

THE IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINISM IN THE PRESENT DAY NIGERIAN SOCIETY: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

The development of the struggles and liberation of women differs from nation to nation across the globe. The basic issues feminism combats are gender inequality and the oppression of women. The issues of gender equality and women liberation have garnered momentum around the world including Nigeria. Many countries across the world including Nigeria have developed policies aimed at promoting gender equality. Some manifestation of the policies featured among employers that practiced non-discriminatory employment relationships among workers. Women are strongly encouraged to apply for certain employments, grants and a host of other opportunities to give them equal standing with men. The implementation of such related policies has been the main focus of women's movement in many countries. The paper critically examine the sociological approaches to the impacts of the development of feminism in the present day Nigerian society. The paper submits that, while many Nigerian women from north to south and east to west are resolute, strong and impactful, others are weak and wasting away in traditional bigotry and cowardice. The paper concludes that, certain factors such as religious misconception, cultural dogmatism, and patriarchy may need to be jettisoned to deal with the oppression of women and gender inequality in Nigeria.

Keywords. Feminism, Sociological Approach, Nigerian Society, Dogmatism.

Introduction

Feminism is the movement for the emancipation of women. In the 18th Century Europe, unmarried women had little protection under the law while married women lost their legal identity. Women were disenfranchised, and when they are out of a marriage, the rights over their children were almost denied. They were lagging in property ownership, signing of contracts and in retaining lawyers. This condition was given stronger impetus by William Blackstone (1758).

The historical circumstance that subjugates women under men is the bedrock for gender disparity in employment, politics, education, and human rights in general. It is also the ground for the modern day quest for gender equality which has its development way back to the 19th century. The issue of gender equality has today garnered momentum around the world more than ever making it more frequent with clearly identified regency.

Feminism is a rejection of women oppression, and a commitment to women's liberation from all forms of oppression. The oppressions sometimes come in different shapes and sizes. There are internal as well as external oppressions: psychological, emotional, socio-economic, and political as well as philosophical oppressions (Mama and Salo, 2021). Mama and Salo submission corroborates with UN General Assembly definition of violence against women that considers any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life is violence against women (Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 2014).

Conceptual Clarification of Feminism

Two key terms according to Ruiz (2002) that are central to the feminist discussion are 'gender' and 'patriarchy'. In the feminist context, gender is not a replacement word for sex or biological difference between a man and woman. Instead, it refers merely to the power relations between men and women, how the relations have socially and habitually been implemented, and how the power is deployed. Patriarchy, on the other hand, refers to the system where female is subordinate to the male (in power and status terms). Feminism according to Hawkesworth (2016) is a range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, personal, and social equality of sexes. The words "féminisme" ("feminism") and "féministe" ("feminist") first appeared in France and the Netherlands in 1872, Great Britain in the 1890s, and the United States of America in 1910, and the Oxford English Dictionary lists 1852 as the year of the first appearance of "feminist" and 1895 for "feminism". Depending on the historical antecedents, culture and country, feminists around the world have had different causes and goals. Most western feminist historians contend that all movements working to obtain women's rights should be considered feminist movements, even when they did not (or do not) apply the term to themselves.

Freedman (2016) refers feminism as a belief that although women and men are inherently of equal worth, most societies privileged men as a group instead of Women. As a result, social movements are necessary to achieve political equality between women and men, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies.

Smith (2019) looks at feminism as the political theory and practice aimed to free all women: women of colour, working-class women, poor women, physically challenged women, old women – as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women. "Anything less than this", according to Smith "is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement".

The Development of Feminism in Nigeria

In 1947, a National Women's Union was formed in response to several anti-colonial resistance activities by Nigeria women. Prior to the Nigeria colonial pe-

riod, many Nigerian women in the southern region participated actively in public life and had independent access to resources different from what it was in the 18th century Europe. Women collectively had social and political influence through their associations and representatives. This was not, however, the case with women of the northern region of Nigeria especially the Hausa-Fulani where Islamic religion restrained their commercial as well as political activities.

During the colonial era, women in the southern region of Nigeria played outstanding roles in social roles involving politics both collectively and individually. There were community gatherings where market women expressed their feelings and agitate for some rights.

However, in 1929, what could be known as the official launching of the movement for the emancipation of women in Nigeria erupted. There was women's war in Aba called 'Aba women's riot' which protested against British tax policies. There were several women attempts to resist the colonial policies that were not in tandem with their long-lived mannerisms. A National Women's Union was formed which is considered the brain-child of the anti-colonial resistance in 1947.

