

## The Role of Psychological and Socio-Economic Impact On Women Empowerment In Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Aminu Aliyu, Research Student at Nims University Jaipur,

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Nishi Fatma PhD; Principal school of humanities, social sciences and commerce Nims university Jaipur  
Corresponding Author: Mr. Aminu Aliyu

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### -----ABSTRACT-----

*Empowering woman is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation. In a male dominated society, women have always been underestimated and discriminated in all spheres of life be it their family and social life or their economic and political life. Moreover, the traditional duties of managing households create hindrances in their social and economic empowerment. While there is no consensus about its definition, empowerment broadly construed refers to the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (World Bank, 2012). If women think just that being highly educated and employed, they are empowered, it is a myth. Everyone must understand the empowering woman doesn't mean empowering them in technical area only. Women should remember that they are also rational, intelligent and thinking human beings. Women constitute more than 50% of the population, undertake most of the work (two thirds) but only receive one tenth of the total income rather than men. The working hours of women are longer than that of men, 12-16 hours per day. Women's empowerment has been a very important issue of the contemporary world. Education is vital for the growth of human mind in order to attain equal opportunities and status to achieve their goals and objectives. In the methodology used was secondary sources for the conducted the related research study which shows that the psychological and socio-economic impact on women empowerment in Nigeria.*

**Keyword:** Role of Psychology, Socio-Economic, Women Empowerment, Nigeria

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### I. INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the study

“Empowering woman is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation”. Women constitute more than 50% of the population, undertake most of the work (two thirds) but only receive one tenth of the total income rather than men. The working hours of women are longer than that of men, 12-16 hours per day. In addition to their domestic responsibilities in child care, women have to be responsible for housework, such as fetching firewood, water & cooking & even hard work as ploughing & raking, planting, transplanting & harvesting. Women have to suffer from continuing under nutrition & two thirds of them are anaemic. Rural women lack sex education & have poor health due to frequent pregnancies. The illiterate women, especially lack information on balanced diet, family planning, house cleaning & other information to improve their health & the quality of life. They have lower status & low paid occupations, lower economic positions so they are less conscious & lack self confidence.

W - Wonderful gift of nature.

O - Originator of life.

M - Monitor of external and internal affairs.

E - Emotional incarnation.

N - Nightingale in the garden of humanity.

#### EMPOWERMENT

There has been a paradigm shift of focus on women, from the concept of “welfare” towards “development” and now towards “empowerment” from the nineties. Several fronts have taken up different initiatives to uplift rural, semi urban & urban woman and to bring them to the mainstream of a growing economy. As a part of these initiatives, the Government had declared the year 2001 as “Women’s empowerment year” to focus on a vision “Where women are equal partners like men”

Empowerment has 6 components:

1. Cognitive
2. Economic
3. Legal
4. Psychological
5. Political
6. Social

For our study, we are selecting the psychological component of empowerment. The psychological component would include “the development of feelings that women can act upon to improve their condition. This means formation of the belief that they can succeed in change efforts”. The participation of women in business enables them to acquire inimitable psychological benefits to rise up psychologically powerful which are an essential for women empowerment in any socio- cultural and economic environment and situations. The members have accrued various psychological benefits including self awareness, high self esteem, self confidence and courage, understanding about own rights, privileges, roles & responsibilities, power of self determination, positive attitude, risk taking ability, the power to face challenges of daily life, gaining knowledge and new ideas and skills, great relief from mental stress and anxiety, leading a happy and satisfied life and so on.

## **II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

To study about the empowerment and its methods.

2. To find out the importance of women participation in economic empowerment.
3. To know about the psychological component of women empowerment.

## **III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To identify the encouragement and developmental skills on Women.
2. To assess the women empowerment threats and opportunities in Nigeria
3. To know the main procedural concerns when addressing women rights and development aspect.

## **IV. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Empowered Women in Nigerian History

Historical records show the political activism of some notable women took independent and direct action in questioning the injustices of tradition and colonial rule. These women contributed to national development in various capacities and could serve as role models to the 21st century Nigerian women. I highlight some of such women in this section:

Funmilayo RansomeKuti’

Her political activism inspired her being dubbed the doyen of female rights in Nigeria and “The Mother of Africa.” In 1947, Funmilayo was described by the West African Pilot as the “Lioness of Lisabi” as a result of her leadership of the Egba women and also for her campaign against arbitrary taxation. She was a very powerful force advocating suffrage for the Nigerian woman. That struggle led to the abdication of the Egba high king Oba Ademola II in 1949. Also an educator and activist, Funmilayo founded the Federation of Nigerian Women requested of her upon return. Today, Moremi is remembered for her selflessness and bravery and several public structures are named after her in Nigeria; two of such are prominent female Halls of Residence in the University of Lagos and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moremi>).

