



**AN ANALYSIS OF THE
SOCIO-ECONOMIC,
SOCIO-CULTURAL,
RELIGIOUS,
ENVIRONMENTAL,
TECHNOLOGICAL,
LANGUAGE AND
EDUCATIONAL FACTORS
ON WOMEN'S RIGHT IN
NIGERIA: THE CASE OF
NORTHERN NIGERIA**

NIGERIAN GROUP



Diagnosis of Nigeria: the case of Northern Nigeria

TÍTULO: An analysis of the socio-economic, socio-cultural, religious, environmental, technological, language and educational factors on women's right in Nigeria: the case of Northern Nigeria

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Chapter One

Demographic Analysis of Nigeria: Politics, Economy, Religion, Educational Status

Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of 167 million people (NPC, 2011) of which women constitute about 51%. Although we are in the twenty-first century, yet tradition, culture, religion and other factors have continued to widen gender gap; women are kept in a subordinate position to men. The larger society and the male subculture still see women and their aspirations as subordinate, resulting in a situation in which the marginalization, trivialization and stereotyping of women are glaring aspects of Nigerian life (Okunna, 2002). The different prominent factors – culture, religious, economic, education, judicial, language all declare the inferiority of females to male. Ngwakwe (2002) explained that Nigeria women are discriminated against in almost every sphere of life: during the employment, education, career, or business process. This results in the violation of women's economic, social, and cultural (ESC) rights. These deprive them of enjoying their human rights as full citizens of the country. However, certain cultural, religion and judicial biases remain major constraints restraining women from enjoying their rights.

History of Northern Nigeria: Establishment of the Hausa States

Hausa states or Hausa kingdoms were a collection of independent city states situated in what later became northern Nigeria. Although the people have been Muslim for many centuries, traditional beliefs and paganism were often mixed with the practice of Islam. In the early 1808, Usman dan Fodio, the head of the Sokoto caliphate warned the Hausa rulers that if they did not separate religion from paganism, a war would be waged against them. By failure to cleanse Islam from the pagan practices, the Hausa state was finally conquered by Usman dan

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Fodio and incorporated into the Sokoto caliphate. The leadership of Sokoto has helped unite the people into a centralized state. The second and the most obvious leadership of Sokoto was to unite people so people become responsible to each other and to avoid ethnic violence.

Religion and Politics in Northern Nigeria

There is always a close relationship between religion and politics in most parts of the world because they both involve systems of value, beliefs and systems of action which are justified in terms of these values and beliefs. In this case, religion lays down fundamental principles of political action and legal relationships between rulers and subjects. Three historical and socio-economic developments have combined to shape the contemporary dynamics of religion and politics in northern Nigeria. First is the pre-colonial and colonial history of northern Nigeria. The northern Nigeria like the larger Nigeria state and society is a colonial creation, while the relationship between the diverse communities of northern Nigeria may predate colonialism, its contemporary definition and dynamics, although still a subject of contention, is a colonial creation.

Unlike most parts of Nigeria, the north has a recent history of theocracy: the Sokoto caliphate and the Kanem Borno were all strong Islamic states before they fell to British colonial power. Even under colonialism, these parts of the north remained under strong influence of Islam. Islam was a strong force which gave definition and stability to northern social system. Since wealth was largely a function of government office, politics centered around competition for positions and political activities were geared to gaining access to state power and the allocation of revenue and patronage connected with it. It is in this context of competition that religion often reinforced by ethnicity became potent weapons of political competition to access the state and resources. The state therefore became central to political and economic activities. Control of state was therefore important for social consolidation of class dominance. The post colonial northern Nigeria was therefore influenced to a large extent by religious

identity. Under both military and civil rule, religion has continued to gain prominence in political discourse and competition.

Educational Development in Northern Nigeria

In northern Nigeria, there are three main educational traditions; the indigenous, Islamic and western. The indigenous education represents the type of education offered in the pre-literate era within the community by community members who possessed specialized skills or abilities in various fields of human endeavour. In most communities, prior to the introduction of formal education, boys were brought up to take to whatever occupation their father's engaged in, in some other cases, the boys were sent to other masters as apprentices to learn various vocations which varied according to the geographical areas in Nigeria. Girls were often expected to stay back home to learn domestic and other chores as cooking, sweeping, weeding the farmlands, hair weaving, decorations of the body, dye production and the like from their mother's. As with the case of the boys, girls did exactly what their mother's trained them to do. Generally therefore, in spite of geo-political variations, traditional or indigenous education in most parts of Nigeria trained individuals to fit usefully into their society by learning and practicing economic skills for self-sustenance, adapting to their role expectations and contributing to the development of their society. For the Islamic educational tradition, Abdullahi Bayero (Emir of Kano) who on his return from Mecca Saudi Arabia in 1934, introduced new ideas by building a law school for training teachers of Islamic subjects and Arabic as well English and Arithmetic's. The school continued to grow and expand in scope such that before long and with the support of the then Northern Region Ministry of Education it had grown into the popular Bayero College, Kano, which became part of the Ahmadu Bello University and later the present Bayero University, Kano. The university helped to expand the scope of Islamic studies in Nigeria.

