

## WOMEN INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS AND SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*Development is a multiplicity social discourse which permeates every aspect of human existence, while, sustainable development is a kind of development that takes care of the basic needs of the present generation without compromising the interest of the next generation, whether economic, political, or social. Therefore, women involvement in politics, governance and democratic development in Nigeria should not be misinterpreted as deviation to social practice. Many barriers responsible for seemingly unsuccessful women participation in politics, particularly in Nigeria. The study x-rays theoretically and empirically critiquing three parallel philosophies. Firstly, “the experiences of oppression and marginalization faced by women in Western societies is not a universal phenomenon- Oyeronke Oyewunmi”. Contrarily: “that women’s oppression and marginalization have been a fundamental feature of African patriarchal societies since the earliest times -Sylvia Tamale, Bibi Bakare-Yusuf” and thirdly: “the subjugation of women was both created and worsened by the colonial experience-Ifi Amadiume and Ayesha Imam”. These assertions were critiqued and reinforced by Talcott Parsons’ Functionalism perspectives and Eisa Arcaute, et al – Ants model. Both emphasizes synergy in human relationship. Empirically, the study torchlight the cultural impact and child bearing in Dukku L/GA, Gombe state, Nigeria. Conclusively, the bane of motherhood, childbearing and economy care heavily despair women’s participation in governance, especially among economic constraint families in the society. The paper’s recommendation, is the need to strengthened ingredients of African culture, stimulating women representations in governance both in the rural and urban settings, which the SDGs 5 - achieving gender equity underscored.*

**Keywords:** Development, Governance, Politics, Sustainable-Development, Women-marginalization.

### INTRODUCTION\BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In aphoristic expression, *development* may be implied in a descriptive manner as a corner piece of land having advantages at both sides, if, the owner utilizes its potentials very well. Perhaps, in another dimension, *development* may be likened to a drum with two sides-faces, colloquially known in Southwest of Nigeria as “*Ilu-gan’gan*” literarily “*talking drum*” (Oduwole, 2020). The perceivers arguably may claim the front of the drum faces him/her and the other side of it back you/someone else. While, the supposedly one backing the drum may equally lay claim in the reverse other. Connotatively, the drum sound whenever it’s beat (drummed) which, permeates respectively to the hearings of both the people at the front

and the one at its back sonorously and rhythmically enjoy its rhythms. Moreover, in academic palace away from aphorism, the discourse *development* is a multiplicity social concept which torches every aspect of human existence without any prejudices to race, coloration, ethics, clans, tribes, physiological compositions or and both material and non-material objects (Oduwole, 2020). In other to ease the conceptual clarifications of the thematic discourses of the paper: *development*, *democratic* (democracy), *politics*, *sustainable development* (sustainability) and *women*. The paper adapts the systematic explanations. Thus; Rodney(1972) and Nnoli(1981) understanding of *Development* can be considered as follows:

(a) Human-centered rather than artifacts-centered, (b) A dynamic process rather than a static state, and (c) Involves a complex interactive relationship between individuals and society – based essentially on production rather than on consumption. Understood from this view point, development is about building a nation and well-being of the citizenry. Onuoha (2007) remarks that *development* can be defined as the continuous process of qualitative and quantitative transformation in the capacity of a state to organize the process of production and distribution of the material benefits of society in a manner that sustains improvement in the well-being of its individual's members in order to enhance their ability to realize their full potentials, in maintenance of the positive transformation sustenance of their society and humanity at large.

Succinctly, Fadeyi (2010) observes that in a wide range sense, *development* covers economic development and other important attributes as well, notably more equality of opportunity, political freedom, civic liberties, gender equality and environmental protection and poverty reduction. In sum, *development* that takes little account of sustainability is ultimately self-defeating.

A quick switch from Development to Democratic (Democracy). Apparently, *democracy* is to serve a level playground for fair play, justice, order, equality, the protection of human rights and host of others, among gender (female/male). By extension; *Politics* as a social discourse too, need to be defined. Going by classical expression of the terminology "*politics*" as coined from the Greek word polis, which implies city, state, a political community. However, it has numerous definitions and variant interpretations as conceived from various perspectives. The paper aligned with Aristotle's conceptualization of politics which, connotes "man by nature is a political animal". Implicitly, being political is socially construed to mean interaction with other members of the society irrespective of clans, tribes, gender (male/female) statues etc. Therefore, *politics* is an action, a process and a relationship among men in the process of sharing resources and values among themselves on the one hand and the state on the other (see Mudasiru et al., 2016, for more).