### **Economic Factors**

Economic empowerment is the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognise the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible for them to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth (Eyben et al., 2008). Economic empowerment increases women’s access to economic resources and opportunities like jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information (OECD, 2011). While presenting a keynote address titled “Towards Financial System Stability: Recent Policy Reforms in the Nigerian Banking Sector” at the second Murtala Muhammed Foundation 2012 Public Policy Dialogue in Lagos, the CBN Governor, Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, set a target to ensure that between 2012 and 2014 40% of top management positions in banks are held by women. During the same period, 30% of board positions in banks will also be reserved for women (Aderinokun and Chima, (Thisday, 16th February, 2012). This is to ensure that women are active agents in the process of achieving sustainable development, pro-poor growth and that they are integrated into the pursuance of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Beyond argument, gender equality breeds empowered women who then function as catalysts for amplifying development efforts. Some scholars argue that gender equality yield the highest returns of all

development investments (OECD, 2010). A proper dissection of the interwoven issues around economic empowerment for Nigerian women will invariably reveal a number of contending factors, some of which are socio-cultural or politically induced (Oyekanmi and Agomo, 2001; Ahmed, 1997).

Women and other marginalized social groups in any country of the world Women Attitudes towards their Empowerment "Attitude" refers to an organized and enduring set of beliefs and feelings towards an object or a situation. In other words, attitudes refer to certain regularity of an individual's feelings, thought and predisposition to act towards some aspect of his environment (Sote, 1997). In women's attitudes towards their empowerment is critical if meaningful progress is to be made in this regard.

### **ROLE OF NIGERIA WOMEN IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

One of the most serious problems faced by the Nigerian development is non-active participation of women in the national affairs. Women had tangible records of economic activities, largely in peasant societies where women made large contributions to community and national development. However, these contributions are not really recognized, but the truth is whether one holds a pragmatic or a humanistic view of development, the participation of women is necessary in national development. The analysis of women's traditional and preservation responsibilities demonstrated that they filled significant roles in the economy and in society, such as cultivation, food processing, food preservation, animal husbandry and marketing, in addition to caring for their homes and families (Okereke, 2010). The following areas have been identified as potent avenues by which women have collectively contributed to national development:

1. Grassroots solidarity omens grassroots initiative, groups and organizations are highly functional and supportive to communities and nations. Women's capacities for co-operative action were a large part of the reason for identifying them as the "backbone of rural development" (Okereke, 2010).

They organize themselves for wide-ranging purposes, mutual savings and loan systems, house construction and improvement, cooperative farming and marketing, mobilizing funds for scholarship, starting nursery centre and installing water supplies. Despite the substantial accomplishment of women groups, women are still regarded as not contributing meaningfully to national development.

- ii. Food production woman's traditional roles in economic activities were neither evident nor even acknowledged in the modern sectors of agriculture, industry, commerce and government. The contribution of women to food production in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. Over time, women have paid their dues immensely both as individuals and as groups in Nigeria in the food production process. They clear the land, till, plant and tend crops. They harvest, store, preserve and even ensure that produced food ends up edible on the dining tables. In Nigeria, women work the land and feed the population. Women are instrumental to the development of most prosperous agricultural regions in different parts of the country and Africa in general. The devaluation of women's work done in sustainable economies is the natural outcome of a system constructed by capitalist patriarchy. These roles are not accorded their rightful recognition in the society but seen is mere on times

- iii. Food preservation and storage Apart from roles women play in the cultivation of crops and livestock domestication, they preserve and store food crops. For example, African bread fruit, cassava, palm oil, cocoyam, among others are specially preserved by women. These foods that are preserved and stored provide food especially during planting seasons when food is in short supply. It provides food security for the family and community. Women have continued in their struggles to be relevant in the development process of the nation though their efforts are neglected in the nation's planning process. In professional technical occupations, they are found mostly as teachers and nurses. Some are also found in clerical occupations. Generally, women dominated the non-wage sectors. Okogie in Ker (1999) observed that women make their greatest contributions to the economy in the agricultural sector. Trading is another area woman contribute to the economy of the country. Many are engaged in both local and cross border trade which boosts the economy.

Economic empowerment is the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognise the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth (eyben et al., 2008). Economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information. Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's rights and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society (swedish ministry for foreign affairs, 2010). it is about creating just and equitable societies. Women often face discrimination and persistent gender inequalities, with some women experiencing multiple discrimination and exclusion because of factors such as ethnicity or caste.