The western type education came about from the Wesleyan Christian Missionaries at Badagry in 1842. It has been the most successful in meeting the

overall formal education. The Christian missionaries arrived and began intensive missionary and educational work in Nigeria. Schools were built and the missions struggled for pupils/members such that there was a proliferation of primary schools established by different missions. Primary schools were the first schools built and later secondary schools and eventually tertiary schools were built when the missionaries had already gone and imbibed the requisite skills on Nigerians to continue to follow.

Why Northern Nigeria?

The northern part of Nigeria as we have observed comprises of predominantly Muslims and as such are bound by the laws of the Shari'ah (Qur'an) and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Islam is a complete way of life because it governs both outside and inside the home. It prescribes corporal punishments (Hudud laws) including capital punishments, it prescribes the mode of dress for men and women, it teaches behaviour that is acceptable and that which is not and it deals with the will and testacy laws of deceased people, inheritance laws, marriage, custody, family law etc. Islam therefore is a complete way of life for Muslims and as such the inhabitants of northern Nigeria adhere strictly to it. As a result of this way of life, religion becomes a core/backbone to the guidance and continuation of those that come from the north of Nigeria and as such many atrocities, inconsistencies and discriminations are done under the guise of Islam. One of such atrocities is discrimination against women under the guise of Islam. For instance female children are subjected to Female Genital Mutilation and this is a very cruel practice that kills women and girls daily in sub-Saharan Africa of which the northern part of Nigeria is a part of. Women are disinherited from their husbands and fathers, and are told that Islam does not acknowledge them (but this is a false notion because there are specific parts of the Qur'an that have specifically allotted portions of their husbands or fathers estate to them, but in practice in the northern part of Nigeria, women are cheated out of their rights as ordained by God).

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In the northern part of Nigeria, girls are forced into marriage at really young ages from 9 years and above, they are given to old men without their consent, this is prohibited by Islam but is practiced in the north of Nigeria by the patriarchs and the patriarchal structure set in place which is a shame and women and girls suffer for their unfairness. The judicial structure is not just when deciding on cases that concern women, for instance the cases brought before the court on matters of adultery or fornication are always one sided, women are given the harsher sentences, while men are given no punishment at all, this is a clear contravention of the law and is a very unfortunate situation that affects the life and liberty of women in the north of Nigeria because the acts of adultery and fornication are not acts that women can perform on themselves, they are acts that mandatorily need the two sexes to perform on each other. Child custody is another area where women are discriminated against; they nearly never have custody of their children in situations of divorce and separation even when/where they are the more responsible parent, they are hardly ever given custody of their children. The Qur'an makes provision of custody issues and the procedure, but this in practice in the northern part of Nigeria does not follow through with the provisions set out and women end up living without their children.

Purdah as practiced in the northern part of Nigeria is not the correct practice and really restrains women from going out, socializing, working and 'having a life'. They live a sad life as prisoners and as such suffer from mental depression and a very withdrawn way of life; some are even unfortunate enough to not be permitted to see their relatives and friends and are beaten continuously by their husbands. It is against this back drop and many other reasons that we have chosen to narrow down our analyses and scheme to the women of northern Nigeria.

Economic Demographics of Northern Nigeria

- Three important demographic features - population growth, rural-rural migration and urbanization.
 - High birth rates greatly influenced by cultural and social factors and traditional patterns of thought and behavior.
 - A very youthful population structure, more than 45 percent of the population is under the age of 15.
 - The prospect of continuing high population growth rates will seriously hinder socioeconomic development prospects and threaten food security.
- Economic growth in rural northern Nigeria revolves around small scale agriculture.
- Its slow development and hence, food production caused by both climatic and non-climatic factors: climatic variation, poor soil quality, poor economic, political, and social conditions are responsible.
- Small-scale farmers have almost no access to training and agricultural extension services that would address their problems.
- Little chances of acquiring much-needed credits for purchasing inputs to increase production, such as chemical fertilizer, seed, and agricultural implements.

Religion

Several religions in Nigeria exist, helping to accentuate regional and ethnic distinctions. All religions represented in Nigeria were practiced in every major city in 1990. However, Islam dominated the north and had a number of supporters in the South Western, Yoruba part of the country. Protestantism and local syncretic Christianity are also in evidence in Yoruba areas, while Catholicism dominates the Igbo and closely related areas. Both Protestantism and Catholicism dominated in the Ibibio, Annang, and the Efik kiosa lands. The 1963 census indicated that 47 percent of Nigerians were

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Muslim, 35 percent Christian, and 18 percent members of local indigenous congregations.

Islam

Since the 11th century, gold traders spread the Muslim faith from North Africa to West Africa along the Trans-Saharan trade routes, inextricably linking Islam with the local economy. According to religious historians, many tribal leaders found that adopting Islam expanded their trade network and promoted them as equal partners in business transactions with Arab merchants. As reported by a Library of Congress study, Muslim practice pervades virtually all public institutions in the north. Out of Nigeria's 36 states, 12 states have embraced the [Sharia](#), a legal code based on the Koran and the practices of the Prophet Mohammed. The vast majority of Nigerian Muslims are members of the Sunni sect. Public meetings begin and end with Muslim prayer. Regardless of the individual's religious beliefs, all residents are familiar with both Muslim prayers and the five pillars of Islam. Reputations of religious piety accompanied with completion of the hajj, a pilgrimage to Mecca, often yield heightened prestige. While Nigerian law prohibits religious discrimination, conversion reportedly occurs frequently among people with political and business ambitions. In its 2006 Report on Human Rights Practices in Nigeria, the U.S. State Department noted that private businesses frequently discriminated on the basis of religion.

