Laws of succession and inheritance need to be touched and improved. Employment opportunities should be made available, and credit facilities granted to women, laws of this kind, enforced, stand a chance of uplifting the status of women in the society and usher them into the public sphere especially in politics.

People like Enemuo suggested reserving some seats in the parliament for women in the interim, but some people like me will kick against it even as a short measure. Women

should be given a free hand to compete favourably with men. Many ignorantly think that they are the weaker sex but they are not. Chinweizu pointed out poignantly in his *Anatomy of Female Power*.

The women folk have a role to play. They need to desire to be empowered, not the lip-service type but one backed and matched with effective action. They must show sincere interest in their bid for leadership position and exhibit love for their fellow women and not live like jealousy and envy personified. Love alone can generate the spirit of togetherness and peace, which is the spirit behind teamwork.

Genuine empowerment and real move to gain leadership positions necessitates women coming together, organizing themselves, designing worthy and noble goals, being visionary and working tirelessly towards realization of their objectives. Enemuo (1999:236) stressed:” In the long-run, meaningful empowerment requires that women be organized and that they be politically educated and encouraged to take active part in the political process, as party members and leaders, and as voters, and candidates for elective

offices.”

It is a truism that women should get organized, and network for the cause of their empowerment and mounting the rostrum of leadership in the political sphere through the processes of sensitization, propaganda and socialization. In order to do this, there is need for dialogue. Women need to move from dialogue to cooperation and to effective action.

Dialogue is derived from the Greek words “dia’ and ‘legan’ meaning between and talk respectively. According to Chukwulozie (1979:7) cited in Ogugua (2001:15) dialogue in a general sense involves a “form of meeting and communication between individuals in a spirit of sincerity, respect for persons, and mutual trust”. In the words of Bishop Taylor (1978) it is a “sustained conversation between parties who are not saying the same thing...” irrespective of contradictory positions and viewpoints Ogugua (2002:15-16) writes:

A proper idea of dialogue involves being open to reality, which necessitates maintaining one’s own position or

view point, and looking into what the other presents (says) with sincerity to understand him in order to arrive at proper and mutual understanding of the issues being discussed as this one will lead to peace and harmony.

By implication, though the means of getting at their goal may differ, womenfolk will encounter each other in the open, and on the planes of truth and action. Ogugua (2001:16) adds: “it implies a movement of rapprochement and a deeper understanding,” for the “Parties involved give and take, make shift of grounds in the bid to arrive at progress and understanding.”

Openness is geared towards relationship. No one can develop in isolation. Emmanuel Mounier states “we must find our way out of our inwardness, in order to sustain that inwardness”. Friedman (1964:204) writes: In communication, I am revealed to myself together with the other, for in becoming manifest, I am losing myself (as empirical existence) in order to find myself (as potential existence) (sic). It is in co-existence that

man is real man, for the fundamental nature of man is only discoverable in communication. Lack of communication entails relinquishment of one's being. Ogugua (2001:23) sees dialogue as a potent tool for societal advancement. He states:

Dialogue is an integral part of the society for it is related to though more complex than the communication function in the society, it is a vehicle for harmony, as an expression of humanity, dignity and freedom; and as a factor of change.

He continued:

It is through dialogue that we are able to provide humanizing perspectives to ethnic, religious, economic, social problems, and even some natural causalities and calamities besieging our

people. It is a value of
great symbol - the
symbol of
humanization, liberation
and peace.

There are obstacles along the path of dialogue. Or else why did Sartre call the other “hell”? At times, the other can be incommunicative. Hardly do we reach perfect agreement in our conversations and even dialogue Hobbes according to Plamentaz (1978:123) writes:“...if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies and in the way to their end, endeavour to destroy or subdue one another.”

Maturity and spirit of morality will help man overcome this kind of behaviour, Ogugua (2001:24-25) listed openness, personal contact, cooperation and frankness of position or viewpoint as the principles of dialogue.