From the foregoing and presumably, democracy is embedded in politics and vice-versa. Therefore, (*democracy* and *politics*) may be conceived as fora in which men/women influence others to accept their points of view,

as they attempt to secure personal share from available but limited resources, they find themselves engaging in politics. More importantly, the classical contributors to the conceptualization of the term "*politics*" did not restrict its practice to a particular Sex – Male or and Female in the cause for its participation in the society or and the state. Suffices, a profound statement "Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people" (Abraham Lincoln, 1865). Hence, the term "*people*" clearly as use by Lincoln is explicit. The participants in this course are physiologically both male and female. Therefore, the contending subject matter – women involvement or and representation in governance, precisely in Nigeria is/are with bulging questions rhetorically: Should women participate or and be represented in governance? Should women be restricted to the kitchen and the inner room, so to speak? Though, before the paper delved into the nitty – gritty of the subject matter. There is the need to clarify the other two remaining concepts as appeared in the paper. Thus, *Sustainable development* and *Women. Sustainable development* as expressed by World Commission on Environment (1987) defines *Sustainable development* as growth that meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. Summarily, (Goodland & Daly, 1996) consider that the general understanding of sustainable development is based on two dimensions: the notion of development (to make better) and sustainability (to maintain). It's classically explained as the balancing between environmental, economic and social aspects of development. These are the three pillars of sustainable development and by extension – sustainability.

*Women*; overwhelmingly and sociologically proven, else, extraordinary wise, she is the one that conceived the fetus from the period of gestation till birth. Culturally and socially, she metamorphic ally nurtures the newly birth. Added, the home chorus – traditionally within the realm of African ethos (cooking) in particular, she is the benchmark. Yet, she is crowned the weaker vessel! The woman!! Prejudiced aside, her counterpart engages in fending for family livelihood – expectedly tradition as typified in African setting. Protection against intruders, caring and physically assisting in tedious, energy sapping activities which, are usually anchor by the opposite object. Perhaps, due to more muscular

physiologically built, the object is adjudged – the Man!!!

However, day by days, year upon years, the society transformed and kept transforming through the periscope of Modernization, Post-Modernization, Macdonalization and many more from sociological perspectives. These old and newly introduced social discourses advertently and inadvertently permeates our values (the African ways of life). Though, if you fail to align with the newly/introduced blueprint, you are considered barbaric, excommunicated, species of antediluvian. Simply, you are not westernized. Furthermore, in order to balance the summation, a non-recognition of some of the Western researches and findings may amount to ethnocentrism or miscarriage of justice. The outcome of such researches clearly put a stop or at least reduced to low percentage some of the antihuman, social-cultural practices of old (the likes of female circumcision, crucifixion of maiden virgin to the gods during drought). The thoughts of multiple birth (twins or more) as aberration and act of been put to death or banishment to the forest and many more acts enjoying support from the supposedly belief (faith) was put to a check. Thanks, to scientific explanations. Maybe, another day debate. Clearly, the paper succinctly diagnosed theoretically, empirically, and reinvigorate the pivotal of the subject matter with arrays of postulations, juxtaposes assertions and brings to conclusions, and recommendation of the paper with a view of offering assertive way forward on the matter at hand.

**Objectives of the study:**

The primary focus of the study is to expand its periscope of diagnosing the subject matter. Hence and presumably, the widespread view that a husband is he, who is capable of work has a duty to society, as well as to his wife, to provide support for his family (Hilary Land, 1975). This perception is erroneous as predicated on belief supports the assumption that a woman’s wage-earning activities are only of secondary importance: her primary concern is, or will be, in the home. Clearly, it is on this everyday phenomenon which has been an age long summation that the study takes up the challenge and began its periscopic diagnosing the discourses.

