GENDER AND WOMEN DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS (2010 – 2020).

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Abstract
Women are a major state holder in the development project of any society. Globally, gender and women issues have been recognized as essential ways and attributes of building stable and developed societies. The contribution of women to Nigeria National Development is desired, their involvement in peace building, national economies, poverty reduction can never be over emphasized. Gender concerns militate against the extension of equal opportunities to women in South West Nigeria which in most cases lead to frustration, apathy, lop-sided development and the need to improve woman participation and possibly given them equal opportunity to enhance sustainable development is to be looked into, this paper considered the challenges facing women in the South West geo-political zone of Nigeria and also the prospects in contributing to gender and national development. Feminist theory which was designed to explain and address the growing rate of oppression faced by women globally employed to give a theoretical framework. The study among others recommends that all cultural and traditional practices militating against women and gender emancipation should be outlawed, state governments should initiate more empowerment programmes for women in South West Nigeria so as to increase the level of women participation in societal
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Keywords: Development, Feminism, Gender, SouthWest, Women,

Introduction

Developments have been viewed from different perspectives and one of the major recent development discourses puts gender and women development on the fore front, this arises from the fact that equality in gender is on the increase and that extension of equal opportunities to women leads to rapid societal development. Gender concerns militate against the extension of equal opportunities to women and therefore, lead to frustration, apathy, violence and lop-sided development and underdevelopment (FGN and UNICEF, 2016). The roles of gender and women in development remain majorly unsung but women have been growers, gatherers, processors and stores of food from and even before, the beginning of recorded history. In many societies, women almost exhaustively undertake the activities of infant care, nursing, water and wood fetching and traditional spinning and weaving. They play key role as healers and as sources of knowledge and practice relating to contraception, the premature termination of pregnancies and the easing of labour, childbirth and menstrual experiences. Women are a major force behind people's participation in the life of society today as play a crucial role in society as procreators of posterity as well as producers of goods and services.

In Nigeria and particularly the South West states of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos which are the focus of this work, traditional perceptions of women as inferior to men prevail, as many people uphold

cultural practices which enhance the subordination of women. Consequently, men continue to dominate women in political, economic, social, and religious realms. This situation has necessitated the clarion call that women should be empowered by giving them due status, rights, and responsibilities to enable them participate actively in the processes of developing their societies. The efforts and roles of women in developing South West geo-political zone of Nigeria was investigated and recommendations made for other zones in Nigeria to emulate. The role of women in rural development has been broadly categorized as: food producers and active participants in the agrarian sectors, daily household maintenance tasks, small scale income generating activities, general contribution to the wellbeing of their community.

Research Methodology
The study adopted phenomenological research method, both primary and secondary sources of data were employed, his involve wide consultation of books, journals, magazines, internet, published and unpublished books. Unstructured interview with some women advocacy organizations was also carried out to test the prospect and challenges facing gender and women development in the South West geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Literature Review and conceptual framework:
Development is about human beings not about infant and adult, male and female. Man and women needs to develop to his fullest potential and working together will ensure rapid and even development. Development connotes meeting the needs of the present generation without jeopardizing the chances of the future generations to meet their own needs. Development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potentials to meet human needs and aspiration. It is about long-term conditions for humanity's multidimensional well-being. Sustainable development is not about the society reaching an end state, nor is it about establishing static structures or about identifying fixed qualities of social, economic or political life. It is about promoting equitable and balanced development. Sustainable development is a comprehensive process involving complex relationships among various aspects of the society including population growth, improvements in education and health, environmental degradation and globalization. It seeks to reconcile the ecological, social and economic dimensions of development, now and into the future. It aims at promoting a form of development that is contained within the ecological carrying capacity of the planet, which is socially just and economically inclusive, so as to achieve the common future of humankind (Baker, 2006).

Development connotes a special social condition within a nation in which the authentic needs of its population are satisfied by the national and sustainable use of natural resources and systems. The basic understanding of development centered on the better utilization of national resources where citizens have access to education, housing, health services, security and food. Development is a complex concept as it could be seen and explained to key into every aspects of the society, it could be defined with special focus to human, engineering, economics, political, educational, cultural among other. The concept of development is as old as civilization as its usage can be trace back to Greco-romance civilization till date; at the end of 17th century, the predominant idea of development was dependent on natural and positive phenomena but modern thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, and Marx conceived and interpreted progress in a distinct manner from that resulting from the idea of conscience of limit or aligned with the potentially infinite concept of progress. Todaro (2014) views development as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structure, attitude and institutions.