In 1948, additional further development were recorded when women protested against excessive taxation in Abeokuta. However, the women's struggle for the emancipation of the female folks intensified and the post-colonial period ushered in the Federation of Nigeria Women's Societies (FNWS) were successfully initiated.

Sociological Approach of Feminism in Nigeria

Since the 19th century, women's struggle in Nigeria against discrimination and gender-based violence has been on the limelight especially during the fight for national independence and improving the quality of lives. The Nigerian women did not fare well during military rule in Nigeria, given that no woman ascended to the zenith in the Nigerian army.

During Nigeria's Second Republic (1983 – 1999), all Nigerian women were enfranchised to participate in the electoral process; women in most parts of northern Nigeria did not participate in the elections. Many of them were disenfranchised by the electoral requirements and irregularities. For instance, tax receipt presentation as a qualification to participate (Shettima, 2015) was one basic feature for segregation. At the wake of Babangida regime, an association of 'Women in Nigeria' (WIN) was commissioned to give input on the perspectives of women. It recorded great achievements.

Sociologists approach to feminism in Nigeria encompasses the analysis of gender relations, cultural norms, social structures, and the impact of colonial and post-colonial history on the status of women. Sociological Analysis of some key aspects are presented below for more comprehension.

Historical Context

1. Colonial Influence: Colonialism significantly altered traditional gender roles in Nigeria. Pre-colonial Nigerian societies often had more fluid and complementary gender roles, with women playing significant roles in trade, politics,

and community leadership. Colonial rule introduced Western patriarchal norms that marginalized women's roles and relegated them to domestic spheres.

2. Post-Colonial Changes: The post-colonial period saw efforts to reassert women's roles in public life. However, these efforts were often hampered by persistent patriarchal attitudes and socio-economic challenges.

Key Themes in Nigerian Feminism

1. Intersectionality: Nigerian feminism in the present day considers the intersections of gender with other social categories such as ethnicity, class, religion, and age. This approach acknowledges that Nigerian women face diverse challenges depending on their socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

2. Cultural Specificity: Feminism in Nigeria often emphasizes the need to be rooted in local cultural contexts rather than adopting Western feminist frameworks non-critically. This approach seeks to balance respect for cultural traditions with the need for gender equality.

3. Economic Empowerment: Economic independence is a major focus. Curtail programs and policies aimed at improving women's access to education, financial resources, and entrepreneurial opportunities are crucial for empowering Nigerian women.

4. Political Participation: Efforts to increase women's representation in political and decision-making processes are central to Nigerian feminism. This includes advocating for policies that support women's rights and address gender disparities.

Sociological Perspectives

1. Structural Functionalism: This perspective examines how traditional gender roles and family structures maintain social stability. Feminist sociologists critique this view point between opposite sexes by highlighting how these structures can perpetuate gender inequality and limit women's opportunities.

2. Conflict Theory: From this viewpoint, gender inequality is seen as a result of power imbalances and social conflicts. Feminist theorists argue that patriarchal structures benefit men at the expense of women, leading to systemic inequality and oppression.

3. Symbolic Interactionism: This approach focuses on the everyday interactions and socialization processes that reinforce gender roles. Feminist sociologists with this view point analyse how language, media, and social practices shape and perpetuate gender norms in Nigeria

Feminist Movements and Activism

1. Women's Movements: Organizations such as the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) and the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NUTF) play a crucial role in advocating for women's rights and gender equality. These movements address issues like domestic violence, reproductive rights, and political participation.

2. Grassroots Activism: Local and community-based activism is vital in addressing specific issues faced by women in different regions of Nigeria. Grassroots organizations often focus on education, healthcare, and economic initiatives tailored to the needs of their communities.

In summary therefore, the sociological approach to feminism in Nigeria involves a multifaceted analysis of historical, cultural, and social factors. It requires balancing respect for cultural traditions with the pursuit of gender equality and leveraging both local and global resources to address the unique challenges faced by Nigerian women.

The Difficulty in women liberation in Nigeria

The impacts of the development of feminism in the present day Nigerian society have been very significant. However, the point still remains that there are still encumbrances to feminism's task of liberating women in Nigeria. For instance, culture and tradition, misconception of religion regarding women's role, human physiology, and poverty/unemployment have constituted serious difficulty in women liberation in many ways.

Culture and Tradition: Culture plays an extensive role in traditional African societies like Nigeria. It embodies the summation of the way of life of people in a given society. Culture and tradition as it were, have been the justification and refuge for inhuman treatments against women. It is a culture that has imprisoned women and denied them the realization of being

Treated inhumanly in Nigeria. Feminists must thrive to combat the long-standing cultural and traditional statuesque limiting the full emancipation of women.