Christianity

Before and shortly after independence, the majority of Nigeria's Christian population was Roman Catholic, however, in recent years, there has been a wide spread of Pentecostalism. The Christian community includes also Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Evangelists, Pentecostal Christians and Africanized sects such as the Aladura.

Roman Catholics and Methodists dominate in south eastern Igboland, while Protestants and Anglicans maintain strong influence over Yorubaland, in the southwest. Catholic priests accompanying Portuguese traders in the 15th

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century first introduced native Nigerians to the Christian faith, but yielded few long-term converts. Missions in the 19th century attained much more significant rates of conversion, in part from their role in the abolition of slavery. Britain's colonial rule helped formalize the geographic and religious differences between the north and the south. Muslim leaders in the north prohibited Christian proselytizing, while a less central power structure in the south enabled churches to create a system of religious institutions and schools. Promoted by the British colonial government, missionary schools produced an elite class of interpreters and civil servants. Since full independence from British rule in 1960, many Catholic and Protestant congregations began to include native music and dancing in their services. Several independent movements have also cropped up to create a Christian faith that relates to Nigerians culturally.

Indigenous Belief

Although a minority of the population still adheres to indigenous practices, they continue in Nigeria, especially in the southwestern region. Nigeria's native religious beliefs tie genealogical descent to a particular site, legitimizing claims to land, resources and leadership. According to religious scholars, the theology combines ancestor worship with the worship of primordial spirits, or the supernatural entities inhabiting a particular locale. Geographical markers, flora and fauna often embody these entities. Regular adherence to prayer and other forms of ritual worship are thought to protect followers from misfortune, and many believers use charms and talismans to ward off evil. Throughout Nigeria, traditional beliefs have fused with imported religious tradition. It is not uncommon to find Muslims and Christians carrying out ancient religious rites -- such as wearing amulets -- although younger generations deem compliance with old traditions as renunciation of the newer faith.

Sharia Law and Religious Violence

Religious violence has been a primary source of instability for Nigeria over the past decade.

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Since the country's return to civilian-ruled democratic government in 1999, at least 15,000 people have been killed and hundreds of thousands displaced due to numerous religious, ethnic and political clashes. The religious violence can be traced to the adoption of [Sharia](#), or Islamic religious law, in the predominantly Muslim northern states. The Nigerian constitution of 1999 provides a framework for the coexistence of Nigeria's two main religions. The constitution allows each state to make its own laws and says the majority Muslim states may use Sharia code.

The initial introduction of Sharia law sparked riots by Christian groups in northern states who feared they would eventually be prosecuted under Sharia, despite the constitutional assurance that the courts only applied to Muslims. The first large-scale riots occurred in the Kaduna state in May 2000, when over 2,000 people were killed following the state government's application of Sharia. Tension over the implementation of Sharia continues today. But Sharia has not been the only factor for increased violence between the religious groups. Protection and acquisition of political power and resources have also caused problems between the country's Christians and Muslims.

In 2001, more than 2,000 people were slain during riots in the majority Christian city of Jos, which started when religious factions clashed over the appointment of a Muslim government official. The most deadly conflict of the past decade occurred from 2001 to 2004 in the Plateau State, in the center of the country, which endured a series of reciprocal attacks by Muslim and Christian workers and militias over the control of valuable farmland. In the last year of fighting, before the government intervened in 2004, violence in the state displaced 258,000 people and left 1,000 dead, according to the United Nations. Sporadic clashes have ensued, fuelled in part by politics.

**Influence of Cultural, Language, Religious and Judicial Factors on
Women's Rights in Nigeria**

Religion

Nigeria has since the 1980s been experiencing growing religiosity and fundamentalism of alarming proportion. Even though the country is a secular state multi-religious state, the long years of military leadership and economic crisis has resulted into profound transformation of religious identity and its politicization for political, economic and social gains (Abdu, 2005). In Nigeria, religion is used a weapon in defense of patriarchy. It discriminates against women. Christian, Islamic and traditional religion contain laws which give central place to paternalistic interpretation to women's appropriate roles and socio-political arrangement of the society. Religion puts a lot of limitations and biases in the issues of women's rights and the rise in Christian and Muslim fundamentalists has aggravated a myriad of discriminatory practices against women.

Religion has placed women in the position of subservience and this has resulted in many awful consequences for women. For instance, the use of contraception is forbidden by the Catholics setting. This has limited the sexual and reproductive rights of women in such settings. Also, some Islamic sets believe that the movement of women especially married ones should be restricted. This explains the reason why some women are not permitted to take formal employment thereby limiting their freedom and access to financial resources. In Nigeria, religion is a means of enhancing the superiority of men to make them to gain power in controlling and manipulating the society. The patriarchal nature of Nigeria and bias in religion fundamentalism has limited women's access to equality and social justice. The different religions in the country preach women's submission, widening the gap in power relation between men and women in the country. Most religious beliefs emphasize the

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inferiority of the female sex and women are regarded as weaker vessels that should not be permitted to hold leadership position in the religious settings.

