

Religion and Women Participation in National Development

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Abstract

The role of women in nation building cannot be over-emphasized. In any nation, women's contribution to development is significant in the area of culture, economy and politics. Religion has been a strong influence on how women participate in society. With this, the impact has been both positive and negative. In national development discourse, little attention is paid to the influence of religion on women and how they participate in national development. In filling this scholarly gap, this paper gives an overview of religion and development in Nigeria. It examines African traditional religion and women participation in Nigeria, the new religions and women participation in Nigeria. It further discusses women's contribution to national development. This paper adopts Emile Durkheim's functionalism theory of religion. Data is collected from secondary sources such as books, journals and articles. Recommendations are made towards making women do more in contributing to national development.

Keywords

Religion, women, national development

Introduction

The role of women is decisive and significant in national development. In history, women participation is commensurate to the level of improvement they have engendered in all sectors of the society and their contributions have immensely influenced growth and development of every nation (Gunjemilua & Familugba, 2015). In most societies, women are seen as important figures that serve as agents of reproduction and continuity of life. They are as well capable of stirring and ensuring stability, progress and long-term development in any society (Afolabi, 2016).

Notably, the twentieth century is remarkable for the role of women in advancing social changes in every aspect of the nation. Social changes in this context imply women attitudes and ideology toward taking leadership roles. These changes were brought about by the emergence of the foreign religions, which are Islam and Christianity and their advent have had a far-reaching

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effects on issues relating to women participation in the society, thus, various questions arose in relation to women's role in the society.

Few parts of the Quran and Bible stresses men superiority over women; thus, subjecting women to be quiet and to submit to their husband. In the same vein, African religions also place more importance to the role of men on religious matters when compared to the role of women. Falola (2018), Ogunjemilua & Familugba (2015) assert that women were seen basically as homemakers whose role and duty centered on taking care of the home and children. According to them, it is believed that a woman is weak and fragile, hence, considered economically and intellectually dependent and imbalanced, thus responsible only as a wife, a mother, and a caregiver. In most cases, in an agrarian society where polygyny was common, women were seen as a clever way of acquiring wealth and status and also as a source of labour expansion through child bearing and household wealth creation. The foreign religions notwithstanding came with enough provision to take care of these issues. Thus, through intellectual enlightenment, the mosques and the churches, religious activists such as the pastors, evangelist, Imam and Alfas serve as agents of enlightenment to correct the erroneous perception about women (Habiba, 2011). In this light, teachings of religious leaders as well as the writings of religious advocates such as religious scholars became agents of empowerment for women in the society. In such, they became equally educated like men, thus stemming the tide of being seen as weaker vessels into taking leadership roles in the society. Today, there are women who are political activists, doctors, academia, and philanthropists (Afolabi, 2016). Corroborating this point, Falola opined that the distribution of power in the home has greatly being impacted by these changes, thereby, duties and responsibilities at home have been shared between the husband and the wife.

From the foregoing, much work has been written on women and national development (Afolabi, 2016; Gonyok, 2014; Falae, 2018; Oludayo, 2015; Nwosu, 2012; Rojas, 2014). However, little consideration had been given to the impact of religion on the role of women in nation building. Therefore, this is the gap this study tends to fill. In light of this, historical research method is employed and data is derived from secondary sources such as books, journals and articles from the internet in appraising the influence of religion on the role of women in the society and their contribution to development.

Religion and Development in Nigeria

The term religion is better explained than defined as it has various meanings depending on the context in which it is discussed. Religion could be explained from various perspectives. It could be explained as a functional, evaluative, and descriptive phenomenon. In addition, it could be seen from sociological, philosophical, and even scientific perspective.

From a sociological context, therefore, religion is defined as a social phenomenon that is powerful and pervasive in society. According to Dzurgba

(2009), he defined religion as a cultural phenomenon, which permeates every aspect of human lives. It is from this light that religion through her social functions has an influence on women participation in national development. Buttressing this view, Okechukwu (2012) discussed religion from the social perspective. In his work, religion was seen as a system of social unity that binds groups of people and governs their attitudes towards object, thought, or imaginary being considered to be supernatural or divine.

