



**THE EFFECTS OF DISAPPEARING INEQUALITIES ON LOCAL LIFEWORLDS:
GLOBALIZATION AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN NIGERIA**

ADU, FUNMILAYO MODUPE (Ph.D.)

Department of History and International Studies, Faculty of Arts,
Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti

ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, gender cultural practices depict women marginalization. African cultural practices and the Nigerian peculiarity have not favoured women participation. This is because most African Cultures are patriarchal in practice. Nigerian cultural practices inhibit women interest in politics and participatory social relations, as most negative cultural practices are hostile, derogatory, relegating and embedded in religious indoctrinations that further reduce women to docility. Cultural practices assign gender roles to men and women and stereotypical language use further entrench negative gender practices. Globalization- the internationalisation of the local has however intensified the internationalisation of information and culture, ensuring the impact of the local on the international and vice versa. It is in this context that gender practices have become a thing of popular awareness across the globe; the news, cultural global information intersect, new gender laws and mainstreaming are creating more awareness. The availability of the internet and telephone advantages has become the point for easy enlightenment, facilitating education, awareness, enlightenment and giving information. This has increased knowledge and encouraged women to key into international practices, influencing domestic practices. In Nigeria, women participation in politics reflects this changes and social roles are gradually reflective of international practices. Women contribute to family upkeeps, enjoy legal representation (especially with human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with fair gender rules and slowly, Nigerian gender practices, despite the negative influence of religion and traditions are being influenced positively and the society is gaining the benefits in development. This paper highlights the effects of disappearing inequalities on local lifeworlds: as globalization impacts gender mainstreaming in Nigeria.

Key Words: Disappearing Inequalities, Local Lifeworld's, Globalization, Gender Mainstreaming, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Disappearing inequalities in local lifeworlds is one trend that is consequent upon the development of globalization. The UNDP (1999) adopts the view that globalization is the growing interdependence of the world's people through "shrinking space, shrinking time and disappearing borders". This connotes an instantaneous satellite communication networking and a dramatic advancement in communication information technology and transportation amongst others. Adefolaju (2005) commented that globalization therefore offers great opportunities for enriching peoples' lives and creating a global community based on shared values. It translates to the integration of economic, political, civil and technological structures around the world (Umukoro, 2002). Globalization can be further explained as the internationalisation of the local which has intensified the internationalisation of information and culture, ensuring the impact of the local on the international and vice versa. It is in this context that gender practices have become a thing of popular awareness across the globe; the news, cultural global information intersect, new gender laws and mainstreaming are creating more awareness and are being popularized because of globalization. The availability of the internet and telephone advantages has become the point for easy enlightenment, facilitating education, awareness, enlightenment and giving information and positively influencing gender mainstreaming. This has increased knowledge and encouraged women to key into international practices, influencing domestic practices. In Nigeria, women participation in politics reflects this changes and social roles are gradually reflective of international practices. Women contribute to family upkeeps, enjoy legal representation with fair gender rules and slowly, Nigerian gender practices, despite the negative influence of religion and traditions are being influenced positively and the society is gaining the benefits in development. This paper highlights the effects of disappearing inequalities on local lifeworlds: as globalization impacts gender mainstreaming in Nigeria. The paper is subsequently divided into Statement of the Problem, Theoretical Framework, and Historical Survey of Women Participation in Nigeria, Effects of Globalization on Disappearing Inequalities and Gender Mainstreaming in Nigeria, and the Conclusion.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Africa presents one of the most serious instances of women relegation. This practice is embedded in cultural and religious practices that have over time become subconscious tenets with rigid adherents. This practice has existed for centuries and become a mixed part of the African society. Politics from traditional African purview is considered a male dominated environment. Historically women political participation are shrouded in mythological considerations and colonial historical agitations; such are those of Moremi of Ile Ife, queen Amina of Zaria, Efunsetan, the Iyalode of Ibadan, Madam Funmiilayo RansomeKuti and Mrs Ekpo of the Nigerian colonial agitations and a host of others. African conception of political participation is robed with cultural embellishments and further seasoned in religious beliefs and practices. Culture, especially in Africa, favour men and accord docile roles to women; this is substantiated with derogatory language and practices. Proportional representation is the campaign of women empowerment. African and Nigerian culture reduces women interest and political strategies to increase women participation have little been positively encouraged. This situation is overwhelmed with challenges which can only be overcome with cultural and religious reorientation, political readjustment with domestic borrowing from the United Nations affirmative action, attitudinal change from both men and