Patriarchy: According to (Mama, 2015). Most women are trapped in the daily business of securing the survival of themselves, their homes and localities but this is a portrayal of staunch patriarchal power and all the social, political and economic injustices meted out to Africans and Nigerian Women in particular.

Religion: Religion and religious institutions have been described as the driving force responsible for the reproduction of gender ideologies that oppress and subjugate women; and asserting the superiority of men (Mama in Adamu, 2018). It should be stressed however here that, misconception in religion made some people to think that women oppression is religiously inclined. And religiously rooted. Far from that. Religion basically plays a dominant role in private and public life in most developing countries and has lead series of Women emancipation movement that supports women development.

The Milestones of Feminism in Nigeria

Historically, several women have stood out for the liberation of women. Queen Amina of Zazzau and Queen Kambassa of Bonny were classic examples demonstrating the feminine might in the military in Nigeria. While queen Amina led troops, fought wars, and forced emirates like Katsina and Kano to pay tributes to her State, queen Kambassa pioneered the militarization of the Bonny Kingdom (Awe, 1992). The duo legends demonstrate the possibility of winning the fight for women liberation in the Nigerian military and in the world at large. The Iyoba Idia of Benin showcased her ability in Benin City upon the death of her husband. She fought for the right of Obaship for her son, Esigie, and repositioned the political structure of the Benin Kingdom.

There are organizations that have hitherto made it possible for feminism to thrive in Nigeria. The Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) provides one example of a successful contextualized feminist effort to promote women's rights through Sharia. It provides legal education and assistance to women and girls in northern Nigeria. It has initiated legal aid, women's rights and access to justice projects in many northern States. Another organization is Women in Nigeria. (WIN). It organized workshops all over Nigeria helping women to fight for their rights.

The Way Forward for Feminism in Nigeria

From the foregoing, it is apparent that feminism in Nigeria is yet to garner momentum like in European and some other African countries. Feminism in those countries has been a success largely because of the availability of employment and educational opportunities for women. Unemployment, abject poverty and other effects of underdevelopment pose a great danger to women aspirations to attain greater heights. Most parents are unable to train their children in school partly due to unequal opportunity access that and a discriminatory sponsorship favors the male child while the girl child is sent off early to marry, hawk, and in extreme cases prostitute. Some of the girls are certainly abused and exploited sexually; some end up being psychologically battered and also infected with deadly sexually transmitted diseases. The Federated Muslim Women Organization in Nigeria (FOMWAN) is an Islamic group that fought for Women's right according to Islam. This group built schools in many town and communities across the Northern Nigeria where they offered Women sensitization on the rights of Women including and not limited to providing scholarships to indigent girls to enrol and participate in formal schooling from Primary to secondary levels. This initiative has liberated many girls from vulnerability to modern slavery and sexual exploitation. Beneficiaries of this initiative have transited to tertiary education levels and are currently gainfully employed in many areas of human endeavour.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is no reason why women should not raise their voices to combat all the atrocities against them. Gender discrimination hampers economic development. Poverty has caused incidences of insecurity, violence, kidnapping, promiscuity and prostitution. Feminists in Nigeria may need to continue striving for women empowerment in the society. This will reduced poverty. Inherited unproductive and visionless customs and tradition which discriminates and subjugates women to the lowest level. Parents should raise children on the basis of equality. Faith groups and movements should eschew the parochial view of women as inferior. Women advocacy groups and institutions are expected to be forthcoming in their campaigns for justice and the issue of inequality. Finally, women are created equal and not inferior to men. If gender equality is harnessed, Nigerian Women have the potential to contribute to Nigeria's transformation conspicuously.

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УРОВЕНЬ ТЕХНИЧЕСКОЙ ОСНАЩЕННОСТИ И ПРОИЗВОДИТЕЛЬНОСТИ ТРУДА В ОТРАСЛИ СЕЛЬСКОГО ХОЗЯЙСТВА РЕСПУБЛИКИ БАШКОРТОСТАН

Аннотация. Республика Башкортостан всегда была и является развитым аграрным регионом. За период с 2015 по 2022 гг. валовая продукция сельского хозяйства возросла на 72%, составив 258 млрд.руб. В регионе активно вводятся производственные мощности, общее потребление электрической энергии в отрасли сельского хозяйства Республики Башкортостан возросло в 4 раза. Урожайность зерновых за анализируемый период в среднем возросла на 60%. Численность работников, занятых в отрасли, в анализируемой динамике сократилась на 48%. Уровень производительности труда в анализируемой динамике возрос в 3,3 раза, составив 2,4 млн. руб. на одного работника в 2022 г.