In Nigerian society, religion is seen as an important phenomenon laced into every aspect of human lives and endeavours. Religion is pervading and difficult to separate from other social institutions in society. Nigeria being a multi-cultural society is characterized by diverse religious system, yet the three dominant religions - African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam constitute the most recognized religion of the land. Nonetheless, each of these religions have influenced the people and their actions as they interact in the society (Ogunjemilua & Familugba, 2015).

Apparently, African traditional religions have always been recognized as the religion of the land even at the advent of foreign religions. Its nature and characteristics encompass the philosophy of people about life. Uzundu (2015) expresses that ATR paved the way for the emergence of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria. Being the religion of the land, this expression could be said to be true because it convergence and divergence point out the multiple viewpoints from which religion can be observed.

Just like Mbiti described African society as notoriously religious, this notoriety is evident in the religious belief of the people in Nigeria. As expressed by Sanni (2016) religion play a significant role in determining the identity of the people, how they react and act in the society. Besides, majority of these adherents receive solace, comfort, guidance and direction from the religion they uphold. Thus, it is not an over generalization to say religion is predominantly a determinant of the action and inactions of Nigerian people.

Various scholars from different fields and perspectives have defined development. Thus it is evident that development represents a whole array of change by which the entire social system meets the need and desires of individual and groups in the society. It is a state or condition whereby there is a re-organization and re-orientation of every aspect of the social system of a nation. In like manner, it could be seen in light of modernization. According to Familusi (2017), development also involves empowering groups and individuals to make their own choices Familusi (2017). Development can be understood also as a process of improving the quality of human lives with emphasis on the quality of lives, standard of living, and condition that promote peoples' self-esteem, human dignity, and respect through the establishment of social, economic, and political system (Oludayo, 2015). Also, Dawe (2015) defined development as a process whereby the people in a given society explore the available resources in order to improve their standard of living.

Similarly, Oludayo (2015) views national development as the ability of a country to improve the social welfare of the people; by providing social amenities like quality education, potable water, transportation infrastructure and medical care services. From a similar lens, Okechukwu (2012) defined development as a process of economic and social transformation embedded in multifaceted cultural and environmental interactions. More comprehensively, national development is the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation (Familusi, 2017).

Now, it is imperative to assert the fact that Nigerian nation is still underdeveloped; in the work of Familusi (2017), evidence is clear that the yardsticks for measuring development are elusive in Nigerian society. Moreover, as scholars have suggested in various related researches, development is possible through strategic planning, which since 1960, efforts is being made by leaders in Nigeria to achieve this. However, it is to be noted that planning alone is not enough to achieve the ideal development craved for; thus, the ethics of religion that promotes patriotism and value among citizens is necessary in achieving development in Nigeria. In light of these, religious perception of Nigerians and the ethical principles embedded in religions can serve as essential catalyst for development in Nigeria.

African Traditional Religion and Women Participation in Nigeria

According to Mbah (2012), the traditional Nigerian society was predominantly patriarchal in nature (religious and cultural phenomena). Patriarchy, though not bad in itself, however, it is an order of hierarchies adhere to from culture and religion, therefore it cut across every aspect of human life. On religious matter, African Traditional Religion awards men power and prestige in the traditional society than women; hence, it affirms male domination over female (Falola, 2018). This is not to say that women were docile in traditional Nigerian Society, they as well, played significant role as a mother and a wife in the traditional society. Within the household, while men were regarded as the heads of households, women were equally relevant in procreation of life through which, they keep tradition and kinship alive through child bearing and socialization of the children. This socialization cut across moral/religious teachings which is the basic source of their ethic. These roles accord women so much respect and prestige in the community.