women, and political acceptance. All these can only be further impacted through awareness and information projected through the influence of the globalization advantages, which we argue in this paper is gradually coming into reality due to globalized influences.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In defining globalization, various scholars have acceded to the idea of space/time compression (Brown, 1995, Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999). In modern and postmodern literature, technology in its various forms is necessary for development and has accelerated the varied conceptions of globalization of international relations especially in the area of economic relations. The globalization of different aspects of state and society in its various manifestations would not have occurred without the input of scientific and technological and accompanying structural changes. Pearson and Payaslian (1999) explained that science and technology are said to be inherently transnational, integral to the internationalization of the economic transformation of states especially through the influence of telecommunications technologies.

Orubuloye (2005) agrees with Grint on the fact that globalization is the capitalist enterprise envisioning the whole world as a unified system of the area and the peripheries, with the peripheries aspiring to adopt the political economy of the former and with the gradual internationalization of the Euro-American socio-political, economic and technological cultures. It is further explained as the gradual connection between different societies (Grint, 1998:28) (Mc Michael, 1996:38 cited in Orubuloye, 2005).

Assessing the politics of globalized science and technology, Pearson and Payaslian (1999) asserted that a fact of modern and "post-modern" life lay emphasis on the positive impact of technology on economic development, while further explaining that telecommunication technologies have accelerated the globalization of international relations, albeit in the constant promotion of information and awareness. In line with this, they reiterated that;

The globalization of the world political economy in its various manifestations ... would not have occurred without the scientific and technological and accompanying structural changes experienced at least since the emergence of the modern nation state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Pearson and Payaslian, 1999:271-275).

Pearson and Payaslian (1999) further emphasized that, from the Nation state perspective, the centrality of science and technology in modern political economy is problematic. Weighing a two side to the coin, they argued:

On the one hand, science and technology, are the foundations for the structures of national industrial production, capital, and information capabilities, all of which contribute to national economic and military power and security; yet in facilitating the internationalization of economic relations, they also challenge the sovereignty of the nation-state. (Pearson and Payaslian, 1999: 271-30).

The impact of technology has also influenced the interactions from outside the state, Cuko and Traore (2011) supported this view, when they noted that: "The cumulative effect of transnational science and technology (also referred to as globalization) has been to deterritorialise some of the activities and processes that influence our life in contemporary

states”. The time space compress and comparison with its localizing effect has created the possibility of instant communication between any one place on the earth’s surface and any other. (Taylor, 2005:17-18).

Cultural homogenization is also a popularly acclaimed area of impact, the convergence in lifestyle and cultural values, icons and designs, similar food, and clothing (Taylor, 2005:19, 20). Globalization is an ideology that re-enacts a dictatorial unipolarism (Sara Cuko and Traore, 2011:6). They (ibid) insist that, it is the dramatic transformation in information and communication technology, in transport, financial and human mobility, and the economic restructuring reducing the significance of state borders. It is the gradual connection between different societies (Grint, 1998). The UNDP (1999) adopts the view that globalization is the growing interdependence of the world’s people through “shrinking space, shrinking time and disappearing borders”. This connotes an instantaneous satellite communication networking and a dramatic advancement in communication information technology and transportation amongst others. Adefolaju (2005) commented further that globalization therefore offers great opportunities for enriching peoples’ lives and creating a global community based on shared values. It translates to the integration of economic, political, civil and technological structures around the world (Umukoro, 2002). Adefolaju reiterated further that, it was the response of states to the apparent inadequacy of nation states to tackle many contemporary issues facing them (Adefolaju, 2005:139). It is also defined as a process fuelled by and resulting in, increasing cross-border flows of goods, services, money, people, information and culture. This is global interdependence amongst actors (individual, groups, and nations) and mutual awareness among economic, political, and social units in the world.