That development must represent the gamut of changes by which an entire social system, to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within the system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory, towards a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and

spiritually "better". Development also connotes the acceleration of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. In the words of Thilwall (2008) he reviews goblet's concept of development involving three core values namely, life sustenance, self-esteem and freedom, he analyses each of the values and concludes that development has occurred when there has been an improvement in basic needs, when economic or political progress has contributed to a greater sense of self-esteem for the country and individuals within it, and when material advancement has expanded the range of choice for individuals. Steady (2005) defined social development as an inclusive process involving the equitable distribution and consumption of country's resources for the benefit of all its citizens. That it also involves the promotion of social reform, human dignity and justice with ethical and spiritual dimensions which promote value and behaviour conducive to human progress, welfare, peace and happiness. She concluded by summarizing development as a process distinct from mere provision of social services or the promotion of social welfare or dependence on development aid.

Development is more than improvements in people's well-being but the sustenance of such improvement. Traditional welfare economics had focused on incomes as the main measure of well-being but modern economist moved further to show that poverty, health, education and living standards as all these were not captured by income alone: it also conveys something about the capacity of economic, political and social systems to provide the circumstances for the well-being on a sustainable, long-term basis. Development is a system-wide manifestation of the way that people, firms, technologies and institutions interact with each other within economic, social and political system, that development directly deals with the capacity of those systems to provide self-organizing complexity as it comes about from a process of adaptation and evolution. That focusing on how environment can be made most conducive for self-esteem will accelerate development. One of the main attribute is inherent change. Rostow (1971) explain development as a process of evolutional succession in stages where human societies leave a rudimentary model until they arrive at a western industrialized civilization consumption model, which is considered unique and universal. Ribeivo (2005) sees development as a concept that covers various areas of knowledge such as a state, process, well-being, progress, economic and human growth or ecological balance.

Gender refers to the power relations between men and women, how the relations have been socially and habitually implemented, and how the power is deployed (Ruiz, 2012). Patriarchy, on the other hand, refers to the system where the female is subordinate to the male (in power and status terms). The Gender framework focuses on describing women's and men's roles and their relative access to and control over resources. It takes the household, rather than the breadth of institutions, women are a homogeneous category it uncovers differences between women, divided by other aspects of social differentiation such as class, race and ethnicity.

Gender is about the behaviour, attitudes, roles and status assigned to an individual in a social-cultural setting. The status of individuals and the power they use to rule in any society are culturally determined, as all cultures are gender sensitive. Gender relationship is a vital practice that influences the lives of men and women in any society. It is so important that it affects the roles we play, and the relative power we wield. It determines the opportunities and privileges we have. In Africa generally, and Nigeria particularly, gender relations are always patriarchal in nature and therefore, dominated by the male. Women are subjected to subordinate status by men. Although gender issues have a global phenomenon, sub-Saharan Africa is most affected. The gender gap favouring male has remained persistent itself in all factors of development in Africa.

Gender refers to the socially-constructed roles of and relationships between men and women. Gender concerns men and women, including conceptions of both femininity and masculinity. The difference between 'gender' and 'sex' is that the latter refers only to biological differences. Gender does not mean focusing solely on women or females, but rather on the inequalities between males and females, and should not be confused with feminism or women's studies. Analyses of gender differences often show a disadvantaged and weaker position of women and girls in social, political, economic, legal, educational and physical issues.

This is why there is a tendency for gender discussions and interventions to focus on correcting these imbalances by specifically targeting women and girls.

It also refers to social roles allocated respectively to men and women in particular societies and at particular times. Such roles and the differences between them are conditioned by a variety of political, economic, ideological and cultural factors, and are characterized in most societies by unequal power relations. Opines that gender constitutes one of the determinants of how poverty is experienced and of wealth creation. Rights and entitlements of men and women to opportunities, resources and decision making are based on socio-cultural norms rather than on human rights or the respective development capability of men and women. Gender is a system of roles relationship between women and men that are determine not biologically but by the social, political and economic context. Gender is the social organization of sexual differences but, this does not means that gender reflects or implements fixed and natural physical differences between women and men, rather gender is the knowledge that establishes meaning for bodily differences. These meaning vary across cultures, social groups and time since nothing about the body including women's reproductive organs, determines univocally how social division will be shaped. Women: Refers to the female gender, the opposite of male gender.