African religion also play a role in many experiences of women during this era, this role affirms power that a woman has in term of spirituality. Zimon (2006) expresses the legal power and spiritual leadership of women in some cults. According to him, they are renowned sorcerers and witches. Some women in Eastern and Southern Africa control the Earth fertility and they are well-known rainmakers. Among the Yoruba, women are leaders of the Osun cult. Even though, women played significant role in some African cults and shrines, yet, menstruating women are forbidden from participating in any

traditional rites. However, a virgin or a woman who has reached her menopause could be a devotee of a god and goddess. In the same vein, Aderibigbe (2015) opined that in society that believes in mysterious power, women were seen to have erroneous power associated with witchcraft. With this belief, therefore, women with mystical power are accorded respect in the society.

During the pre-colonial era, aside the spirituality, women were elected into position through the dictate of the oracle, thus through various association and social groups, women were allowed to participate in politics, economy, and management of affairs that are specific to their gender (Mbah, 2012). Notable among these were secret societies and age grade groups. Women were made leaders and they were allowed control in decision making on matters of interest to them. For instance, Iyalode, among the Yoruba was known to be head over trader and market women (Nwosu, 2012). Aside the administrative power on economic matter, women had political powers as well. This is evident in communities and kingdom where women were warriors as well as kingmaker (Falola, 2018). During this traditional period, there were women like Madam Tinubu of Lagos and Efunsetan Aniwura of Ibadan and they all performed excellently well in their position.

New Religions and Women Participation in Nigeria

In recent literatures Afolabi (2016), Gonyok (2014), Falae (2018), Oludayo (2015), Nwosu (2012) and Rojas (2014) had significantly reflected how women have participated in national development. For instance, Afolabi (2016) stresses the role of women in the society and how their participations have contributed immensely to development. Hence it will be demeaning to talk about exploitation and empowerment of women as if their role was static. Few works (Falola, 2018), (Ogunjemilua & Familugba, 2015) noted that around the twelfth century, traditional practices were modified and strengthened by the advent of colonial leaders and missionaries. The new religions introduced by the missionaries brought about penetration of foreign values, norms, and idea that significantly strengthened men as against women. In this wise, new jobs were introduced against subsistence farming which was predominantly the occupation of the people, hence, distribution of power in the community favoured men as against women, due to the forms of occupation introduced by the colonial masters, such as police, civil services and educational jobs (Falola, 2018). These jobs marginalized women thus, all the political power, as well as the economic power of women, got diminished, in such, they became localized to domestic activities as they depend on their wage-earning husband for a living (Uzondu, 2015).

Islam and Christianity did also endanger women active involvement in societal development at the early emergence of these foreign religions. As

Nwosu has brilliantly shown, the new religions through their books (Bible and Quran) subtly recognize the superiority of men over women in the society. The religions emphasize the necessity for women to maintain total submission and obedience to the authority of men. While the Quran specifically directs that men are appointed guardians over women,

Qur'an 4:34:

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their mean.”

The Bible as well states that women should remain silent and be in submission to their husband. 1 Timothy 2:12:

“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in **silence.**”

In bid to change this condition and to save the society from foreign rules and domination, some women in the past challenged the colonial rules by contributing to nationalism. Women like Margret Ekpo, Carlotte Olajumoke Obasa and Constance Agatha to mention both a few became political activist, economist and administrator (Falola, 2018). In spite of these, women continue to struggle to achieve a considerable success, in this wise, they became educated thus, were liberated. As Mbah rightly asserts, more women are educated than men in Igboland today due to the fact that the men place more preference to business and trading activities than going to school. Increasingly, according to Afolabi (2016), in many primary and secondary schools today, the number of female pupils outnumbered the males and many families seem to have realized the proverb that says if you train a woman, you train a nation, if you train a man, in some case; you are just training an individual. It is in this light the importance of women in our society is continually being reasserted.

Today, we have religious apologists and advocates whose aim have been correcting these ills through writings and giving hermeneutics interpretation of the Quran and the Bible. Some of who are J.K. Ayantayo, Familusi, O.O., Late Mrs. Akintunde, and Oladosu Habibath to mention but a few.