In the instance of this research (i.e. the Nigerian case study), the influence of technology on information dissemination is crucial in giving a transnational dimension to internal affairs of the state in respect of cultural transformation. The internet provides a transnational communication device to promote economic network and encourage cultural and technological borrowings. It is important to highlight that there are divergent views from schools of thought regarding the concept of globalization which range from realist, liberals to historical structuralisms. The point of diversions however, is that the realist acknowledges the increasing pace of globalization which is at the instance of the most powerful states (Boyer and Drache, 1996, Hirst and Thompson, 1999). Liberals, in contrast, believe globalization, at a significant level, is eroding state control, but the growth of global interdependence is positive – thus, they highlight the importance of technological changes and advances in communication and transportation that are beyond state control. They (liberals) emphasize societal actors such as transnational firms and domestic citizens (Milner, 1988). This is referred to as a focus on the “borderless world” – a world in which obvious market forces influence issues far more than National government (Ohmae, 1990, 1995). In the instance of the liberals, it is believed that there is a significant level of globalized state control erosion, but the growth of global interdependence is a positive development. To this group, technological change and advances in communications and transportation that are beyond state control is the main focus.

Liberals see globalization as leading to a “borderless world” in which market forces are superior to National governments (Ohmae, 1990, 1995). Historical structuralisms argue that though globalization is having a significant positive impact, it has extremely negative consequences for the poorer states and classes in the periphery of the global economy. The dependency school of economics agrees with the analysis of Steven and David, (1993) that globalization is leading to the development of a “transnational historical block” composed of the multinational corporations (MNCS) International Banks, International Economic Organizations (World Bank and IMF) and International Business Group in the most powerful

capitalist states. Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investments and aided by information technology with effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems, on economic development, and prosperity and on human physical well-being in societies around the world (ibid). Globalization is not new however, because many of the features of the current wave of globalization are similar to those prevailing before the First World War in 1914 (ibid).

Bauman (1998) assessed globalization through the social roots and consequences of the globalizing process. For globalization, the causes of division are identical with those which promote the uniformity of the globe (Bauman, 1998: 4-10). It is a two-sided coin which appears to different people from dimensions and points of vantage. In this wise, Bauman (1998) noted “what appears as globalization for some means localization for others signaling a new freedom for some, upon many others it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate. Adu further reiterated Baumans argument inter alia, analyzing the spate of the historically changing nature of time and space within the premise of pattern and scale of social organization, the stages of development from the past to present within the modern pattern of social control, the idea of political sovereignty under conditions of globalized economy, finance and information, the cultural consequences of the transformations in globalization present itself. Adeyanju (2006) noted that state territoriality is being reconfigured by issues of globalized capital market operations, the integrated system of production and consumption, international labour mobility, diminishing state control of flows across its boundaries(especially in the area of information disseminationspurred on by the internet advantages(ibid:141-142)). This it is argued has become a point to note as gradual awareness increase gender participation in Nigeria.

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA

Gender is the social organization of sexual differences. Although biology created us, societal interpretations delineate into feminine and masculine people (Shaw et al, 2011, 107). Shaw (ibid) further explains that notions of femininity and masculinity are socially constructed, created by social processes that reflect the various workings of power in society. They further explain that these notions are therefore culturally and historically changeable.

There is nothing essential, intrinsic, or static about femininity or masculinity, rather they are social categories that mean different things to different societies and in different historical periods. Society shapes notions of femininity and masculinity through the subtle interactions between nature and nurture. It is really impossible to speak of a fixed biological sex category outside of the sense that a culture makes of that category (Shaw ibid).