Gender is defined by FAO as 'the relations between men and women, both perceptual and material. Gender is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but is constructed socially. It is a central organizing principle of societies, and often governs the processes of production and reproduction, consumption and distribution' (FAO, 1997). Despite this definition, gender is often misunderstood as being the promotion of women only. However, as we see from the FAO definition, gender issues focus on women and on the relationship between men and women, their roles, access to and control over resources, division of labour, interests and needs. Gender relations affect household security, family well-being, planning, production and many other aspects of life (Bravo-Baumann, 2000). The word gender has been used since the 14th century as a grammatical term, referring to classes of noun designated as masculine, feminine, or neuter in some languages. The sense denoting biological sex has also been used since the 14th century, but this did not become common until the mid-20th century. Although the words gender and sex are often used interchangeably, they have slightly different connotations; sex tends to refer to biological differences, while gender more often refers to cultural and social differences and sometimes encompasses a broader range of identities than the binary of male and female

In general terms, "sex" refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences. "Gender" is more difficult to define, but it can refer to the role of a male or female in society, known as a gender role, or an individual's concept of themselves. Sometimes, a person's genetically assigned sex does not line up with their gender identity. These individuals might refer to themselves as transgender, non-binary, or gender-nonconforming.

The Nigerian gender movements come actively alive in 1929 when the women participated in anti-colonial resistance and in the wave of nationalist liberation movement. The women dup deep into the traditional institution of "setting on a man" to humiliate and teach the men who violated women's right. They used it as a collective political tool against the British colonial authorities. In the post-colonial era, the market women exploited their relatively acquired position in the informal sector as traders to form different types of social movements at different stages of development of the society. In early post-colonial period, in some part of Yoruba Land, the market place and used their control of the space to persuade influential men in Yoruba society 'who also wanted financial assistance from the women. The gender movement set up among the Egba women by Funmlayo Ransome Kuti in 1947 is in the forefront of such persuasion. This was later transformed in 1953 to the National women's Union and later the Federation of Nigerian Women's Society (FNWS). FNSW metamorphosed into the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) in 1958 consequent upon affiliations by women movements from the Eastern and Western parts of the Country.

The emergence, spread and transformation of women gender movements across the globe has continued to put in the front burner issues of women's marginalization and subordination in their multi sectorial perspectives.

Globally many types of women's gender movements exist in various communities or nations. The most common issue in these movements are "women issues". These issues incorporate gender issues and sex issues. The gender issues relate to the social construction of the relations between women and men and among various groups of women or men. The sex issues encompass the biological similarities and differences between and among women and men.
 Among the gender issues are maternal and child health, child care, income generation, support for mothers and education. Over the decades, the women movements have articulated these issues significantly. On the other hand, the sex issues are typically associated with women in the sex gender division of labour, of importance is also a considerable ranged of political and social problem. However, the women are always on the lookout for any issue that can appear on the socio-economic and political horizon. This is why women movement has remained dynamic and probably proactive in activism.

Theoretical Framework
The theory adopted for this study was the feminist theory, the term feminism was coined by a French socialist named Charles Fourier in 1837, and was first used in 1872 in France and in the United States in 1910 (Offen, 1988, 126), and it includes a wide range of subjects from political, economic, social, cultural and social, but its central message remains the equality among the sexes, equal opportunities for women and the dissolution of the oppressive practices associated with patriarchy, while also seeking increased access to education, better health care and improved life choices for women. Feminist theory can be understood in the context of being both a normative and intellectual discourse, shining its limelight on the social phenomenon, issues, and experiences as it concerns women that are swept under the carpet, following years of dominant male perception (Crossman, 2017). The feminist theory is aimed at understanding and explaining the intricacies that surround the subject of gender inequality and gender roles, while also trying to explain the blurred lines that exist between men and women within a social construct.