Ayantayo (2005), viewed leadership as role responsibility, which has to do with putting in place certain moral qualities such as a sense of purpose and direction, enthusiasms, friendliness, technical mastery, and leadership skills as against gender status. He further explained that leadership has nothing to do with gender factor but ability to influence others- followers. Oladosu Habibath (2011) also affirmed this point from an Islamic point of view. In her view, Islam emphasizes that leadership is conferred based on qualification and consensus of the people and not assumed by advantage of one over another. These rights are perceived as equal and not restricted to one gender. Quran

injunctions stipulate equality in devotion, in moral, civil, and communal responsibilities hence, these propositions have engendered change in the role of women and their involvement in national development.

In relatively recent time, this immense influence brought about by religious education and enlightenment has significantly changed the traditional role of women in Nigeria, thus social barriers of tradition and culture are gradually giving way to new ideas, new values, and practices among women. Today, we have an array of women who are advancing, doing well and breaking new grounds in almost every field of human endeavour, even those occupations and professions that were once considered exclusively for men are now been practiced by women too. As a result, Nigeria can today boast of women doctors, pharmacists, evangelist, general overseer, engineers, politicians, lawyers, bankers, vice-chancellors, military officers, pilots, wrestlers, and even commercial car drivers, among others.

Women contribution to National Development

Development is said to be evident in a nation when inequality, unemployment, and poverty become thing of the past. Similarly, one can say a nation is developed when there is an increase in the quality of life of the people, which is visible in per capital income, qualitative education, and accessibility to good health care facilities as well as high level of productivity and low rate of population (Familusi, 2017). However, it is obvious that Nigeria is yet to climb the ladder of development not to talk about its sustainability; has evidence is clear of gender inequality, unemployment and even poverty. Nevertheless, the situation with female participation in development is getting better and better each day, as they are continuously enthusiastic in participating in leadership roles. There are notable agents of change who are women in Nigeria and have contributed to the development of the nation through their active involvement in different sectors in the society such as Agriculture, education, politics, health economy and other institutions in the society (Nwosu, 2012).

At this point, it is to be expressed that these women are affiliated to one religion or the other. This implies, that, they have been influenced positively by the ethical principles of their religions, and they have imbibed the principle of responsibility, accountability, faithfulness and integrity. These principles thus facilitate their active participation in contributing immensely to development. For the purpose of this section, contributions of a few of them to national development in Nigeria are succinctly discussed.

Historical evidences are available to prove that the Nigerian women have been involved in Politics since before 1960 and this has contributed in no small measure in defining the political system of the nation. In the work of Oludayo (2015), Funmilayo Kuti, Margret Ekpo, Late Hajia Gambo Sawaba, Chief Mrs. Ngozi Iwuala have crucially contributed to political roles in Nigeria.

Corroborating this view, Oludayo (2015) and Gonyok (2014) affirmed the role of Maryam Babangida in institutionalizing the office of the first lady in 1987 during Babangida regime. Also, Dame Virge Etiaba played a significant role in the history of Nigerian women as she effectively influenced Nigerian politics thus, she is recognized as the first woman governor in Nigeria who turned Anambra state into peaceful state during her (100) days in office as governor of Anambra state.

Presently, we have the like of Honorable Funmi Tejuosho. She has been consistent in Lagos state politics. As reported by (Ukwu, 2017) Funmi Tejuosho is currently serving her fourth term in the Lagos state House of Assembly representing Mushin Constituency 1. She is also the chairperson of the Lagos state House of Assembly committee on finance. She has been a voice for the female folks in Nigeria's commercial capital. She is known for showing exemplary leadership quality and diligence while carrying out her parliamentary duties. Also, the role of Kemi Adeosun, minister of finance was significant during her tenure in office; she acted in her capacity to set an unforgettable impact in that ministry and our country at large. Abike Kafayat Oluwatoyin Dabiri-Erewa is also the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora. She was formerly a journalist before she became a politician. According to research, she was the chairperson of the House of Representatives Committee on Media and Publicity and the chairperson of the House Committee on Diaspora Affairs in 2007-2015 (Falae, 2018). Another prominent woman in the history of Nigerian politics is Senator Florence Ita-giwa, known as mama Bakassi. She began her career in the late 80s as the chairperson for Delta state from NRC. Over the years, she has built her influence and even got to be a presidential adviser. She was a member of the Senate from 1999 until 2003, representing her home state of Cross River. While working at that post, she showed keen interest in the issues of the Niger Delta. These included drug problems, women empowerment, foreign affairs, and the environment. Even at the age of 71, she still actively represented her people (Falae, 2018).