Women have been considered not only intellectually inferior, but as a major source of temptation and evil. In historical Greek mythology, Pandora was believed to have opened the forbidden box and brought plagues and unhappiness to mankind. This has till today created the proverbial sentence; he opened the Pandora box i.e. the Greek woman’s name is used to represent evil. (Ugah, 2004). Early Roman law described women as children, forever inferior to men. Early Christians perpetuated these views, a 4th century Latin father of Christendom said, “Woman is the gate of the devil, the path of wickedness, the sitting of the serpent, in a

word a perilous object. “Thomas Aquinas, a 13th century theologian, maintains that woman was created to be man’s helpmeet but for her unique roles in conception, for other purposes man would be better assisted by other men” (ibid). In Nigeria, women are not better acknowledged, in fact their representation is far worse, for example, in Ibo culture, a woman is not allowed to pick the kola(an object to represent acceptance and social respect) until the youngest male in a gathering has performed the same right.(this might be the woman’s grandson).

Gender practice varies from culture to culture in concentration. Nigeria, in recent records boasts of about four hundred and fifty ethnic languages and diversity of cultures, and in recent time’s religious variances. Traditionally, most of these cultures are patrilineal, while some are matrilineal. In the simple patrilineal Igbo society for instance, there is long established male dominance of all the arts, belief, and social institutions. Ogba (2006) noted that this is why the Igbo addresses their wives as *oriaku or ndioriaku* which translates to consumer or the consumer of wealth, the average Nigerian family man is the head of the family, the wife/ wives are completely dependent on him for socio economic upkeep. Oduyeye (1985, 34) commented on this

The man is usually the head of the family and breadwinner. He has the responsibility for the welfare of its members. In order to achieve this goal, he is expected to exercise complete control over such members. He has the final say on their movements and actions. Women and young people are not expected to [participate in activities outside the home without the knowledge and permission of the head of the family (ibid)

Cultural inhibitions in the traditional Igbo society present kola nut(an important spiritual and cultural object) to the man, even if the male present is younger than all the female. The male pours libation, breaks the kola and picks his own before any female, after allowing all present male the choice of pick. The woman is even offered her piece without being allowed to dip her hand in the sacred plate (Oduyeye, ibid, 97). The Yoruba conception of the woman’s opinion is faulty. It is often said, *oroobirinni*, translated, a woman’s word, that is to say it cannot be considered important or it is inconsequential. A Yoruba superstition also opines that if one meets a woman on his way out, his engagement or activity for that day would be a failure. An Igbo adage states “but for women and children, every Igbo word would have been spoken in proverb (bid)”. In Hausa land the negative gender roles were further entrenched by religious doctrines. Women were kept in purdah and rarely allowed public appearances talk less of participation. All this express the belief about women’s inability to do constructive reasoning. It is no wonder that women’s opinion were not sought in decision making. At independence and during the colonial era, the new sets of educated Nigerians were almost a hundred percent male. Military regimes did not promote gender balance, because of religion; thenorthern Nigerian women were disenfranchised till 1979. There has been emphasis on education and the formation of female professional associations to protect women’s interest.

A historical journey into women political participation however reveals that despite cultural inhibitions women had political positions and political relevance in traditional Nigerian

cultures. This however does not excuse the negative cultural practices as such positions in traditional Nigerian culture were given to women with a larger than life personality and allowed in most instances to coordinate other women or influence certain political actions such as a coup to oust a reigning Oba in Yoruba land.