**Problematization of the study:**

The women’s liberationists challenge the propositions that it is taken for granted, considering that married women who participate in paid/wage employment, as most

do are also responsible for the bulk of the housework, childcare and looking after elderly or sick relatives. A “double shift” as described by women’s liberationists. Its phenomena! The argument is as a results of women’s important contribution to society in caring for husband, children and the sick or old has been and still is, largely unrewarded, while their activities as workers are both underestimated and undervalued. This is well pronounced in modern day. An everyday living phenomenon. Pertinently, there are worrisome questions undermining the position of female (women) in the society. Firstly, for most women, marriage spelt permanent removal from paid work, ever justified? Secondly, even if this were so once, in view of current dispensations in our society-social, economic and demographic changes emanating since our social security system was founded, is it the same today? These two questions stand in lieu of statement of problem for the paper to be unraveled – a center piece for the discussion.

**A Review of Scholarly Work – Literature Review:**

The periscope of diagnose explicitly felt the need for discussion of the experience of Women in the society in the context of arguments which, cropped up from the Women’s Liberation Movement. Recently, discussions of the position of women are, in the view of, the notion of “social secondariness” opined by Rowbotham (1973). The value of this idea is that, it recognizes the degree to which the inequality of which women are victims is mediated by, among other things, personal relationships rather springing directly from economic and political oppression. It directs attention to the practice of social relationship between men and women; to the constructed facticity of the women’s world. It raises the Durkheimian (sociologist) issue of the extent to which we create our own constraints – and could therefore hope by our own action to free ourselves: “the peculiar characteristics of social constraint is that it is due not to the rigidity of certain molecular arrangements but to the prestige with the certain representations are invested”.

Rowbotham has suggested a number of ways in which the secondariness of women is mediated; “core concepts of sexists thought” in her terms:

- I. Men do the important work in the world and the work done by men is what is important;
- II. Women are here for the pleasure and assistance of men;

III. Women's identities are defined by their relationship to men and their social value by that of the men they are related to.

In each of these respects a woman sees the world through one end of a male telescope and is herself seen, suitably diminished, through the other end of it. In each of these respects, however, one might think that the situation of women would be drastically altered in the society. To begin with the home becomes, in principle, the primary scene of value and action for men and women alike. What is important, is deliberately not what is done outside but what is done in and for the time. Again, among the social relations that the society seek to repudiate, those involving explicit recognition of structured differences between men and women are prominent. Their thoughts would be perhaps, to rewrite Rowbotham's second assertion as "people are here for the pleasure and assistance of each other". Although, few societies/states are consciously concerned with women's liberations as an issue, their unconcern is meant to have egalitarian implications. Similarly, their commitment to the openness of relationship, to the freedom of men and women to make and break relationships on their own terms, is tied directly to a rejection of the idea of any partner to a relationship being defined by the relationship.

Furtherance, the experience of the oppression and marginalization faced by women in Western societies is not a universal phenomenon – Oyeronke Oyewunmi (2005) asserted. Significantly, the piece of the work challenged the misconception and misinterpretation of concepts as used mostly in Europe/America world and cultural hegemony forcefully introduced to Africans and the need to swallow it as such based-on colonialization and imperialistic order. Additional assertions stated that many scholars have critiqued gender as a universal concept and have shown the extent to which it is particular Anglophone/American and white women politics in the United States, especially. Mostly, critiqued of the concept Gender, has to do with differences amongst women and the need to fathom multiple forms of oppression particularly where inequalities of race, gender, and class inequalities are evident. Oyenronke, Oyewunmi (2005: 102) vehemently debated that biological determinism shows the application of biological explanations and social hierarchies are thoroughly intertwined.

Implicitly, this biological determinism is manifested in male-dominant gender discourses. Discourses in which female biological differences are used to explain female socio-political disadvantages. In a similar vein and contrarily – that women's oppression and marginalization have been a fundamental feature of African patriarchal since the earliest times – Sylvia Tamale, Bibi Bakare-Yusuf. As previously mentioned, the mannerism of misconception, misrepresentation of female body which, have been framed in accordance to a Western Scenery. The contention with this is that African Societies are mythicized, misrepresented without having even presented their positions in the first place (Oyewunmi, 1997). Therefore, moving away from the normalized Western Knowledge and thought which we have internalized as universally applicable.