Our womenfolk need to enter into an era of dialogue which must be condemnatory or captious with the men folk or career politicians; but an open and sincere encounter, and even more sincere because there could be the possibility of a hidden discrimination,

intimidation and segregation in women folk, and subjugation that might influence the structure of women's plot and move or even mechanism to become empowered or get political positions.

The mere fact that political powers, ambitions of men and women have enough weapons and tools to destroy each other makes it more reasonable for both to dispose themselves to dialogue and work together to arrest and overcome dangerous defence mechanisms which might crop up. For the sake of a better society and more human hope, both need enter into a constructive dialogue. This dialogue will be "characterized by mutual listening and readiness to respond in full freedom and total sincerity, an exchange of communication in which the participants act as partners" so stated Haring Bernard (1979:365). There is need to discern critically and creatively, seek common ground (s), and readiness to change positions if need be, for it takes maturity to drop a position when evidence and current realities point towards a better position.

It is prudent and sincere dialogue alone that can hold men folk and women folk together to get at a hoped for cooperation and work for a better society even when viewpoints and positions differ. The dialogue so advocated will

not yield any fruit if it remains at the theoretical level, it must be translated into action. It must be action-oriented. Let the principles of dialogue enumerated above propel us even to a stronger call to action, for the good of our society. Now we can ask what role the civil society will play.

(iii)The Civil society made up of every organized social life groups such as N. B. A. (Nigerian Bar Association), NLC (Nigerian Labour Congress), ASUU (Academic Staff Union of University), NUNS (National Union of Nigeria Students), IFUNW (International Federation of University Women), YWCA (Young Women Christian Association), WUCWO, (World Council of Catholic Women), WIN (Women in Nigeria), etc. According to Larry Diamond (1995:9- 10) Civil Society is:

The realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self generating, self supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound to by the legal order or set of shared rules... it involves citizens acting

collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions and ideas, exchange ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable. It is an intermediary entity, standing between the private sphere and the state.

The civil society has to aid through education which is part of the socialization, and by reinstituting (reemphasizing) the virtue of honour which has been discarded with the influx of westernization and materialism. This education to be precise is political education Ogugua (2000:100) pointing out the relevance of education in the society states: Education cannot end with certification. Education should serve the society and improve man's condition. True education is for life. It must be capable to help one to know oneself properly, one's limitations and abilities, the opportunities in life, and disposes one to meet challenges and solve

problems so as to better one's life and those of others in the society. He wrote elsewhere (2002 :) that "Political education may sound ambiguous but there is nothing more necessary than it in a political society". Haring, B (1981:379) pointed out: "In the past, political education in many nations was triumphal and self-righteousness. Frequently it cultivated nationalism rather than sound patriotism. It neglected a worldwide vision."

By implication, it must have recourse to culture and value. It is its task to cultivate and inculcate virtues i.e. equality, liberty, justice, peace, respect for human rights, tolerance and fair play in the citizens. Little surprising, Vatican II document holds that. Civic and political education is today supremely necessary for people; especially young people. Such education should be painstakingly provided so that all citizens can make their contribution to the political community. Political education is value- oriented and laden, hence recognizes the value and worth of the citizen; and realizes that he is subject and not an object of politics. According to Onwuka (1988:135) it is:

The influence which

enables people to discriminate when faced with alternatives. It consists of all the activities which help them to determine who their friends and enemies are and accordingly take appropriate decisions and steps calculated to be in the interest of their survival.

When the citizens of Nigeria are given adequate political education, they will become more aware and conscious of their political rights, and responsibilities and there is a chance of uplifting our political life an enduring political climate. Haring Bernard (1981:380) states: “The heart of such education should be to activate the rational citizens through freedom and for responsible freedom.”

In order to have wholeness of vision and real freedom every aspect of the society will take part in this kind of education, for without a kind of pluralism in political education there cannot be any enduring democratic society. Having

gone this far in political education, let us talk on reinstitution of honour in our society.