Yoruba oral traditions recall female *obas* in several areas of Yoruba land i.e Oyo, *Sabo*, *Ondo*, *Ijesha*. In *Ijesha* for example, five of the thirty eight *Owas* (kings) had been women, but there had been no female ruler since *Yajeori*, the eighteenth *Owa*. Queens were given official chieftaincy titles of *Eyesorun*, the head of the female slave officials were also called *ilari* and the *Obas* wives were *IyaAafin* after the demise of the kings. There were also female regents, to stand in gap at the period between the death of an *oba* and the selection of a new one. These women performed religious roles and sometimes exerted political authority. The *Iya Oba*, queen mother was present with the *Basorun* when the *ogun* rituals were performed and she was the feudal head of *Basorun*, the *Iya -Aafin* acted as political and religious advisers in this instance and the citizens approach them for political favour with the king. (Ogidiefa, 2008), *Emotan*, was a paramount warrior woman of Benin tradition and other sundry instances across Nigeria. During the colonial era women's loss of political power became eminent as men were dominant in administrative positions. Colonialism by making women to feel victimized and deprived provided them with reasons for protest in eastern Nigeria; there was protest against lack of political recognition and authority; the December 1929, Aba woman's riots, Onitsha. This agitation was against the water rate of 6 dollars and political participation. The intervention of women activists like MrsFunmilayoRansomeKuti was active attention drawer to the facts of little political representation. Kuti led *Egba* women, Abeokuta women's union AWU, to demonstrate against tax discrimination. There were women wings of political parties, MrsKofuAbayomi formed the women's party where agitations for vocational schools for girls and educational opportunities were agitated for. Political nomination of women into positions began since 1958. MrsOluwole, Margaret Ekpo, Janet Mokelu of the eastern Nigerian house of chiefs, rose to prominence. Since 1960 tickles of women have risen in political power and other professional areas. MrsNgoziOkonjoIweala(former minister for finance), Hon. AbikeDabiriErewa(senior special adviser on Diaspora matters), ObyEzekwenzili(former minister, also a presidential aspirant in 2019, but Stepped down), Prof. Dora Akwunyili, ChimaChikwe, Dr. AminaNdelee, MrsModupeAdelaja are notable women political leaders of the decade. Tradition and religious adherence has promoted child marriage, reducing the efforts to allow women to rise. In the Political parties, very few women were nominated for elective office at the federal and regional levels. In the senatorial election of 1992, MrsKofuBucknorAkerele was the only woman in the senate, chief Florence ItaGiwa was elected into the house of representative under the NRC Calabar constituency. President Babangida in 1983 appointed two women as members of the traditional council. Nigeria has witnessed a female governor in Anambra state, which rose to power by providence (1996). For the first time, the 1999 democratic processes witnessed an increase in women political participation.

In the 4th republic, the political terrain witnessed a beffup in the number of women appointees. In May 29th elections of 1999, women emerged as chair persons of local government councils,

councilors, deputy governors in Lagos state, three senators at the national assembly and few at the state assembly levels across the country . At various times women were appointed as commissioners. In the Obasanjo executive cabinets, some female appointees were privileged.

In decision making, mass enlightenment and removal of cultural and traditional practices that militate against women, there is little but gradual improvement as evidence of positive achievement.

At the home front and across the social strata, the impact of female participation is increasingly influenced as several news radio programmes and road shows promote gender equity. There are internet sites and NGOs platforms to give information, education, and legal assistance to women whose rights are violated. The radio broadcasts give information on Voice FM Radio 89.9 Ado Ekiti, Nigeria (as an example) to women on how to seek redress. Politically, the compared situation with international standards is not impressive, but the current status is a positive development compared to the previous era. Political participation, which is a sinequanon to democracy allows for diversity of opinion and the participation of both men and women. The Nigerian constitution provides equal opportunities for both sexes in governance and public life, while inheritance laws now provide opportunity for asset inheritance in the consequence of the husband's death. New tax laws have also been adjusted to give women rebate in taxation for upward of four children.