Oyewunmi and Amadiume (1997) for instance, laid the foundation clear-cut understanding the construction of *gender* and consequently of *nakedness*. The idea of gender as a social construct may be traced back to colonialism, and how the system of oppression was justified. The level of dehumanization as asserted by Oyewunmi (1997) by the West – being black, female and coriaceous meant that you were at the bottom of the hierarchy. In Western Society, the entire social order is dependent on the body, it then flows that the body becomes something to be read and therefore becomes the object of a gaze – a gaze which in turn, constructs the body's movement into certain meanings within a social system (Oyewunmi, 1997). More interestingly, that within European thought, only women were embodied and men were thought to be the thinkers, the walking minds (Oyewunmi, 1997). This generated idea of maleness and femaleness, one which reduced the credibility of the female body and gave the credibility to the male body. The summation of the extract is that, presuming nakedness, albeit initio by the West is not in line of thought by the Africans. The basis argument of this section is that indeed naked is symbolic and it is not inherently sexual, but that it had been constructed to be this way through the primacy given to what can be visualized (i.e., the physical body) in the west (Oyewunmi, 1997). In addition, the underscoring point of debate is that nakedness is not only constructed to be sexual, but may also be constructed and used for the purpose of resistance.

Nakedness, rather was used as legitimate form of resistance, as illustrated through the work of

Tamale (2016). For instance, the scenario of the women activists in Kenya and Liberia, the aspect of motherhood, age, and the “curse of nakedness” played a major role. These women capitalized on an old belief within the cultural context, and used it as a mode to demonstrate their political agency – denouncing the idea that the physical body has no place in the political realm. Therefore, and unlike the West subjecting nakedness to object of advertisement and many more. To Africans, the motherhood, the women folk assert themselves into the political, but it is a direct rejection of the notion that the female body is passive, powerless, a sexual object for male consumption, an object owned by society – and not a political weapon owned by the woman herself. The use of the naked female body as a tool of political resistance is not only a form of unruly politics, but a personified, symbolically assertion that personal is political.

Lastly, the subjugation of women was both created and worsened by the colonial experience – Ifi Amadiume (1987) laid voice to the contending discussion. Amadiume posits and tacitly argues;

*‘What structures allowed women to achieve the power that it is generally agreed that they had? What were the effects of colonial institutions on the old structures of the traditional society and on women’s choices and situations? Finally, what is happening to women in contemporary local politics and consequently national politics?’* (Amadiume, 1987:17).

Classically, Amadiume opined that in precolonial era, sex and gender do not share any correlation. In essence, the argument that biological sex did not usually correlate with philosophical gender suffices that woman could assume the roles often muscled by men or be known as “male” in regard to power and authority over others. Amadiume’s (1987) foremost work depicts that colonialism was epistemological gendered scheme which systemically made African female power invisible, whilst engendering inelastic Western gender classification, hence carefully foreclosing the fluidity that existed within African gendered structures that made it feasible for women to gain a wide set of social, cultural, and political power structures. Siphokazi, et.al (2021) reinvigorated in their review of Amadiume’s (1987) *Male Daughters, Female Husband - a revisiting on gender, sex, and political economy*. The work asserted that – over thirty years later, Amadiume’s (1987) works forms part of what can be called the

“distinctive characteristics” (Mama, 1996) of both African women’s studies and the foundational literature of African feminist thought, with its epistemic power and resonance also shaping study fields such as African studies, Heritage studies and African cultural studies. Adesina (2010) added, this interdisciplinary, yet historically rooted and thickly contextualized element Amadiume’s works is an example of “what can be achieved when we allow the local ethnographic data to speak... in ways that are distinctly epistemic in outcome”. By proclaiming the “daughters could be sons and consequently ‘male and daughter’ and women in general could be husband to wives and consequently males in relation to their wives” (Amadiume 1987, 15). Amadiume challenged a universal definition of male, female and a homogenous depiction of women’s status and relationship to power that was grounded on purely male based forms of power, ethics and morality.