### **Psychological Perspectives on Empowering Poor Rural Women and Girls**

It is generally recognized and supported by psychological and other social science research that empowerment is essential to progress and stability in development, including the critical area of the eradication of poverty. In community psychology, the term has come to mean “an intentional, ongoing process, centred in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection (evaluation), caring, (and) group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of resources gain greater access to and control over those resources” (Zimmerman, 2000). Empowerment is both a multidimensional social process and a multidimensional social outcome that involves individuals and groups gaining control over events in their lives (WHO, 2010) and improving their life circumstances

### **V. METHODOLOGY**

This paper examined the role of psychological and socioeconomic impact of women empowerment in Nigeria.

It is a descriptive study which will explore how psychological and socioeconomic impact affects women live in Nigerian considering the socioeconomic stability and other mental and social adjustments. Secondary data mainly content analysis will be used which is the utilization of Library materials such as text books, newspapers, Journals, Internet materials and publications of government agencies as the main source of data.

### **VI. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The need to empower Nigerian women cannot be over-emphasized particularly in a democratic society which recognizes the need for individuals to develop their potentials and contribute to the overall development of the nation. It is therefore imperative that awareness be created on the benefit that could be derived from women empowerment and as well as assist women to realize their potentialities in order to contribute meaningfully to national development.

The empowerment of Nigerian women towards national development should be a matter of top national priority, which demands the attention and genuine commitment of every responsible member of the society.

#### **Hajia Gambo Sawaba**

Hailed from northern Nigeria where women were denied the franchise to vote even well after independence. As a result of this discrimination, prominent female politicians in the North could neither vote nor be voted for. It was only in 1979 that women in northern Nigeria were given the franchise to vote, following the return to civilian politics and as a product of her struggle. ([www.nnn.com.ng/id=315](http://www.nnn.com.ng/id=315)).

In Southern Nigeria, women already enjoyed suffrage by Independence unlike their counterparts in the North. In fact, in 1960, Mrs. Wuraola Esan from Western Nigeria became the first female member of the Federal Parliament. Mrs. Janet N. Moku and Miss Ekpo A. Young also contested elections, won and became members of the Eastern House of Assembly. Omenani, 2010. Psychological research has shown that there is a strong relation between poverty and depression (Simmons et al., 2008) and that women in rural areas are more likely to suffer from high levels of psychological distress and depressive symptoms (Hays & Zouari, 1995) and less likely to receive psychological treatment than urban women.

They are affected by poverty, isolation, lack of education and economic opportunities, and inadequate access to health and mental health care (American Psychiatric Association Issue Paper, 2009; Mulder & Shellenberger, 1999; Smalley, et al., 2010; NAC Rural Health and Human Services Report, 2006). Migration of their husbands to find work is associated with higher levels of depression in rural women (Bojorquez, Salgado, & Casique, 2009). Rural women and girls are subjected to violence, rape, early marriage, high fertility rates, and chronic illness. When these women work, they are poorly paid in low level jobs. In addition, they are burdened at home with unpaid care work. These multiple stressors interact to cause anxiety and depression, which have a deleterious impact on women’s ability to cope, resulting in the persistence of poverty in E/CN.6/2011/NGO/77710-68509 their lives and in their communities (Mazure, et al., 2002; Smalley, et al., 2010; Beeson et al., 1998; Beck, et al., 1996; Mulder & Shellenberger, 1999).

Lack of education and business experience further inhibit rural women’s motivation to engage in entrepreneurial development which could move them out of poverty, reduce their social isolation, and increase their self efficacy.

Rural life presents significant barriers for women seeking psychosocial services. Rural women’s social isolation, poor education, fear of stigma, lack of transportation, and lack of health insurance make gaining access to psychosocial care difficult (Mazure, et al., 2002; Beeson et al., 1998; Beck, et al., 1996; NAC Rural Health and Human Services Report, 2006). There are few and, in many areas, no trained psychologists, social workers or other health care providers to work with these women.

## VII. CONCLUSION, RECOMENDATION

Changing the attitudes of women in respect of to their empowerment has been amply demonstrated in the wealth of literature reviewed in this study. The study has established that women are becoming increasingly aware that they need empowerment. In theory, many women desire empowerment but do not appreciate the labour that attends such empowerment; enduring the tortuous path to empowerment is a daunting challenge for them. The study debunked the general beliefs that women do not like to be empowered or that only the educated supports women empowerment. The positive relationship between women attitudes and economic independence, political consciousness among other variables articulates the need to involve women in programs designed to empower them. It also confirms the fact that with adequate education, coupled with stark realities of economic survival in various homes, most of the conditions that engender negative attitudes of women towards their empowerment could be changed.

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