The 1995 Beijing declaration demand for thirty percent women representation in governance, the united nations also proclaimed the eight points millennium development goals(MDGs) emphasizing women empowerment and gender equality. Some African countries have made progress in giving better access to women in political representation. Uganda, Cameroon, Mozambique have achieved measurable results. According to the United Nations human development index, women in Mozambique and Cameroon have eighteen to fourteen percent quota indexes respectively, reserved for them in parliament. Gabon actively promoted gender parity to the point that the country now boast of women generals in the army, Uganda had a woman vice president and Liberia had a woman president for years. The Nigerian government, in reaction to the various international conventions and covenants on women has undertaken legislative and administrative reforms that gave women full economic access to economic and productive resources. The political parties have not introduced mechanism for equal representation within the party executives as required by the creation of the post of women leaders, most political parties in Nigeria fail to adopt any system to increase the number of women holding party offices. Section 191 of the Beijing declaration and platform of action require political parties to remove all barriers that clearly discriminate against women participation in politics. Akpoveta(2010) suggests that the prospects of Nigerian politics will be bright if women are allowed to participate effectively in politics. Inam(2010) noted that some of the obstacles and challenges have been removed through the efforts and initiatives of some past Nigerian first ladies. Rosaldo(2004) reaffirm that there has been an improvement in the status of women, women now enjoy greater participation in governance, more women occupy ministerial positions and seats in parliament, for example, in 2003-2007 there were six women ministers out of thirty four, and ten women special advisers out of thirty five, as well as twenty one female representatives out of three hundred and sixty. In election campaigns,

women are nominated as women leaders in the grassroots politics within communities, local government, state and national government.

Customary and sharia law promote gender inequality in Nigeria. The Igbo customary law is discriminatory and highly illiberal towards women's rights. Sharia law which is equal with customary law in the north is discriminatory in many respects, forced marriage, wife inheritance, harmful widowhood practices, (highly dehumanizing and sometimes life threatening) child marriage, girl wife disinheritance in customary marriage practice, wife chastisement, polygamy denial of custodial maintenance rights, harmful widowhood practices and female genital mutilation are some Nigerian discriminatory practices that slow down women emancipation. Child marriage exposes the girl child to medical challenges such as vesico vaginal fistula and recto vaginal fistula which can result into untimely death. All these challenges face criticisms and forces of awareness and information due to globalization advantages.

EFFECTS OF GLOBALISATION ON DISAPPEARING INEQUALITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN NIGERIA

The impact of globalization on Nigerian gender practices can only be measured by the increased awareness. More and more people have access to the internet through the use of iPhones which are sometimes made available to even women in purdah. Due to the gradual education of the girl child on radio and television programmes (Public and private radio and television programmes abound in this area) gender awareness increase daily. Some radio programmes address child marriage issues, women's rights, wife battering, and domestic violence against women, marriage rights and inheritance and rape laws, gender mainstreaming in political participation amongst others, spurred on by the education of UNICEF radio plays target and education and awareness creation and outright awareness campaigns by NGOs and information dissemination avenues. The Radio and television provide a good point to reach extreme local environments. In this 2019 presidential and parliamentary election, gender participation has witnessed an upward review as registered female aspirants have increased in number with about 11-12 percent increase in the house of representative alone (source, NTAi, The National Television Authority International, Nigeria Decides, a programme mainstreaming the election and processes. 28th march 2019), the statistics on gender practices since 1999 democratic dispensation is here presented.

YEAR	VALUE
2000	3.40
2001	3.40
2002	3.40
2003	4.90
2004	4.70
2005	6.40
2006	6.10
2007	7.00
2008	7.00
2009	7.00
2010	7.00
2011	6.80
2012	6.70
2013	6.70
2014	6.70
2015	5.60
2016	5.00
2017	5.60

*Nigeria proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%) **Index Mundi**, internet Source Accessed 7/4/2019

Despite much progress gender inequalities remain pervasive in many developing countries noted mundi. This is evident in resources such as education, healthcare, nutrition, and political voice which affect productivity and economic growth. Women are underrepresented in decision making positions in government. Gender parity in parliamentary representation is still a far cry from being realized. It is difficult for women to influence policy without good representation. Inclusive democracy must show fairness in representation. It is about using women resources and potentials to determine political and development priorities that benefit society and the world (Index Mundi, ibid).