In addition, and sequel to publication of Amadiume’s work, ten years after, Oyeronke Oyewunmi’s *the Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (1997) made similar conclusions for instance, about the Yoruba societies in Nigeria. Oyewunmi (1997) argued that the colonial projecting was a gendering project, while sought of violently impose and universalized gender categories to societies that historically organized and reproduced themselves also through lineage, age and seniority. Equally Adesina (2010) argues, Amadiume and Oyewunmi’s works produced epistemic ruptures in the global discourses around the sociological meanings of gender relations and how we understand “gender” posing impediments to women audacity to involve in politics and democratic development and its sustenance in Nigeria. Furthermore; at this juncture, the paper reaffirms that the degradation in our core values as Africans and Nigerians in particular, which has permeated all facets of our social existence, may be described as counter – productive affecting women – spheres of life, to be specific. To this end, the paper briefly recapitulates Talcott Parsons’ Functionalism theory and the Ants theological model of life.

***The Functionalism... in brief:*** Functionalism is one among blueprints which diagnose social change as advanced in all societies. The propositions of the theory criticized the stand of evolutionism that societies started from a particular form and develop though the same

stages. It also debunks the advocacy that development (value) inclusive takes a particular shape or pattern. Instead, functionalism sees the society also like a living organism with many parts and all parts functions to foster healthy living organism. Parsons and his followers emphasized the importance of cultural pattern in achieving stability in society. Their stand is that; the society has the ability to absorb disruptive forces. In other words, the cultural forces of society have the ability to resist certain social changes emanating from within and outside of the social system while maintaining stability. Parsons' positions stressed two concepts as significant in the explanation of functionalism and social change-values of the society: *differentiation* and *integration*. The perspectives stressed that in simple societies, social institutions are undifferentiated. That is, a single social institution performs many functions. For instance, the family performs the following activities in simple societies: reproductive, education, socialization, economic, recreational among others (Rao, 2014). As the society becomes more complex, a process of differentiation takes place where institutions like schools, hospitals, etc. takes over the functions of the family. Therefore, the new institutions are expectedly to be properly linked with the old ones by process of integration. Suffices, the argument demonstrated that, there is the need for thorough integration irrespective of roles pairs between the (male/female) in order to sustainably sustain the system. This could be carried out within the realm of cultural specificity of the society concerned.

**The Ants Theological Model:** Nature arguably has given the best pathfinder to human social existence. Optimistically, there are many pathways to division of labour in order to ensure sustainability. One of such mechanism is the superficially division of labour in insect life cycle. Interestingly, the Ant colonies are complex dynamical having procedurals in their system. Remarkably, the disposition of the colony as a whole, is quite different from one another and are quintessential to their social existence for their survival and sustainability. Therefore, the behaviour of the colony is the outcome of the many and logical local interactions between the ants, and between the ants and their environment. A laudable emergent structure is the division of labour (Robinson, 1992; Beshers & Fawell, 2001; Page & Erber, 2002) persistent in many different attractive fields.

### Methodology of the Study:

The paper understudied and reviewed the empirical model work of Eisa; Arcaute, et. al, (2008). Succinctly, the empirical research studied the mechanism of the life cycle of Ants. The herculean tasks involved in moduis-oprandi of the Soldier Ants- the composition of the Queen, the workers, the Soldier Ants which, entails and demonstrate seemingly functionalism's nitty-gritty at work, a division of labour perfecting their existence and collaboration among the Ants, a quintessential to one another. Taking a clue from the empirical research study of (Eisa; Arcaute, et.al, 2008). The summation of the findings based on two different cases that were considered to study the dynamics of the model. One, where ants increase their "keenness" to perform a task if they did it before, and also forget if they stop doing it for a period of time, and another one where neither learning or forgetting is implemented. In both cases it was observed that the tasks were successfully completed. Division of labour therefore takes place as an emergent property of the system within the model. The argument however, is that the model intends to represent how ants in their real environment, and many other social insects, allocate and complete their tasks. The idea is that each of the tasks, and hence stimuli, is the equivalent of a potential network of people. Both are the outcome of the interaction within the system. In other to understand, the line of the arguments is that, understanding individual self-regulatory mechanism in nature could possibly clarify many intricacies in the society.

