NIGERIA IN-SEARCH OF DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT WOMEN

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Abstract

Despite vast natural resources, Nigeria like most third world countries is pervaded by poor leadership, social inequality, poverty, unemployment, backwardness, corruption, shrinking economy amongst others. Hence, development has been, by a stint of logic, abysmally distant and a phantasm in the country. Considering that women in developing societies constitute more than 50% of the population, and are facilitators of economic productivity and by extension development, this study employed secondary data to investigate women exclusion in development strategies in Nigeria. Founded in the womanism theory, this sought to provide answers to the concept of development, Nigerian's development policies and the place of women in development. The paper concluded that women have irreplaceable role to play in Nigerian's development such as bringing the gender perspective to development. Women should be engaged as crucial partners in the articulation and execution of development policies in Nigeria. There is need for women involvement in development policies for Nigeria to be rated among developed worlds.

Keywords: *Development, Policy, Women, Nigeria*

Introduction

Mona and Mackay (2011) affirmed that traditionally, social policy over looks sexual orientation and assumes a heterosexual male subject. This statement is especially true in Africa and especially in Nigeria. Rodney (2009) believes that human history has been a fight for survival against natural hazards and against real and imagined human enemies.

Governments at different times formulate policies as strategies for combating these underdevelopment indices (Rodney, 2009). Implementation of these policies culminate in the improvement and advancement in the living standard of the people in different stages of development.

The African continent, the 1950s marked the sovereignty struggles with nationalist movements sprawling in most African states. The era was also a sequel to the emergence of national and economic development plans for African states. According to Klaus (2008) development across the state in the world tended to vary as with regard to the peculiarity of such an environment. This is the reason the United Nations–sponsored Brandt Commission Report in 1983 confirmed a world significantly divided between the rich north and the southern poor hemispheres (Klaus, 2008).

According to Rodney's (2009) viewpoint the reason why different states develop at different rates when left on their own is hinged on factors such as the environment the human groups evolved from and the superstructures (forms of government) of human society. Igwe (2010) on the other hand, accepts that Africa as one of the Third World countries is characteristically associated with poor development indicators when compared with developed countries. To him, this is evident in life expectancy, extreme poverty, ethnic conflicts and wars, amidst an extensive state of corruption, political and social instability while the governments of African states and Nigeria are largely authoritarian (Igwe, 2010). He further argued that in recent years several countries that were previously grouped under the Third World category (China, the four Asian tigers Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea) and some Latin American countries (Brazil and Chile) have speedily risen to the ranks of First Worlds. While African countries especially those in the sub-Sahara Africa; Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Togo, Niger, DR Congo and the Benin Republic amongst others besides South Africa have continually degenerated rather than develop (Igwe, 2010).

Rodney (2009) concedes that as humans battle the material environment, they create forms of social relations in the form of governments, patterns of behaviour and systems of beliefs and codes of conduct which together constitute superstructures (constitutions and institutions) which is never exactly the same in any two societies.

Karl Marx conceded that social status and relevance of man in history depends on the position he occupies in the mode of production. (Mukherjee & Sushila 2011)   The elite theory stressed that by occupying strategic positions in corporations, corporate boards, rendering financial support for foundations and holding think tanks positions or policy-discussion groups, the elite, therefore, control power, The

Argument of Wollstonecraft (1996) argument is that acquisition of wisdom and mastering of the environment, times and seasons were not implanted in man alone by God but to both sexes. But, men took better advantage of the opportunity while women keep the home. Men took the lead to understand and manipulate the environment to their advantage while women were content with cooking and caring for their husbands and children and never negotiated the rules of engagement of their service abinitio. In human society, it has always been the case that the expansion of the economy eventually leads to a change in the form of social relations (Rodney, 2009).

Today, like the preceding phase of feudalism, capitalism has been characterized by the concentration in few hands the ownership of means of producing wealth which is majorly men not women. Going by the submission of Rodney (2009), men are in leadership and governance and therefore determine policy directions and outcomes resulting in the unequal distribution of the products of human labour which favour men. Today, women are side-lined even when declared free to sell their labour like the serfs with no means of production owned by them in the society to compete favourably with those of men. Rodney went on to argue that subsequently, that the child of a slave was a slave, so also are the children of serfs, were serfs In line with this argument as women were and are still subjugated by men so are girls born by women are subjugated just like their mothers until there is a fundamental change in the mode of production and social positions that is gender balance or in favour women.