Obiageli Ezekwesili is also known for her outstanding work as the head of the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit. Madam "Due Process" has she is fondly called exemplified her meticulous strength of discharging her political duty. She worked as the Minister of Education before she ventured into business opportunities. Through her passion for development, she was one of the people who started the campaign "Bring Back Our Girls" to return the girls abducted by Boko Haram (Falae, 2018).

Women in health care are also immensely contributing to the nation's development through their resilient spirit and motivation. As Oludayo (2015) disclosed in his writing, the past immediate government recorded most of its success in most area that was spearheaded by a woman. For instance, Dr. Dora Akunyili, a strong and incorruptible NAFDAC Chairman took it upon herself to stem drug abuse. In the same vein, Dr. Ola Orekunrin, a medical

doctor, helicopter pilot and the healthcare entrepreneur founder of Flying Doctors Nigeria, West Africa's first Air Ambulance Service dedicated herself to bringing healthcare service to the remote parts of Western Africa, through her air ambulance service. According to Glamsquad report, Dr. Ola's passion is finding an effective way of facilitating people who are critically ill, getting them to see the right doctor at the right facility within the right time frame for that particular illness. Thus, this motivates her in providing air ambulance service in West Africa to provide urgent helicopter, airplane ambulance and evacuation services for critically injured people. This is an immense contribution to national development in the country since the business was launched, many lives have been saved and victim in critical condition have been accessing quality health care services (Dr. Ola Orekunrin, Africa's high-flying doctor, 2018).

We cannot but talk about the role of Mrs. Folorunsho Alakija. She is an entrepreneur, investor, and business tycoon. She is also involved in the fashion, oil and printing industries. She has expanded the frontiers of success by constantly challenging herself and beating her own record. Alakija has pushed herself to the point of becoming one of Africa's richest women, hence listed as the second most powerful woman in Africa after Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and the 87th most powerful woman in the world by Forbes (Afolabi, 2016). She was appointed as the first female Chancellor in Nigeria at the Osun State University, Osogbo. She is a blessing to thousands of less privileged women as she stands as inspiration to countless of women in the world and through her passion and ambition motivating them.

In agriculture, there are two millennial women who have raised the bar of agriculture in Nigeria and in Africa as a whole. Aderonke Aderinoye, the founder of Agrichub Nigeria has been representing women race efficiently through her ambitious project to change the farming system for farmers in Nigeria and indeed Africa. Ada Osakwe also founded Agroley Ventures in May 2014 (BusinessDay, 2017). These two are immensely doing well in this sector.

In education, Late Dr. Mrs. Olubanke Akintunde, was a leading figure in women studies, in the journal dedicated to her by the department of Religious studies, University of Ibadan, her profile reveals her persistent and zealous passion as a woman and as a role model. Late Dr. Mrs. Olubanke Akintunde was the first female head of Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan. She served in various capacities in the University of Ibadan. She was Anglophone coordinator; she was an African women theologian. She held her position admirably until her sudden death in 2011 (Ayantayo, 2012).

More comprehensively, in the work of Obiozo as referenced by Oludayo 2014, Prof. Mrs. Bola Awe's position in the area of education cannot be forgotten, she did tremendously well as a lecturer. She was considered one of the youngest academics in Africa when she was appointed as a lecturer at the

University of Ibadan, Nigeria. As a lecturer she contributed positively through her intellectual research into personal beliefs and national advocacy. Professor Awe has been a consultant to various organizations across Africa and her contributions have attracted recognitions in form of honours and election to high office.

Research has also revealed that Prof. Alele-Williams was an erudite scholar of Mathematics and the first Nigerian woman to be awarded a doctorate degree in Mathematics. Also, she was the first woman to be appointed Professor of Mathematics and the first female to become the Vice-Chancellor of a Nigerian university. She contributed to academic advancement in Africa by working with the African Mathematics Program in Newton, Massachusetts, under the leadership of MIT's Professor Ted Martins (the New Nigerian Foundation, 2015).