### Results of Discussion:

From the foregoing, the arguably discussion over time from all shade of human endeavors "gender equality and gender equity" (even, if the concepts are reluctantly taken) is the bane of discussion underlying the subject matter of the paper: Women Involvement in Politics, Democratic Development and its Sustainability in Nigeria. To this end, value as opined in this paper rest its premises within culture. Therefore, relativity is inherent in culture. Oduwole & Isaiah (2020) takes culture to mean a worldwide phenomenon. It gives room for social cohesion and stability. Culture embraces human elements beyond heredity manipulations; for examples, our norms and values, the folklores we tell, learned or acquired behaviours, religious beliefs, art and fashion, and lot more. Thus, culture has been defined in a range of manners by scholars. Taylor's (1871) definition has remained the most classical. He

defined culture as that complex whole which are learned and shared by men as members of society and transmitted from one generation to another. Therefore, the summation of this segment is that culture is embryonic filament which, nurture the society (the people) on path chosen by the people as their ways of life. Inherently, value is one of the ingredients of culture. It speaks volume and showcase what a given society considered as dos and don'ts which, are equally learnt, shared and transmitted from one generation to another. Historically, the infiltration of West (Modernization, Post Modernization and Macdonalization perspectives) to mention few, seemingly and fast eroding fundamental of African values. Though; to certain extent, there are plausibility in their postulations which enhance development. However, culture is relative and better appreciated by the adherents. The likes of Acholonu (1995) coined "Motherism" as social discourse which wrestled with Western Terminologies – "Patriarchy" and "Matriarchy" as considered Euro-centric and opted for "Patrifocality and Matrifocality".

Simply, Acholonu is of the astute opinion that men and women symbiotically and complementarily magnetic object in Traditional African Society. However, there are specificity in spheres of life. There are areas either as results of physiological composition – men dominate in such areas. In a similar vein, by physiological construct – women equally are dominated in that regard.

Hence, Acholonu opined;

*"Patriarchy, the system that places men on top of the social and political ladder seems to be inappropriate term for describing the organization of the social system of the African peoples. This is because several Africa societies reflect systems with ranging degrees of dual – sex hierarchies in which men and women exist in parallel and complementary positions and roles within the society".*

By and large, Acholonu conceives a motherist as a model embellished with tranquility and peaceful social interaction with the environment. The perspective is meant to strengthen cordial relationship between men and women. Unlike the likes of Modernization, Post-Modernization, Macdonalization etc..., their propositions were heavily criticized. However, Motherism still in its embryonic stage, need more pragmatic approach in order to synthesize the perspectives (thoughts) in

developmental nexus of the developing countries. Added, Oyeronke Oyewunmi buttressed the above summation that, women complexities, oppression and marginalization been experiencing in western countries is not a universal phenomenon. Hence, the assertion still in concomitance with relativity of culture as emphasized in the paper. Similarly, Slyvia Tamale, Bibi Bakare Yusuf argued contrarily that women's oppression and marginalization have been a fundamental feature of African Patriarchal societies since the earliest time.

The historical antecedent of patriarchal system is equally heavily laden with criticism. Simply, it is connected with culture and exploration of the colonial masters during the era of British Colonial Empire. The third assertion of plight, most especially the women folk as explained by Ifi Amadiume and Ayesha Imam that the subjugation of women was/were both engendered and exacerbated by the colonial experience. The tone of Ifi Amadiume and Ayesha Imam is a strong attestation affirming the former thought – which has to do with colonial exploration (slave trade, dehumanization of humanity) that were heavily perpetrated by the British Colonial days in Africa and Nigeria to be specific. The underlying point the paper laid its credence is the "Ant Theological Model" which the creature (Ants) amplified division of labour and incisive functionalistic approach within their life cycle, that presumably make their lives a water tight social existence. Therefore, the "Motherism" – an invention by African scholar and the likes of "Womanism", "Stiwanism" etc..., they all need to be placed at the front burner of intellectual debate in order to be globally recognized.

#### **Re-Validation of Discussion of Findings – Empirical Relations.**

The paper further attempted to take a clue from ongoing research titled "The Cultural Impact and Child Bearing in Dukku Local Government Area, Gombe State, Nigeria". Succinctly, a correlation of the work and juxtaposed with the paper in question. Precisely, one of the objectives of the aforementioned study stated:

I. To examine the influence of cultural factors on the desired number of children.

Meanwhile, the problematique of the study was the use of economics theory of fertility, wealth flow theory and ideation theory to identify the correlation on influence of culture on the desired number of children.