In developing indicators for religion and women's rights in Northern Nigeria, a few pointers to these progressive changes can be mentioned as what women's human rights practitioners would like to see. However it remains doubtful if this is the general position of all women. For instance, human rights practitioners will like to see women not segregated and in the same mosque with men during prayer times, women leading prayers, and equality in the legal status of women and men under the religious laws especially in the case of adultery.

Religion and Women's Rights: The Case of Northern Nigeria

The northern part of Nigeria is inhabited largely by the Hausa and Fulani. Islam is the most common religion in the region and it has a great influence on all aspects of life of the citizens. The educational, social, economic and political systems are guided and influence by Islam.

As a result of the prevalence of Islam in the northern region, Sharia is the major system of law in the region. Even at the time of Nigeria's colonial history, the British recognized Sharia court as part of the territory's legal system along with customary courts in the 'Native Courts Proclamation' of 1906 (Courtwrights, 2003) . States like Zamfara in the northern region have adopted the Sharia legal code and eleven (11) other states have adopted some version of Sharia. These states are Kaduna, Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Niger, Kano, Jigawa, Yobe, Gombe, Borno and Bauchi.

Different concepts have been drawn from the status of women under Islam in Nigeria. This issue generates a subject of continuing debate. In some instances, scholars and organizations have praised Islam for the dignified treatment accorded to women in many respects. Several teachings from the Koran emphasized respects and improve status of women. The Koran explained and accorded the women's rights of inheritance and divorce even before such rights

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were accorded to western women. However, the misinterpretation of the Sharia by some Islamic sects in the country has reinforced several discriminatory practices and social injustice against women. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) states that discrimination against women is not allowed. Nigeria has also adopted both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. As such, these declarations have been adopted as part of Nigerian domestic law. Both documents prohibit cruel and unusual punishment, but Sharia provisions permit a sentence of death by stoning, seen openly by the Nigerian government as cruel and unusual. In fact, the section on Fundamental Human Rights states that a citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, circumstances of birth, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by any reason be discriminated against. The sentence of Amina Lawal, who is supposed to be stoned to death for having extramarital relations (zina) brought a lot of contention in the circumstance to Sharia operation in Northern Nigeria (Courtwright, 2003).

As a result of prevalence of Islam in the Northern region, segregation of women and veiling is a common practice in the region. It is good to note however that even though the Koran prescribes some degree of segregation and veiling, there are no provisions in the Koran that requires the veiling of all women or their seclusion from men outside of their families. Also, polygamy is common in the northern region because of the support accorded to it through custom and religion. Okunna (2002) explained that 'in northern Nigeria where Sharia is practiced, this Islamic legal code is taking its toll on women'. She gave the case of Safiya, a Moslem woman who was convicted of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning. According to her, the case is still very fresh in the memories of Nigerians and, indeed, the rest of the world. Women are the major victims of Sharia law. Other prominent examples of attempted religion injustice against women in Northern Nigeria are the cases of Hafsat in Sokoto State and Aminat Lawal in Katsina State who were sentenced to death by stoning because of their alleged commission of adultery. It is worth noting that their male

"accomplices" are taken as innocents (Ndubuisi, 2006). Safiya, Hafsat and Aminat have been let off the hook as a result of the local and international campaign. The genesis of this religious injustice against women may be tied to the legal status of men and women especially in the giving evidence at the religious courts.

Nigerian Judicial Systems: Influence on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights

Although, the influence of the judicial system on women's rights has been extensively explained in the Unit 2 Group Exercise. In summary, factors which impede effective delivery of judicial systems in regards to women's rights in Nigeria include:

1. Inadequate number of courts especially in the rural areas
2. Inadequate number of experienced judicial actors (Judges, prosecutors and lawyers)
3. Biased nature of laid out rules and operations in the judicial system
4. Adherence to customs in judicial rulings with women being disadvantaged
5. Inadequate representation of women in law enforcement e.g. police
6. Lack of financial resources

In the Pursuit of Justice, the UN Women's 2011-2012 Progress of the World's Women Report; different ways in which the justice system can work for women was highlighted. These are:

1. Support Women Legal Organizations
2. Implement Gender Sensitive Law Reforms
3. Support One-Stop Shop to Reduce Attrition in the Justice Chain
4. Put Women on the Front line of Law Enforcement
5. Invest in Women Access to Justice
6. Train Judges and Monitor Decision

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7. Increase Women's Access to Court and Justice Commission during and after Conflict
8. Implement Gender-Responsive Reparation Programme
9. Use Quotas to boost the number of Women's Legislators
10. Put Gender Equality at the heart of the Millennium Development Goals
(UN Women, 2011)

Developing indicators for gender equality and women's human rights in the Northern Nigeria is controversial based on the conservative preference for equity and fairness over equality. This view from various experiences emanate from both conservative and some progressive Moslem. Asides the above, the legal status of women under the religious laws and in Sharia court proceedings reflect gross discrimination against women. Where we have equality and equal legal status for men and women under the law and in Sharia court proceeding, women will be afforded a greater hope for justice. However, with all the limitation against women's rights in the judiciary, women are still able to strategically challenge and overcome biases and gender based injustice. An example was given above on the case of Amina Lawal. Her sentence to death by stoning for alleged adultery was overturned by the Sharia Court of Appeal in 2003 (UNIFEM, 2008) due to women's strategic interventions at the local, national and international levels.