The feminist theory was originally designed to explain and address the growing rate of oppression faced by women globally, without recourse to tribe, nationality, status, and age. Feminism as a theory has evolved over the years and has developed into two major shifts which include the particularizing and contextualizing the different experiences as they affect women, rather than the previous approach which universalized the struggle, losing elements in the way. The second dimension involves the shift from seeing and women as categories to be focused on, to getting into such categorization, while exploring what makes up oppressive gender practices. (Carlson & Ray, 2001).

The feminist theory although being an old theory began to gain momentum following the speech by Susan Anthony following her arrest after illegally voting in 1872 which challenged the but which gained more momentum in early 1900, and a period was characterized by the increased clamor for the protection of the women's suffrage and protection of women's right. Feminist campaigns have recorded remarkable success over the years, and has been identified as a major force in the process that has recorded historical changes in the establishment of women's rights especially in the west where issues that affect the wellbeing of women, for example, women's suffrage, freedom to make decisions as it affects her reproductive rights, education, equal employment and pay, and freedom to enter into contracts without the approval of the men in her lives feminism cannot exclude the specificities because some realities within the African context make its feminism comparatively distinct (Atanga, 2013).

 Feminism in Nigeria originated from an increasing demand to improve the quality of lives in her pre-colonial era, vocal women like Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Magareth Ekpo beat the odds that characterized acute patriarchy of the Nigerian society, emerged as politicians, and identified as pioneers to the feminist struggle

in Nigeria (Faseke, 2001). These women and many others played a key role during the era of the 1960's Nationalist struggle campaigning for equal rights and opportunities for all in Nigeria (Strobel, 2011). There were series of protest in the pre-colonial era, however, one of which includes the prominent Aba (Southeast Nigerian state) women's riot, the Abeokuta (Southwest Nigerian state) market women's protest in 1948 against heavy taxes levied by the colonial masters. These protests were spear headed by Mrs.Funmilayo Ransom-Kuti, who had by then was recognized as a women's right activist (Faseke, 2001). These women led a protest which succeeded in abolishment of the excess tax system and the struggle against unjust treatment meted out against women despite the fact that they fulfilled their civil responsibility (Oduntan & Mcintosh, 2011). These nationalist protests by women paved the way for the contemporary feminist movement in Nigeria through the formation of the National women's union in 1947 which later metamorphosed into the federation of Nigerian women's society in 1953 (Strobel, 2001). The leadership of this union fought for the inclusion of women into the male dominated political space through playing an active role in political forums and their individual engagements (Okeke–Ihejirika & Franceschet, 2002).

Prospects and Challenges of Gender and Development in South West

The major challenges facing women in the South West states of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos are traditional and cultural practices which make women subordinate to men as men continue to dominate women in political, economic, social, and religious realms. Some rural communities in the South West are still deeply involved in cruel cultural and traditional activities of subjecting women to uncivilized activities and also using them as subservient to men.

The prospects and roles of gender and women in developing the South West geo-political zone are enormous as they remain more vibrant in developing their communities as they plays pivotal roles in contributing to all-round development of their community, they have been supportive by playing complementary roles by supporting men to develop their communities. The role of south west women in rural development has been broadly categorized as: food producers and active participants in the agrarian sectors, daily household maintenance tasks, small scale income generating activities, general contribution to the wellbeing of their community. There are women mechanized farmers most especially in Ekiti, Ondo and Lagos states, the traditional believe that only men are to involve in agricultural work has been jettisoned by women in the South West and they have been contributing in no small measure in the developmental drive.

Within these categories, the role of women in developing Nigeria can be analyzed thus, in the agricultural sector, women have been useful in small scale farming activities that support the household food security, provide significant employment opportunities, and generate some income for other livelihood pursuits. From the perspective of home management, women's roles have been significant at various levels. Household tasks involving water fetching, domestic sanitation, fire wood collection, food processing and preparation, child care and upbringing, family welfare, are all within the realm of women activities. These are crucial to family stability, progress as well as the overall development of the community. Women's direct control over income and family resources have been known to translate to better economic, social and improved nutritional levels for the family as a whole. But how are these translated in Nigeria and particularly south west geo-political zone?