Like feudalism and capitalism where owners of a mode of production also own the resources and therefore determine the trend and partner of gender relations in the society. The economic position of men in capitalism strategically positions them in leadership and governance to make policies that favour them and disadvantaged

women (Wollstonecraft 1996) stressed that society is formed in the wisest manner by God the creator but the constitutions are founded on the nature of man because man acquired the virtue to frame the constitutions while women consent and acquiescence themselves to the policies made by men. She argues that at creation, God created everything, he imbued passion in both male and female , that in struggling with this passion they will use their intellect to invent their needs such as codes of conduct, shelter, clothing, food and many more through learning experience (Wollstonecraft, 1996). With the superstructure made by boundaries were created for male and female and their garments which we call gender were worn on them. The rules through policies made it an infraction for the sexes to veer into roles considered not appropriate for them (Rodney, 2009). Development plans determine and control virtually all aspects of women's lives.

Consequently, feminists have to decry the continued exclusion, relegation and women in development processes. Following the agitation of women Nigeria in 2007, Ghana 2004, South Africa 2007, Uganda 1997, Cameroon 1999amongst others welcome, and domesticated various women development policies in order to catch-up with the gender practices and perspectives of living standards of people in the developed worlds. These national gender-based policies were meant not only to bridge the gap between the genders but also for the development, empowerment, and advancement of women in Africa. This does not amount to mainstreaming women in development and development planning.

The crux of this paper is that Nigeria has since her inception as a state/country minimally engaged women in development. Using the Womanism feminist theory this paper argues that until women are mainstreamed in development planning and execution the country's fight for survival against social and natural hazards, real and imagined human enemies would continue to be elusive to Africa and Nigeria in particular. Excluding women in Nigerian's search for development explains why Nigeria has continued to achieve negligible growth than development which is all-encompassing in her efforts to combat underdevelopment indices in the country.

Conceptualizing Development

Development, like most concepts in Political Science, is a loose and ambiguous word that has attracted several definitions among scholars. Due to its ambiguity, it has been difficult to reach a precise meaning. Therefore, there are diverse perspectives on its conceptualization. Desai and Potter (2008) conceptualized early development views as catching up with and generally imitating the West. Laval (2011) argued that development is a vital necessity for the growth and sustainability of any vibrant nation. Other scholars conceive development is the act of rising to the highest value the Gross National Product (GNP) through the process of accumulating capital and industrialization. On his part, Desai 2008 argued that the fact that economic growth is necessary, it is not a sufficient condition for development. For him, without the redistribution of income, wealth inequalities will not be reduced. It is inequalities that pique development must be regarded as synonymous with enhancing human rights and welfare. This makes self-esteem, self-respect and improving entitlements central concerns in the development of any nation.

Development is not limited to just the process of acquiring industries but encompasses such processes as modernization, productivity, social and economic equalization, modern technical know-how, improved institutions, and attitudes as well as rationally coordinated policy apparatus (Meier, 1988). Todaro (1985), buttressing on the multi-dimensional nature of the concept of development opines that it is the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system arguing that development is a state of advancement which makes life more meaningful in its various aspects, including economic, administrative, political, social, cultural and religious aspects (Todaro, 1985).

According to Onah (2005), development is not static but is a continuous improvement in the capacity of the individual and society to control and manipulate the forces of nature for the enhancement of the living standard of people. This definition introduces another dimension to the meaning of development. It analyses the human aspect of development, which is the individuals who reside in a given state. Collaborating on this position Ahmed, (2007noted that development is concerned with the general upliftment in the material, social and psychological conditions of a given human society. Also, for

development to be achieved, socio-political and economic stability must be guaranteed at all levels of government. This will not only promote the attachment of the people to the governmental process, but it will also ensure the improvement of the living standards of the people.