Culture: Influence on Women's Rights in Nigeria

Culture is the way of life way of life. It means the shared ideas, norms, values and beliefs among a group of people. Culture predicts many of the societal beliefs including gender roles and responsibilities. According to (Okunna, 2002) 'culture and tradition continue to exert overbearing influences on Nigerian women and deny them their fundamental human rights'. Nigeria is a high ethnic diversity as the country is occupied with over two hundred and fifty different ethnic groups. However, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are the three main ethnic groups.

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The Hausa occupy most part of the northern region of the country; the Yoruba are predominantly in the southwest while the Igbos are found in the South east region. The cultural practices in a society reveal the values and beliefs respected by members of the society. The different cultural and traditional practices transform into discrimination against women and challenge the realization of their human rights. Nigeria being a patriarchal society reflects a lot of cultural norms and beliefs which are discriminatory and bias against the physical and social well-being of women. Most traditional cultural practices and beliefs in Nigeria are more beneficial to the men. The society as whole plays crucial roles in perpetuating female subjugation and oppression. Several norms and practices act as barriers to women access to social justice. These constitute harmful traditional practices which prevent women from enjoying their rights as their male counterparts.

Gender inequality continues to be linked to various traditional practices of many cultural groups in Nigeria. Many culture promote the belief that women do not have an identity of their own but those derive from men. The different ethnic groups engage in practices which degrade and discriminate women. In Nigeria, the belief that male issues are more important than female is rampant. As a result, a woman needs to give birth to a male child before she can have part in the inheriting her husband's property. Even in issue of education, some families prefer to educate male child at the expense of the female. This is one of the reasons why illiteracy rate is still very high among women especially rural dwellers in Nigeria.

Nwagwu and Ifeanacho (2009) stated that the reason for the preference of the male gender is in the general societal belief that continuity of the family lineage is achieved through the male issues. It is pathetic to know that many women have accepted such misconception and as a result accept different mistreatments as the normal way of life. Even older women raise younger ones with such beliefs therefore extending the period of mistreatment to women

rather than curbing it. Nigeria being a country with cultural diversity exhibits different forms of violence against women through the different norms and beliefs which operate among different society in the country. In regards to inheritance rights, women are not permitted to inherit their father or husband's properties. In some culture, especially among the Ikwerre of Rivers State, a woman must remain unmarried if she wants to inherit her father's property (Bamgbose, 2002). The prevalence of patriarchy in all spheres in Nigerian society promotes gender-bias practices like female genital mutilation, child marriage, widow inheritance, rape, and polygamy.

To aid our analysis, it will be ideal for women to have the following benchmarks as a pointer to the development of progressive culture, viz. reduction in child marriage, polygamy and female genital mutilation.

Culture: Influence on Women's Rights in the Northern Nigeria

Islamic religion is the most common religion in the Northern Nigeria, most cultural practices and beliefs are in accordance with laws and practices of the Islamic beliefs. Among the cultural practices which mainly exist among the Hausas due to their religious beliefs, are the practices of putting women in purdah and the arrangement of early marriages for the females. Purdah is a social entails the exclusion of married women from public view. This practice results in the denial of women in participating in various aspects of social life such as employment, politics, and public life (Nwagwu and Ifeanacho, 2009).

Islam justified female genital mutilation (FGM), therefore the practice is still common in the Northern region especially in the rural areas of the region. This practice is misconceived to reduce promiscuity in the girl child. In this region, the patriarchal nature of culture is greatly portrayed even during some special events like traditional marriage ceremonies where the mother of the bride and the bride are almost excluded from the ceremony. Child marriage is a common

practice among all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, this is more rampant in the Northern region of the country especially among the Hausa culture. The

father of the child or his family are responsible for choosing the prospective husband. Issues like religious, social and monetary factors are considered in the selection. The child brides are usually given to men who are quite older than them. Early marriage was reported as a practice that emanated from some Moslem mallams who spread the false doctrine that a girl must not have three menstruations (Haila) at home before getting married. This is not in the holy book of the Moslems. Adamu observed that such ideological construction was put in place to control women's sexuality because women's sexuality was and is still guided by men with emphasis on virginity.

Consanguineous marriage is also very common in the Hausa culture. This is the marriage between two close relatives. In such case, the bride and the groom may be cousins and in some instances their consent is not considered before such marriage are conducted. The Hausa marriage under customary law is also ethnocentric (Bamgbose, 2002). Nobody from another ethnic group was allowed to marry a Hausa girl. This form of marriage is encouraged to prevent what is called 'blood mixture'. However, globalization through urbanization and migration has reduced such practice and inter-ethnic marriages are now taking place in the Northern region.