Application of Theory

This paper adopts Emile Durkheim functionalism theory of religion. This theory analyses the social functions of religion in the society. Durkheim viewed religion in a positive way, thus, according to him, religion maintains harmony and social cohesion. It is also a positive apparatus in society, which promotes social solidarity and allows society to run smoothly. Therefore, functionalism theory is interested in the social and psychological functions that religion performs for the individual and society.

This theory is apposite to this work because the theory is concerned about collective conscience. This collective principle recognizes the role of women beyond domestic chores, thus through social change and enlightenment, the horizon of modern society became widen on beliefs, norms and values that make social life possible. Without these, society would disintegrate and development would be a mirage. Hence, regular share of collective conscience promotes development and social integration in the society. Women participation in the society is a way of carrying out their civic responsibility, which religions encourage vehemently. Religion, thus, is a source of intellectual and cognitive capacities; it is reason and conceptual thinking needed for understanding the world and contributing positively to it.

Matters Arising

From this study, religion have impacted the role of women both negatively and positively in participating in national development. In spite of the remarkable achievements of Nigerian women, it is not an exaggeration to say that their involvement in social integration has militated against their role as a member of the family. The family being the smallest unit of the society is significant in societal development, thus, the failure of the parent in general and the mother in particular in discharge of conjugal responsibility has effect on development. Igba & Usulor (2016) revealed in their work the traditional role of parents,

which cut across modelling, and socialization of children. This duty today has been abandoned to caregiver, school teachers, and housemaids. In this wise, mother-child intimacy is eroded. Many children because of the busy schedule of their mother became vulnerable to moral decadence and juvenile delinquencies. This is evident in youth social vices such as examination malpractices, cultism, violence, cyber-crimes, sexual immoralities to mention but a few. The failure of the mother in the home is largely responsible for youth's engagement in unethical activities. According to Omoregbe as quoted by Familusi (2014) morality has become the thing of the past among youths, diligence and hard work has been deleted with it. This statement is true of Nigerian youths as they are deficient of ethical principles they ought to have been exposed to from tot. This situation also affirms the statement of "train up a child in the way he should go and when he grows, he will not depart from it. It also confirms the old saying of charity begins at home; thus, the level of moral delinquencies in the society confirms that no nation can grow above its youths.

Corroborating the point above, Awoniyi (2003) as supported by Adebisi, (2018), the impression upheld by the majority of Nigerian is that the government is indifferent to the plight of the youths as there are no provisions made for the youth. However, it is important to stress the fact that socialization and moral upbringing of the individual begins at home, the Holy Bible says "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" Proverb 22:6. So, there is no denying the fact that the home provides the most decisive mold for individual's personality and social skills, the consequences which persist throughout life. On the contrary, the changing roles in the family particularly that of the mother reflects this ill. Most women, due to their passion for their career, expose their children to external influences from caregiver, this, in turn, erodes the mother from performing her role as a teacher, caregiver, confidant and other social functions to her children.

The adverse effects of all these attitudes indirectly fall on the youths. Statistical records show that penal institutions such as police stations, court of law, remand homes, and prisons consist primarily of youths who have engaged in criminal activities. The youths engage in these wicked dealing as drug addiction, oil bunkering, hired assassins, forgery, arson, secret cult, ethno-religious fanaticism, "419" syndrome among others. All these activities are inimical and detrimental to the development of the society (Adebisi, 2018).

Corroborating the point above, the rate at which the number of single mother increases in Nigeria today is alarming. Following Falola's view on marriage, women are expected to be married in the majority of African community, recently, the inability of many married women who are also professionals to manage their job and sustain their marriage, led to opting out of marriage through divorce. As such, affect emotional and psychological development of the children (Fagan & Churchill, 2012). From the liberal point

of view, divorce can save people from a bad marriage Kunhiyop S.W. (2008), but research has shown that it can also debilitate a society because it threatens social stability by dissolving families and weakening their belief system, this is because, it surges poverty level and affect quality education (Vrouvas, 2015).