From the above argument, one can, therefore, infer that development refers to the eradication of limiting constructs such as gender inequality, deforestation, maternal mortality and morbidity. It also includes alleviation of poverty, ensuring human rights, provision of potable water, livestock management and power generation making available decent and habitable habitat, eradication of child mortality of children under the age of five, improved education for boys and girls and advanced adult literacy, eradication of hunger for all amongst others. With proper development policy, there will be improved education for girls and the reduction of girl child education dropout, technological backwardness and global isolation.

While Chambers (2017) defines development policy as a guideline that the government uses to address specific public or national problems. He stressed that several issues concerning economic growth and development are addressed through government policies. Specifically, issues such as inequality, inflation, budget deficits, monetary social instabilities, economic diversification, unemployment, poverty, boosting manufacturing and human capital rural development, attracting foreign investment and many more Chambers, 2017). Development policies in most African countries were strait-jackets not considering the needs of women. However, the achievement of the above requires the articulation and implementation of development policy as adduced by Chambers (2012) and FDFA (2003) refers to all political, economic and social measures are taken by a donor country to achieve sustainable improvements in living conditions in developing and transition countries (FDFA, 2003).

At the level of the individual, Rodney (2009) believed that it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. However, what is disputable is that the achievement of aspects of personal development is very much tied in the state of society as a whole. From the earliest times, man found it convenient and necessary to come together in groups to hunt for the sake of survival. The relations which develop

within any social group are crucial to an understanding of the society today. Consequently, freedom, responsibility, skill, etc have real meaning only in terms of the relations of men in society (Rodney, 2009) believes that development makes it easier to comprehend the concept of underdevelopment. Underdevelopment is not the absence of development because every people have developed in one way or another to a greater or lesser extent. Underdevelopment makes a sense only as a means of comparing levels of development. It is considerably tied to the fact that human social development has been uneven and from a strictly economic viewpoint some human groups have advanced further by producing more and becoming wealthier. Hence, development policies are viewed by all African states as one of the standard attributes of sovereignty.

Nigeria in Search of Development
The first two decades of post-independence democratic development policies began with a five-year plan in Nigeria. In 1999, the government was positioned to start on a clean slate with the initiation of a four-year medium-term plan called, the National Economic Direction (1999-2003). The plan had the primary objective of pursuing a strong, virile and broad-based economy with adequate capacity to absorb externally generated shocks. According to Donli (2004), the plan was targeted at the development of the Nigerian economy that would be highly competitive and responsive to incentives to private sector-led, diversified, market-oriented and open, based on internal momentum for its growth. Consequently, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) - 2003-2007 was birthed to give vitality to the Nigerian economy. The main aim of this plan was to usher in the return to serious medium-term planning as was the case in the 1960s and 1970s. The plan was seen and described as Nigeria's plan for prosperity. NEEDS was implemented by the Nigerian government of the day led by Olusegun Obasanjo.

Beginning from the 1960s, the 1970s and early 1990s the development plans were either aimed at positioning the country to have her pride of place in the comity of sovereign nations, reconstructing and rebuilding the country after a devastating civil war or revitalizing the economy after the mild or serious economic recession. However, in the midst of these plans, gender inequalities

were not perceived or considered imperative because there was a largely unified cultural orientation within the regions. Consequently, development plans adopted by the country and indeed most African countries at the inception of independence was basically gender-blind. From the inception of statehood in Nigeria's development plans and policies, the involvement of women was never an issue for some inexplicable reasons. One argument was that Nigeria adopted a regional approach to development planning.

Apart from the internally oriented development plans, Nigeria also signed and adopted some global policies aimed at engendering development in Nigeria such as the MDGs, NEPAD and the current SDGs. The leaders of 189 countries signed the historic MDG Declaration at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 with a set of eight goals ranging from 1-8 with measurable targets and clear deadlines for improving the lives of the world's poorest people in the developing worlds. These includes: 1.To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger 2. To achieve universal primary education 3. Promote gender equality and empower women 4. Reduce child mortality 5. Improve maternal health 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases 7.   Ensure environmental sustainability and 8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Nigeria through the Bretton Woods embraced the MDGs to bring development to Nigerian citizens. It was specifically aimed at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. To achieve universal primary education, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. To reduce child mortality, improve maternal health. to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and to ensure environmental sustainability so as to develop a global partnership for development. However, the place of women in the articulation, adoption and implementation of these goals was missing or at best infinitesimal compared to that of men. (www.http://who.int).