The Hausa customary law permits women to own property. A woman is allowed to inherit from either of her parents though this is not usually practiced. The female is entitled to half of the share of the male sons. If the only surviving child is a female, her uncle occupies the land as of right, but the female child is entitled to the proceeds of the farmland. However, with the increasing pressure on land, females tend to receive movable and more liquid assets as inheritance while land remains close in the hands of men. The Islamic Law supports a fixed share of inheritance which is gender based. The Hausa customary law supports

the right of a woman to inherit from her husband's estate even where she is childless. In this custom, the woman is ensured support for herself and her children and it enhances patrilineal inheritance of the cattle. Polygamy is another consequence of cultural bias against women. It is practiced among all cultures in Nigeria. It is more common in the Northern Nigeria because it is supported by the prevailing custom and the Islamic religion. Polygamy is used to reflect the social and economic status of a man as a man who marries only one wife is believed not be financially capable or of a lesser status.

However, with the growth of society and increased sophistication, the relevance of bare customs as sustaining norms has gradually declined and easily yields to any law on the same subject. For example, old customs have been given the force of law for the sake of commercial convenience. Such accepted customs are to be respected as laws only because they are pronounced to be so by the courts.

Language and Women's Rights in Nigeria

Language affects women's rights in two major ways. First, is the incompetence of many Nigeria women to communicate effectively in 'English' which is the official language used in most formal transaction in the country. The reason for this is that illiteracy is still relatively high among many Nigerian women especially women residing in the rural areas. Okunna (2002) explains that 'the very high illiteracy rates among rural women in the developing countries is attributable to the very heavy arduous task which women perform to ensure family subsistence – a situation which places poor rural women in inescapable domestic servitude and allows them little or no time to acquire formal education'. This results in the inability of these women to communicate effectively in the official language of communication. Consequently, it limits their ability participate in decision-making especially on issues that affect them and their society. Also, this incompetence in communication is one of the reasons why many women are voiceless in issues pertaining to sustainable development

in their society. This high level of illiteracy among women resulting in lack of in-depth understanding of English is also limiting women's participation in important leadership and decision-making positions in the country. Women participation in the political, legal, judicial and economic sector is really limited because not many women are competent enough to hold leadership posts in such sectors.

Second, language influence women's rights in Nigeria because of the lack of gender consideration in the language used in constructing the statement in nation's constitution and policies. The Nigerian constitution is written in the masculine gender and discriminatory language is used throughout. The language of the Constitution reinforces preference for the male sex (Women's Aid Collective, 2008).

Language: Influence on Women's Rights in Northern Nigeria

Language has little influence on the exercise of women's rights in the Northern Nigeria. This is because Hausa language is the prominent language of communication among most Northerners. In-depth understanding of the language is helping many women to express themselves in the way that they can be understood. Even though illiteracy rate is high among the women in the region, the use of Hausa language as the major mean of communication is helping them in communicating their view on livelihood and development issues especially in the rural areas. However, the use of gender insensitive language in the Nigerian constitution and policies is also having effect on sustainable livelihood of women in the region. In summary we have looked broadly at the Nigerian context as factors relating to culture, religious, language and judicial issues affects women's human rights. A closer look at the Northern Nigerian setting reveals a lot of patriarchal institutions and structures and its abysmal effect on women's rights. In all patriarchy seems to be the bane of women's existence and so far progressive deconstruction of this monopoly will enhance women's rights and empowerment.

Chapter Three

Influence of Environmental and Technological Factors on Women's Rights in Nigeria

Influence of Environmental Factors on Women's Rights in Nigeria

Women in Nigeria have a right to a healthy environment and other fundamental rights linked to or dependent a healthy environment. These rights are contained in the Maputo Protocol to which the Nigerian government has signified its commitment. Also the Nigerian constitution provides for the rights to a healthy environment. There are other rights that feed into the rights to environment, viz. right to the highest attainable standard of health, right to safe and healthy environment, and the right to life. Women in the Northern Nigeria are faced with a difficult situation due to the topography and nature of their environment

By virtue of the protocol, Nigerian women are guaranteed the right to a healthy and sustainable environment. The Protocol to the Africa Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa is a unique piece of legislation because it takes into consideration the provisions of other international instruments on human rights that touch on women's rights. It also takes into consideration the peculiar circumstances of women in Africa and their vital role in development. The protocol certainly could have been the key to a new dawn for Nigerian women, but the sad thing is that the reality seems a far cry away. Every woman in Nigeria has a right to a healthy environment that is favourable to their development.

Human rights relating to the environment are set out in basic human rights treaties and include:

- The human right to a safe and healthy environment.
- The human right to the highest attainable standard of health.
- The human right to ecologically sustainable development.
- The human right to an adequate standard of living, including access to safe food and water.

- The human right to freedom from any type of discrimination.
- The human right to safe working conditions, including adequate safeguards for pregnant and lactating women.
- The human right to education and information, including information relating to links between health and the environment.
- The human right to full and equal participation in environmental decision-making and development planning, and in shaping decisions and policies affecting one's community, at the local, national and international levels.

Influence of Environmental Factors on Women's Rights in Northern Nigeria

In reality, the environment in North-North region of Nigeria has not been favourable to the development of women due to the problems of desertification and drought and all these are gradually heightened by the impact of climate change.

In the North, men and women play different roles in the family. Women are engaged in the household subsistence activities and highly depend on the environment for their tasks; they are expected to cater for the welfare of their children in polygamous marriages. Polygamy pervades the region, compelling men to distribute their income between the female-headed units within the polygamous unions, concubines and other extended family members like aged parents, brothers and sisters. The traditional division of labour gives the rural women in the North responsibility for providing and managing natural energy sources required for the maintenance of the family household, desert encroachment and drought in the northern region places a special extra burden on her. Poor supply of food due to environmental factors increases the women

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hours she will devote to fetching clean drinkable water, gathering forest and water products, which are crucial for food supplement, and firewood for domestic use.