A society that has lost every sense of sin cannot have any sense of honour. In Nigeria everything goes. A philander can become the president of the nation, a thief or a cheat can rig an election and become the governor of a state, a murderer can be appointed a minister or an ambassador, etc. The 2003 election just ended recorded the greatest number of 419's in the upper and lower houses at the federal level.

In an age that sin is commercialized honour is said to be outdated. For one to claim that he has lost honour will mean not been in vogue, for we care less about honour. That person will be an object of amusement, because nobody cares rather than being an object of sympathy.

Many see honour as obsolete and ideological. According to Peter Berger (1985:416) "Honour occupies about the same in contemporary usage as chastity". Honour and dignity are related; honour has to do with duty while dignity has to do with rights. Honour is specified by the social duties. Many of us today tend to see insult as nothing. Even overseas insult is not a ground for legal action. We fail to realize, that it concerns one's self worth, value and respect. Why must we ask people to overlook

insult? Ogugua Paul in “Towards a civilized society: the role of Traditional Igbo family values” writes: “... belief in denial of honour no doubt gives us a clue to the structure of modern consciousness. Demise of honour brought with it dehumanization of man, for it helped in lessening respect for man.” He continued:

This same society which denied the reality and significance of honour went about to fashion new moralities, and a new humanism.

In the West, it is seen as an aristocratic concept, grounded in feudalistic structures. Today honour still survives in the military and there you get order and respect. Berger (1985) states: Those who have high status in the community have particular obligations of honor, but even the lowly are differentiated in terms of honor and dishonor. It is amidst the wreckage of honour that dignity, which stresses rights alone, sprang up, and since then all has not been well. It is in honour that an individual discovers his true identity in the roles he plays in the society. Ogugua poignantly stressed: Honour is an attempt to relate existence to certain archetypal or desirable patterns of behaviour. Dishonour involves loss of self, loss of face in the society,

and alienation from the nitty-gritty of human life. A society that has a place for honour stands a chance of having an orderly society, because everybody will be trying his best possible to conform and not be an escape goat. More so, one without honour will be a 'persona non grata' hence will not even muster the courage to contest for any elective post let alone win. In United States of America for instance, one with skeleton in his cupboard, one that is not morally sound cannot be a governor of a state, but here in Nigeria a cheat can become the president of Nigeria. What does one expect in a nation, where the president is a rogue? Of course, roughish activities will become the order of the day. There is also an urgent need for desocialization. According to UNESCO and FAWE it entails: Critically examining learned behaviour, received values, familiar language, habitual perceptions, existing knowledge and power relations within a given community. It means determining, and relearning, dropping of values inimical to empowerment of women and societal development and advancement. After pedagogy come the techniques, tactics and/or strategies to be employed in order to actualize the targeted objectives (s).

STRATEGIESFOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, involving the economic, socio-political, cultural, etc. There are some areas women need to be empowered such as education, cultural social-political, economic, etc.

a. EDUCATION

The women folk in the traditional society were denied good education. Today since the value of education has been discovered, they should ensure that they have access to good and functional education. They need not wait for the government or men to coax them to be educated for nobody make another strong. They need an education imbued with proper values for this existential voyage called life. In the words of Ogugua, "...an education that can give the head, the heart and hand values."

Bacon opined that knowledge is power. I prefer to maintain that use of knowledge is power, and at the basis of empowerment, there is need for an integral kind of education; it will promote some principles: Intimate knowledge of the contemporary world. Full integration of the recipient into his own society and culture. A life

of faith in God and redemption moved by the Holy Spirit. Promotion of human values, (cited in Aghamelu). How does the situation in Nigeria aid in ushering in this kind of education? The realities of our situation show irresponsible and unresponsive attitudes and acts of leadership and fellowship towards this kind of education. What should be done? It is by going into ourselves, re-attuning our spirits and imbibing the spirit of Christ, for total rejuvenation and radical transformation for the better.

b. ECONOMICS

God in Genesis asked man to subdue the world. Man, the labourer and producer is made to dominate, and humanize his environment, this is why he is a cultural animal. Marx pointed out that the economy is at the root of every superstructure; and that one's relation to the means of production determines one's consciousness and vice versa.