**Table 1.0:** Respondents opinions on reasons whether cultural barrier affects the choice of the desired number of children in Dukku Local Government Area.

Response's	Frequency	Percentage
Because it is the key to people ways of life including their reproductive decisions.	30	32.6%
Culture discourages few numbers of children	17	18.5%
Because it considers children as a source of wealth to their parents	45	48.9%
Total	92	100%

Researcher's Field Survey 2023

Above indicates that 48.9% of the respondents viewed cultural beliefs and religion has influence on the desired number of children because of the traditional perceptions hold towards having children. While 32.6% responded that, cultural practices encourage large number of children, to them children go with the family name and much number of children earn respects to entire family. And 18.5% of the respondents said, that according to their cultural believe few numbers of children is highly unacceptable. The major thrust of the study (still ongoing) was to analyze the influence of culture on desire number of children in Dukku Local Government Area, Gombe State. Africa is primarily rural and it is patriarchal in nature with strong male influence over most family matters including reproduction. Indeed; the typical African society, especially among the rural areas, male dominant stratified institutions of family which, is the shock absorber of every existing society, succession practices, and hierarchy relationship remained unchangeable. The underpinning consequences which brought the correlation of this study to the latter can be rhetorically queried “the implications of too many births per woman, what about the health implications (risk) for the women and how much more time to participate or and be adequately represented in democratic governance of the state – Nigeria. Hence, the former study opined a strong thrust – that, there should be an intense campaign to foil high birth rate per woman in the interest of the mother (women), betterment of the children and to sustain both qualitative and quantitative developmental nexus for the women and at large, the society.

**Women and Politics-** Over the years, there has been a remarkable increase in women’s participation in politics in Nigeria considering these standards, yet there is inherently a pronounced level of under representation of women in politics when compared with their

male counterparts (Nkechi, 1996). Women’s aspiration to participate in governance is premised on the following ground; that women in Nigeria represent half of the population and hence should be allowed a fair share in decision-making and the governance of the country. Secondly that all human beings are equal and women possess the same rights as men to participate in governance and public life. The right to democratic governance is an entitlement conferred upon all citizens by law. The 1999 Nigerian constitution by virtue of Section 40 states the following:

*Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests: Provided that the provisions of this section shall not derogate from the powers conferred by this Constitution on the Independent National Electoral Commission with respect to political parties to which that Commission does not accord recognition.*

*Section 42(1) of the same constitution states further that: A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person be subjected to any form of discrimination.*

*This further confirms that you can go to court to seek redress if as a woman your franchise is violated and that the constitution as a whole prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Section 77 of the Constitution also states:*

*(1) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, every Senatorial district or Federal constituency established in accordance with the provisions of this Part of this Chapter shall return a member who shall be directly elected to the Senate or the House of Representatives in such manner as may be prescribed by an act of the National Assembly.*



(2) Every citizen of Nigeria, who has attained the age of eighteen years residing in Nigeria at the time of the registration of voters for purposes of election to a legislative house, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter for that election.

#### Conclusion:

The much ado about women involvement in politics and participation in governance rest its premises on gender disparity and value orientation as social discourse within the academic- the paper noted. However, and more importantly to African as a continent and Nigeria to be specific, there are variant dimensions and thoughts to the issue. There are protagonists and antagonists to the debate globally, with different assertions to the discourse. The paper diagnoses *Gender* as both physiological and as a social construct with varying meaning as applicable to different society. Particularly, value which is embedded in culture. The relativity of culture is what the paper attuned its strength in elucidating and X-ray of the discourses. Therefore, the propositions and critique which follow each of the discourses are what the paper brought to bear. It is a leap forward balancing the argument and a means of adjudicating over the debate.

#### Recommendation:

The fundamental drive is that, the paper passionately is of the opinion for Africans, Nigerians in particular to pull in to the fundamentals of value re-orientation, a mechanism which the paper conceived as panacea to the debate in order to forestall meaningful development and sustainable human co-existence. That is, men and women to uphold a synergy as nature ordained for the humanity, which the SDGs 5 - achieving gender equity underscored.

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