Divorce has serious adverse effects on the parents also (Arugu, L.O.). In this case, they suffer from the injury done by divorce; such as stigma; it is usually difficult for most husband and wife to cope from the emotional and psychological effects of divorce such as shame, fear, and hatred. Therefore, it becomes difficult for them to live a secured and meaningful life. Sometimes divorced parents go to the extreme and seek an unfulfilling life through drunkenness. If the situation should continue unabated without flexibility, then it connotes that the present and the future prospects of the society would be precarious because the home which is supposed to be a template for an ideal society has failed in their role, the youths who are supposed to be a dominant force for national development have otherwise turned to be social deviants.

The Need for Flexibility and Balance

From the foregoing, in a society where Juvenile delinquencies, single parenthood, divorce, and decline in morality exist, it is impossible to talk of development. Therefore, for the whole array of change to be more visible, there should be balance and flexibility as women carry out their duty at home and to the society. Flexibility and balance in this light connote the quality of being supple (Vrouvas, M., 2015). It also means blending one's commitments to both one's job and family. In this way, flexibility will make it easier for women in leadership roles to create and live the lives that they want- a fulfilled life.

Research has shown that more women than ever before are trying to "have it all," by involving in leadership and at the same time effectively performing their conjugal duty. In the same vein, many women forgo their personal life at the expense of their job thereby facing their career while neglecting their responsibility at home. Thus, many of these same women often feel exhausted, as well as guilty. They struggle to balance the time that they spend on fulfilling the demands of their work and their personal lives. These internal doubts and conflicts can make it especially challenging for women in leadership to be able to increase their personal performance, and the peak performance of those they lead (Murray, 2017).

Flexibility and balance is a possibility for women in leadership. This is because the world itself is dynamic, and there is a continuous advancement in technology. Through this, women can apply flexibility and balance in prioritizing their program and duties. In order for women to achieve a balance, therefore, Murray advised that there should be "re-structuring. This connotes separating work hours from personal time. When women adopt the concept of flexibility and balance, there would be even division of time between home and office and priorities will align with passion and career. One unique way

through which this is possible is by embracing the dynamic change consistently occurring in the society which is technological advancement. Women in leadership should take advantage of this and other mobile platforms to make it possible to work from nearly any location.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From what has been discussed in this paper, religion has no doubt empowered women in participating in the society and religion shall continue to be significant in scintillating women to participate effectively in the society. However, women need to strike a balance between their role at home and how they attend to civic duties. It is apposite because a trained home breeds a developed nation. The home being the smallest unit in the society can be a prototype of the society if women will maintain flexibility and balance between their role at home and in the work place. In today's world, women's role in the home is fading away gradually as they delegate their duties to helpers and nannies. This negligence has exposed majority of children to unethical action and behaviours which in turn breed juvenile delinquencies in the society. If women continue to abandon their home to attend to other duties in the society, then development will be eroded.

What can be done in view of this reality is for women to restructure their role in the home and at workplace without either lagging behind.

On this note, it is recommended that women should maintain balance and flexibility as they discharge their duties, knowing that inability to maintain this will erode development.

Women should embrace the ethical teachings of their religions vehemently so that their impact could be felt in the society. As Omooregbe (1998) said, when ethics is removed from politics, then we will have thugs and thieves as politicians. In this light, when ethics is removed from women's daily activities as leaders, pervasion is inevitable.

Religious leaders should teach nothing but the truth in their religion. They should also enhance their knowledge on exegetical and hermeneutic study of their religion so that they can transfer the right teaching to their followers.

Organizations and institutions also should be flexible in their rules and regulations, knowing that women's roles are not limited to the four corners of the institution alone, but also to their family.

Organization and institutions should inculcate the use of technologies that would make it possible for workers to be able to work at any location without physically being present at the office all the time. This will enhance efficiency.

Finally, the government should make more provisions for women to participate in societal duties. This is possible when they advocate equality among all.

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