The average man flees from labour that is the postulation of Mac Gregor's theory X. It is the responsibility of women folk to be involved in labour as a way of transforming their environment and changing their position in the society. With a proper and positive philosophy

of labour, they will not be held captive by the 'squandermania' syndrome and mentality, which has plagued many Nigerians.

There is need for the promotion of the economic rights of women by altering or modifying some legal norms which had continued to hold women captive. The discriminatory cultural norms militating against the progress of women should be discarded, and access to economic resources facilitated. This will aid in disposing them have the muscles to seek and vie for equal representation in public sphere and take part or even play active role in decision making and leadership.

(c). SOCIO-POLITICAL

With the granting of some vital and crucial right to women, their status and image in the society will change and improve, and as such they will easily find their feet in the social and political sphere, and compete favourably with men for positions of trust and leadership. Women must realize that their getting leadership position is not to intimate, dominate man or even revenge for supposed harm inflicted on women folk for ages but rather for the common good.

In empowering women, certain necessary

questions need be addressed; are women really depowered? If they are, what or who depowers them? What do they want? Is it equality or equity? If equality, is it possible A critical analysis of the gender question shows it is a fusion of cultural, historical and moral issues. If women are depowered then, they depower themselves through fear, and inferiority complex; customs, traditional, religion and myth depower them and not necessarily man; save indirectly because the society is male-dominated. By implication certain things need not be done in the bid to empower women. A vital question is, how then should we not empower women?

8. HOW NOT TO EMPOWER WOMEN

We should not empower women by relegating men to the background or depowering men. We need not empower them by destroying our culture, irrespective of the fact that cultural norms and traditional practices kept them where they are; for culture is indestructible. Rather culture being dynamic should be modernized in obedience to the law of nature, in consonance with the evolutionary stage of our society. According to Dukor (1998:91):

the goal of women

should neither be to create a forum for sharing political positions with men nor create chances for them in the governance of the state. It should rather aim at creating a conducive atmosphere for women to compete with men for in all human endeavours without, however, touching the sanctity of the home where the woman is second to the man.

It is not objected that women should play leadership roles in politics, but they must ensure that the family which is the bedrock of society and humanity is not destroyed or else it becomes burning one's house to kill a rat. This empowerment necessitates reorganizing societies in order to create (a) just condition (or conditions) where women will play active parts and participate fully in the onward march towards progress.

Research need to be carried out to know how these women who have found themselves in positions of leadership operated? We need know how their roles as wives, mothers, and leaders in politics fared. Did they combine them effectively? Did the upbringing they give to the children suffer? Did they feed their husbands well? Did they have time to attend to family matters? Women are made for love, and love is at the foundation of marriage and family life; so we cannot just ape and gaze and the fundamental cornerstone of the society gives way and crack just because women want power; of course, the power they don't have. The president of any nation, is still under the clever hold of a woman either his wife or a girl friend. Women rule men that rule cities. Who rules man with her smiles, genitals and her womb? In the words of Dukor (1998:91-92):

Women empowerment
is not throwing away
women's old virtues and
pride, it is not women
practice of lesbianism
and perverted norms and
it is not pitching
women's class against

men's class; it is the enhancement of women's' conditions to lift them above poverty lines and give them equal opportunities in economic and social life through education as well as protect them through legislation from exploitation and sexual abuse.

9. CONCLUSION

In the main, many tasks have been accomplished. We started by positing some salient questions, which brought in the insight of philosophy. We equally examined the key concepts, looked at the realities of the Nigerian experience (state) as the key means of empowering the women folk, towards the tail end of the work, we pointed out the faces of empowerment under the caption (strategies) and then reflected on how not to empower women.

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