In Nigeria, the traditional practice which alienates women from owning economic resource base only allows them access to land through their spouse, sons, brothers/ or male relations but the Northern region is an exception because their religion permits women to own land through inheritance. When the environment is degraded, as is the current situation in the North- North region, women are most affected because of their culturally and socially defined roles and responsibilities, because their adaptive capacity is low due to poverty and because their livelihoods are tied to the environment. In sum, any damage to the environment is damage to women as it affects their potential and their productivity.

When we look at women's right to environment especially as it relates to women in the North region, the present environmental conditions and the carefree attitude towards climate change and the impact in the Northern zone is tantamount to a breach of the rights stated above. All these rights are contained in different human rights instruments globally such as the Maputo protocol, the Beijing Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (No. 169).

In all these, the government has a commitment to uphold these laws even though it fails to domesticate, like the case of Nigeria. Where these laws are in place, women will be granted the adequate protection needed from the political will of the government to protect the environment and the right to health.

Influence of Technological Factors on Women's Rights in Nigeria

Information and communication technology, which have become a driving force for development process represent yet another dimension in which a knowledge gap has emerge between women and men: a gender- based digital divide. Studies has found out that countless women in the developing world are further removed from the information age because of their lower levels of education and deeply ingrained negative attitudes towards other forms of achievement. Women in the region especially in the rural areas have no access to information technology, understanding of its significance and the ability to use it for social and economic gains, thus further marginalize them from the mainstream of their communities and the world at large. From a strategic point of view, lack of education and mass illiteracy is the bane of women's poor or nonexistent access to information technology and for women to gain the benefits of information technology, education is a key.

Educational attainment is without doubt the most fundamental prerequisite for empowering women in all spheres of society, for without education of comparable quality and content to that given to boys and men, and relevant to existing knowledge and real needs, women are unable to access well paid jobs, formal sector jobs, advance within them, participate in, and be represented in government and gain political influence. Education in particular, leads to higher growth and thus lower poverty as society makes better use of its human resources including information technology. This is manifested through the information they derive and empowers them with options to reduce under nutrition and child mortality (as better educated mothers can ensure better care for their children), reduced fertility which lowers the demographic burden of a society, it promotes education for the next generation (as educated mothers ensure better education for their children), and it increases the bargaining power of women within families which ensures greater access to resources for them (and also their children),thus becoming one important tool for empowerment.

Having established the importance of educational attainment and the nexus to access to information technology, it is safe to state that women cannot gain from the benefits of technology where they are not educated. From an analytical perspective, in Nigeria, there is no domestic law backing the right to technology and as a result we can only lay claims to the government's obligations in various international human rights instruments as mentioned above. However, some influence of technological factors on women's human rights in Nigeria for the purpose of this paper will be restricted to information technology and the absence of such will lead to a gap of ignorance on the part of women.

Influence of Technological Factors on Women's Rights in Northern Nigeria

Within the context of this paper, the paucity of information on the technological factors influencing women's rights in the Northern Nigeria seems a challenge to this paper. Our research is internet based due to the dearth of authors on this issue.

In conclusion, the environmental factors of the Northern Nigeria have women human rights implication but it seems unfortunate the continuous desert encroachment. Women who are custodians of the environment are hardly empowered to make a change. With respect to technological factors, presently we hardly have adequate information on technological factors and these gives room for further research.

Chapter Four

Influence of Social Economic, Health, Reproductive and Sexual Rights and Educational Factors on Women's Right in Nigeria

Introduction

Formulation and implementation of the projects had provided a kind of bridge to the barrier of women's right in Nigeria, although it is not just enough but increasing the impact of understanding and exercising women right and it is important to nation development. This will enhance the quality of life, the populations, and facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal. In the past, women were faced with a lot of challenges, these includes their multiple natural roles, women seen as second fiddle citizen, lack of free access to timely information, reduced access to education and lack understanding of women right. All these problems among others, exclude rural women from benefiting from the opportunities targeted at improving their production activities. Obviously women in Nigeria are different social background. Some cultural practices and attitude put women in disadvantaged positions. The cultural practices which majorly exist in the northern part among, maybe due to their religious beliefs and thus: post a threats in exercising women's right

Progressive analysis on the socio-economic rights demands identifying some pointers such as giving value to their informal activities, equality in the home, equal gender relations in the society, access to health, options to reproductive choices and sexual orientation.

Influence of Socio-economic Factor: Case of Northern Nigeria

Nigerian women are popular for their contribution to socioeconomic development, while many of them are noted for their much involvement in trading and farming. They provide necessary support and ensure the necessary provision is made available for their immediate families. However, in the

northern part of the country the women are limited to a level dictated by their husband. This is because the culture has designed the women to be subjected to the husband wish and therefore limit the level of economic activities engaged in by such women. This has contributed to the disempowerment of many women, which made them be at the level of confinement to their husband rules and regulations. The form of cultural limitation on the socioeconomic status of the women also limit them from relating with other women or outside their immediate community to know what women right is all about , women right the giving up cultural traditions which are seen as having adverse effect on the people that have such have served as a barrier to exercising women right, the women are used to the day to day running of their economic activities irrespective of age group and years of engagement in such economy activity.