The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) on the other hand is the African development plan created from the merger of two plans in Africa, (MAP and OMEGA plans). The economic regeneration of Africa and the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP), led by Former President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa in conjunction with Former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the President of Algeria; and the

OMEGA Plan for Africa developed led by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal were merged to form a formidable instrument for African economic reintegration and cooperation with the global community. It was created at the summit of Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Sirte, Libya in March 2001 where it was agreed that the two plans MAP and OMEGA should be merged.

Consequently, in July 2001, the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, adopted this document under the name of the New African Initiative (NAI). The leaders of G8 countries also endorsed the plan on that same 2001. Other international development partners, including the European Union, China, and Japan also made public statements indicating their support for the programme. The Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) for the project finalized the policy framework and named it the New Partnership for Africa's Development on 23 October, 2001 (Wayback Machine, 2010) NEPAD is now a programme of the African Union (AU) that has replaced the OAU in 2002, thought it, has its own secretariat based in South Africa to coordinate and implement its programmes This development policy has four mainstays which include: to eradicate poverty, to promote sustainable growth and development, integrate Africa into the world's economy and accelerate the empowerment of women. Based on the underlying principles of commitment to good governance, democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution and recognition that maintenance of these standards is fundamental to the creation of an environment conducive to investment and long term economic growth.

As an African owned development policy planned by Africans and for African, NEPAD sought to facilitate indigenous economic growth by attracting increased foreign investment and cooperation, capital flows and funding, providing an African-owned framework for development as the foundation for partnership at regional and international levels. NEPAD, was poised to facilitate African development by involving all stakeholders. Its strategy confirmed the need for participatory democracy involving all stakeholders including women for the achievement of development in Africa. As an initiative of African heads of states and governments, the policy was expected to tackle the problems of African development with indigenous methods. It was designed to be a holistic, comprehensive and integrated strategic

framework for the socio-economic development of Africa. From 2001 to date, Africa has made some advancement in development in some areas. However, achieving comprehensive development has been abysmal to Africa and indeed Nigeria since independence with the exclusion of women. Nigeria today is categorized as one the headquarters of poverty in 2019.

The founders of NEPAD believe that NEPAD would bring about economic growth and development, increase employment, reduce poverty and inequality, diversification of productive activities, enhance international competitiveness and increase exports and finally integrate the African continent. An outcome where extreme poverty is nearly eliminated throughout the world except in one region, Sub-Saharan Africa certainly does not portray a picture of a world that would be able to half free or half poverty by 2030. '(www.au.2018**).** Since women constitute 50% of the population in their states and play a very vital role in their society's development then development policies need to administer the gender needs of males and females. However, this would be easily achieved when women are properly represented in development policy articulation, planning and other processes. Emordi (2019) believes that women need to take decisive action to navigate their way in development by occupying a good place in the mode of production. Women do not need to wait for men to include them in development policy because men will not willingly cede power to women by engaging them in development through development policy. The involvement of women in development policy would be the fastest way women would be part of the elite and make policies that would benefit men and women in Nigeria (Emordi, 2019)

However, with the added efforts of local feminists and other stakeholders, Nigeria in 2000 established the Ministry of women affairs and enacted the gender policy in the year 2005 (Emordi,2019). Although, the women question is gradually being addressed and they are gradually getting involved in developing policies and the development process in Nigeria, but the agenda still remains unfinished. This is evident in the establishment of women ministries and the adoption of gender development policies in Nigeria. Women representation in leadership and politics has also remained extremely marginal, except at the level of voting and grassroots mobilization. The marginal presence of women in development planning Nigeria

contradicts the objectives and the outlook of the Nigerian gender policy. It is a deviation from the essential tenets of democracy. Democracy demands a high degree of competitive choice, openness, civil liberties, popular participation in decision making. The absence of these democratic qualities hinder a high inclusive level of political participation in the selection of political leaders through regular free and fair elections such that no major adult/social group is excluded (Diamond, 1992).