The returned of Nigeria to civil rule in 1999 saw the emergence of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) a useful platform for South West women into development practices as it was not duplicated at all levels of governments (State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy-SEEDS; and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy-LEEDS), it incorporated the private sector, non-governmental organization and the general public in pursuits of its developmental goals. By attempting to empower the rural populace (including the women), NEEDS had a substantive vision of eliminating rural poverty and promoting the development of the rural space through the agency of the women.

There were other women empowerment programmes initiated by government and first ladies in the South West to promote women development and emancipation such as Gateway Front Foundation by Yeye Olufunke Daniel of Ogun State, Idera dee by Mrs. Ladoja, wives of Dapo Abiodun, Babajide Sanwoolu, Rotimi Akeredolu, Kayode Fayemi, Seyi Makinde and Adegboyega Oyetola (current governors in the South West geo-political zone) are having one welfare programme or the other to support woman development and emancipation, these programs are all geared at women development and they have helped in no small measure in contributing to the development of South West region.

Another prospect of gender and women development in the South West is in the area of education, science and technology, the era of education is exclusively meant for men is over in the South West as there are more female in all levels of educational institutions in the region for now (UNESCO 2017), ladies are now taken leading roles in scientific and technological innovations which has contributed and still contributing to development in the region, women in the region has contributed in the areas of fighting against injustices, imposition of obnoxious policies, stoppage of female genital mutilation and other practices that militate against women folds.

Conclusion
This study looked into the challenges and prospects of gender and women development in South West geo-political zone of Nigeria, the evolution of traditional and cultural practices against women was traced, the development of women race and rise against obnoxious practices against women were also looked into. The concepts of development, gender, women development and efforts at developing women were also discussed, feminist theory was employed to explain the protection of the women's suffrage and protection of women's right, that feminist campaigns have recorded remarkable success over the years, and has been identified as a major force in the process that has recorded historical changes in the establishment of women's rights especially in the west where issues that affect the wellbeing of women, for example, women's suffrage, freedom to make decisions as it affects her reproductive rights, education, equal employment and pay, and freedom to enter into contracts without the approval of the men in her lives feminism cannot exclude the specificities because some realities within the African context make its feminism comparatively distinct. Policy recommendations were made to improve on gender issues and women development in the South West zone of Nigeria.

Recommendations
Haven established the pivotal roles of women of the South West region of Nigeria and those challenges facing their efforts in contributing to development, the following policy recommendations are put forward;
All cultural and traditional practices militating against women and gender emancipation should be outlawed; this will enable women to contribute more actively to the development of the South West.
More empowerment for women in South West Nigeria so as to increase the level of women participation in societal developments, there is the need for sensitization and empowerment of women to socially and developmentally participate in the development of their society. It is important to eradicate all discriminatory policies against women, by reviewing the structure and operational guidelines of political parties.

More financial support should be provided for women to aid their businesses and political aspirations, increase the number of women in elective positions and Decision-making processes, there is need for affirmative actions in politics. This could be done by ensuring that women and men have equal legal and human rights by eliminating all gender discriminatory clauses in existing laws and legislations including, by persons, organizations and enterprises.
Employment opportunities for women should be improved drastically, as it has been noticed when programs such as; Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) were initiated and implemented, women were actively involved and it helped women a lot and they should be re initiated. "When you educate a woman, you educate the nation" so says an adage. When women are given affordable, qualitative and comprehensive education, there will be more robust social women's movements

and female activism. The national literacy level has remained low even though there is considerable regional variation in female literacy rate. Analysis made by the National Population Commission and United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) concerning literacy situation in Nigeria in 2017 shows that the literacy rate decline from 58% in 2014 to 49% in 2015. Literacy among women and girls declined from 44% to 41% during the same period. Regionally the South East and South West female literacy rates were 60% and 55% respectively compared with male literacy rates of 74% and 74.4%.76

On the other hand, the North West and North East zones had female literacy rates of 22% and 21% respectively compared to 40.3% and 42.1% for their male counterparts. Recent study indicate a gross enrolment ratio for boys remains higher than that of girls by over 10% with a male – female ration of 55% to 44.1%. At the secondary level girls' dropout rate is higher and 39.7% of female students graduate from University and 37.54% from the Polytechnic respectively.

Other geo-political zones in Nigeria are encouraged to emulate South West geo-political zone women in their national developmental efforts.

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