Influence of Health Factors

The Northern states of Nigeria include Bauchi, Borno, Niger, Kano, Katsina, Plateau, Nassarawa, Sokoto, and Zamfara. Basically, there is lack of awareness and in some cases availability of health insurance; this led to the out of pocket spending on the health issues of women and this therefore post a threat on the accessibility of women to health facilities. The risk of girls being forced to marry irrespective of her level of education, therefore contributed to a form of low esteem and a sense of social exclusion, fear of the unknown has There is the fear that Nigerian Northern women are highly marginalized. They do not have money, power to take decisions concerning their health. These women are not given priority while delivering service and if it is possible to convince their husbands on certain issues concerning these women's health.

Gender relations are important factors that contribute to the high maternal mortality in Nigeria. Also, husband's permission and financial support is needed before a woman can seek for healthcare. All these have implications for maternal mortality because if a husband for instance does not love his wife especially as many are polygamists, he may not give his permission and even if

he gives his permission, he may not give any money to the wife and many wives do not have money of their own.

Influence of Educational Factors

Going by the influence of language and culture, Nigeria as an example of a typical African country is a "male dominated society" where women are always at the background in all cultural celebrations. Sending a female child to school in the late fifties to sixties is considered not only as a waste but a big "risk". The popular African maxim says, "no matter the level of education a woman, she will end in the kitchen". The first major point of entering into the literal world of education is from the teaching profession. As years go by, African women started showing their academic prowess in other professions including law, medicine, sciences, finance, and accounts, industrial and governmental sciences. This educational attainments and achievements have in no small way changed the fortune and perception of the society, especially from men toward women. Today in Nigeria, women especially from the south west south-south and south east are found virtually in all professions of human endeavours a factor which has raised their status and made them to be at par with their male compatriots.

The northern part of Nigerian is mainly characterized by Harem practices, this shield a woman away from relating with other men and even women outside their homes. While the women are subjected to the dominating rules of their husbands, they do not have a voice on any issue but are subjected to the husband wishes. Also, the girl child education is not taken serious because mostly the female child must have been given away in marriage even before they understand the meaning of life.

Influence of Reproductive and Sexual Health Factors

Nigeria is a patriarchal society with an extreme religious identity for men and women. Issues on reproductive health and sexual rights in the country are sensitive issue that needs a careful approach. Nigeria is a community with diverse religious orientation viz, Islam, Christianity and Traditional belied systems. All these religious views see the woman as the symbol of life and fails to condone any form of control over reproduction and sexual notions. In addition to the reproductive roles women naturally possess, issues on sexual discourses is ideally between spouses. It takes the form of a taboo for a woman to be openly engaged inin sexual related discourse outside her husband. In addition to this, the larger Nigerian society frowns on homosexual orientation and this is clearly evident from the controversy over the Same Sex marriage bill that experienced a heated debate between law makers, traditional authority, religious leaders and the Nigerian communities, including some human rights organizations.

Having given a brief into the mood of reproductive and sexual rights in the country, a closer look at the Northern Nigeria, bu virtue of pre-dominant religion Islam, non-heterosexual relationship except that between a husband and the wife is unpopular. Presently there are no reliable statistics backing the level of its unpopularity due to the fact that people with different sexual orientation are undisclosed within the society.

With respect to reproductive health rights of the woman or girl-child in the Northern region especially among the rural population, a woman is left in the care of mid wives or traditional birth attendant for pre- and post natal periods. In a common view, a woman is not recognized as strong if she attends hospital for maternal care till birth. While the trend is gradually changing, the case of the rural Northern villages leaves so much room for concern because the access to primary health care centres or hospital remains a challenge.

Finally, to end this session, we need call to mind the capital intensive nature to provide facilities for socio-economic life. Government in an attempt to put in place some facilities seems to neglect the rural settlements. This impacts on women negatively as it relates to deals with health rights. A look at reproductive health rights, more maternal care facilities are constructed but the rural areas are often neglected. With respect to sexual orientation, customs and tradition frowns on any discussion on sexual choices among women especially where it is decried by religion.

Conclusion

This research work for the Northern region of Nigeria is a timely intervention to view the impact of multi-faceted factors on women's human rights. Though the research may not be extensive, it has come to show that there is room for further research. We have garnered the best possible information possible on the diverse factors that affects women's human rights in the Northern region, viz. Environmental, technological, education, socio-economic, religion, culture and language. These factors are in one way or the other manipulated to cause oppression and injustice to women in Nigeria, while some may arise as a result of natural effects, such as the environment and climate change, the failure of the government in putting a mitigating effect and adaptation process in managing environmental challenges is a cause for worry. Nigerian women face a lot of constraints in enjoying their rights as a result of different limitations imposed on them in the society. As feminists and women's rights advocates, we need to keep on agitating for equal opportunity for men and women. We need to confront the problems preventing women from enjoying their rights. Nigeria women if supported to live in a fair and equal society have a lot of inherent potential which can foster national development and improve the welfare of all citizens in the country.

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