Womanism as a theory elucidate the fact that African women are not seeking to be like men, look like men or necessarily act like men (Kolawole, 1997). The African women in womanist theory sought to occupy their place in the scheme of things as women not as men neither was she seeking to usurp the position of men nor the authority thereof but to occupy their own space. Kolawole (1997) emphatically argued that the African woman's expression of femaleness and the struggle for self-esteem did not come from the West. Femaleness has been part of the traditional African values before the advent of colonization Modupe (1997) provides good insights into the concept of womanist theory. She explained that the term is generally believed to have gained attention when Alice Walker used it to represent an aspect of African American's appreciation of the mature womanhood of girls in America.

Womanism according to Okonjo (1996) refers to the consciousness underlying concept of women of color which transcend individual awareness and is not new to the African women. Womanism bears the same resemblance to any other theory about women but it has very distinct characteristics emerging from African values. African women in the diaspora are retrieving these values in spite of the time and regional mediation. African women are aware of their place in life. Womanism is, therefore, the totality of her self-expression and self-realization in diverse positive ways. This involves eliciting women's positive qualities, abilities, self-enhancement, self-esteem and freedom within the African cultural context. Ijeoma and Nwajiaka 2010 affirmed that womanism an ideology portrays the African female to be interested in and also committed to the survival of her society. To them womanism extolled the inestimable values of women and their contribution to development and development planning. Believing that without women development will continue to be a mirage to Nigeria.

Despite Nigeria's engagement with the above-mentioned policies, the World Focus Economics (2018) classified the country as one of the world's habitat of the poorest people in the world. The report explained that there was 736 million extremely poor in the world in 2015, 368 million of that total live in just 5 countries while four out of the five are in Africa. These countries include; India Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Bangladesh. With Nigeria at the top of the list in 2019. The report therefore, suggests that Nigeria is now the country with the poorest people in the world using 2018 projections (Wadhwa and Divyashi, 2019)

Although, today there are women in public offices than ever public ever while encouraging more women leaders will help to achieve greater gender equality a equality, and better planning and implementation of policies. Hence, the society is divided into the few who have power and the many who do not, According to the elite theory only a small number of people allocate values for the society, the masses do not decide on public policy. The few people who govern are usually not typical of the masses who are governed. The elite are also disproportionately drawn from the upper socioeconomic strata of the society. Most of the time, women are hardly in this strata. The UNDP (2002) acknowledged that it is vital to give women equal rights and property, sexual and reproductive health, technology and the internet. The UNDP also emphasized that it is better to have women as veritable patterns in development planning and implementation than planning for and on behalf of women. It is better to have women on board from the beginning than handing down to women development policies which the planners think are good for them which they were never part of during articulation and planning.

The movement of non-elite to the elite position must be gradual and continue to maintain stability and avoid revolution, only non-elites who have accepted the basic beliefs or consensus can be admitted into the governing circles (Thomas, 1978). This is why the inclusion of women in mainstream political positions has been abysmally gradual. The elite men expect women to act and behave like men to be accepted and admitted by men into governance and leadership positions. Women represent about 50% of the population in Africa that are active and vital for African development. The nitty-gritty of the various activities of women in Africa in various areas- agriculture,

business, manufacturing, domestic, cultural, local governance and politics, reproduction and health amongst others are very vital in the growth of the African economy and African political development. Keeping women marginalized in development has been a drawback to archiving development in Nigerian's search for development without women.

Conclusion

It has been established in this article that women were not actively engaged in Nigerian search for development. From the article, we discovered as the feminist argue that the activities of women were not recorded because Nigerian societies are highly patriarchal in nature. Consequently, since development policies were political and social welfare-oriented, women's needs were assumed to have been represented in the collective social welfare needs. Secondly, development policies were largely and general economically structured with the intention to benefit all however, paradoxically women minimally benefit from the policies. One reason adduced to this is that women's interests were subsumed within the national interest. As a result of the exclusion of women from the articulation of policies the country has also not been able to make appreciable progress in execution and implantation of the policies so far made without adequate representation of women

Recommendations
- Women need to take decisive action to navigate their way in development by occupying a good place in the mode of production.
- Women do not need to wait for men to include them in development policy because men will not willingly cede power to women in any sphere of life endeavour.
- There is a need for the development of robust democratic and gendered institutions that allow men and women to participate in the development
- There is a need for the establishment of a quota system in the representation of the sexes in any nation and social programs.

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