A proposed bill of the National Assembly to promote gender participation is already in the pipeline and in a process of constitutionalization. The zebra representation platform in Zimbabwe needs to be emulated. It is important to note that countries with fair gender participation are more inclusive and more democratic.

Increasingly, Internal democracy within homes is becoming popular, equal role playing ground is better leveraged by educated parents. School and education opportunities are also equally given to both genders, especially in the south western part of Nigeria. The situation of child marriage is still a far cry from the ideal, but information on the health disadvantages of early child birth is creating more awareness. Female circumcision is gradually becoming a thing of the past as laws instituting punishment is now in place, wife battering has also become a major offence at the national and state levels and rape perpetrators are increasingly facing relevant judicial interventions. Increasingly inheritance laws are also receiving awareness as practices

in the different parts of the country receive NGO intervention when there is access to information. Associations are being formed, example Association of women in politics in Nigeria. YAWDA, CEDAW (United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) in Nigeria, Women Arise, an NGO on women human rights, Association of Women in Academics, Women lawyers and Women Human Right Lawyers and Women journalists among others. There is internet information on NGO sponsorship on enlightenment campaign. Access to international labour laws and political participation laws under international conventions has also become an easy relevance. Society's frown at women seeking redress and rape victims now receive a change in moral attitudinal support towards legal solution finding. Incest is fought by NGO human right assistance and the list is endless.

CONCLUSION

Yolah (1996) noted that our culture inform us on how we view and orientate ourselves, and our social norms, attitudes, and values to issues of development, emphasizing that a dynamic culture must have the ability to jettison antiquity, outdated and negative practices and even laws, while encouraging the positive aspects which in fact are abundant in the African society. Women's docility is reinforced by societal attitude and role of women in development requires that this high population contribute their quota. The problem of poverty, lack of access to resources, how to improve the productive capacity and the ability to determine their own needs and goals within the confine of exploitative economic and sexual relations persist as barrier to a just world in which women, as well as men, will share equally in the available resources. The United Nations in several instances has taken verbal and practical lead in underwriting the need for women to achieve full equity and participation in the challenges and benefits of societal development. The problem of women participation is reflected in their growing poverty, inferior status in society, and family and unequal access to legal rights, social welfare, education, property, political participation, and access to information and communication. There is therefore a need to remove long standing prejudice; a design to change the overall pattern of beliefs and perceptions of women in the society.

There is need to increase gender mainstreaming and implement international legislations. The level of affirmative action in the country needs to be reviewed in line with happenings in South Africa where the ANC has 50 percent quota for women political participation and also in Zimbabwe and elsewhere across the continent. Nigeria has not gotten to a point of getting women appointed to elective positions. Election violence is an inhibiting factor that needs to be addressed. Mentoring is also a desideratum; there is need for an implementation of internal democracy by political parties at all levels from state to the national. The basic unit of the family needs to encourage and support politically interested members. The growing globalization advantages should be intensified, through higher information dissemination about the levels of gender mainstreaming in other African states. Democracy is about inclusion and women are highly resourceful, constitute a high percentage of the population and have a lot to contribute to national development. It is important to lobby for abolition of customs and practices which are unfair to women and impede their participation in policy formulation and implementation on women issues which should improve in accordance with international trends. Values habits and transitions entrenched by stereotype languages which influence gender perception should be readdressed for value reorientation. A programme of sustained reorientation and education, reverse discriminatory policies, role modeling activities to encourage female participation is necessary. The solutions should begin in the family where

both sexes should be taught how to be equally relevant in the home and society. Religion should not be a hindrance to gender participation. Despite the challenges and on a note of high ranking percentage, it might not be encouraging to claim a fair gender practice as adherence to international conventions is still a far cry from the ideal but without gain saying Nigerian gender practice has received a positive change in the last decade. I argue in this paper that this positive development has a good impute from the globalization advantage.

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