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AKO-NAI, RONKE IYABOWALE

FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D) IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRATISATION IN GHANA AND NIGERIA

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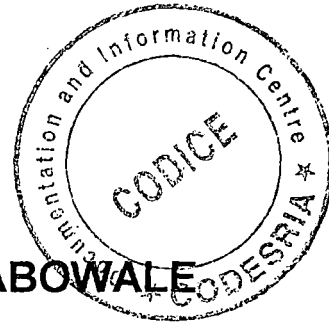
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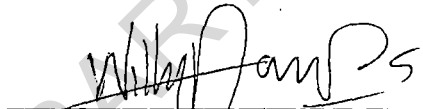
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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this study was carried out under my supervision and in accordance with all prescribed guidelines and regulations of the Postgraduate College of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

15-3-2005
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Professor Amadu Sesay
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Date

Dr. W. Alade Fawole
Co-Supervisor

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to **Dr. and Mrs R. O. Akinsete** of Blessed Memory and my husband, **Kwashie**; my children, **Oyindamola, Olumide, Adebowale and Aramide;**

And

The oppressed women of Ghana and Nigeria.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AG	-	Action Group
AWAG	-	All Women Association of Ghana
BLP	-	Better Life Programme
CAG	-	Christian Association of Ghana
CAN	-	Christian Association of Nigeria
CBOs	-	Community Based Organisations
CEDAW	-	Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.
CPP	-	Convention Peoples Party.
DWM	-	31ST December Women's Movement.
DPPC	-	Development and Project Planning Centre.
DFFRI	-	Directorate For Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
ERP	-	Economic Recovery Programme
EU	-	European Union
FEAP	-	Family Economic Advancement Programme.
FEGAW	-	Federation of Ghanaian Women
FIDA	-	International Federation of Women Lawyers.
FOMWAN	-	Federation of Muslim Women Organisation of Nigeria.
FPET	-	Feminist Political Economy Theory
FSAW	-	Federation of South African Women.
FSP	-	Family Support Programme
GNP	-	Gross National Product
IFIS	-	International Financial Institutions
ISSER	-	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research.

NEPU	-	Northern Elements Progressive Union
NCNC	-	National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon
NCWD	-	National Council for Women's Development
NCWS	-	National Council for Women Societies.
NDC	-	National Democratic Congress
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPP	-	New Patriotic Party
OAU	-	Organisation of African Unity
PDCs	-	Peoples Defense Committees
PDP	-	Peoples Democratic Party
PFA	-	Platform for Action
PNC	-	People's National Convention
PNDC	-	Provisional National Defense Council
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	-	United Nations Fund for Population Agency
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	-	United Nations Development Fund for Women.
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development
SSA	-	Sub-Saharan Africa
WDCs	-	Workers Defense Committees
WILDAF	-	Women in Law and Development in Africa

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to compare the involvement of women in governance and democratisation processes in Ghana and Nigeria from post independence to the year 2000. Primary and secondary sources of data were employed in the study. The primary data was obtained through administration of questionnaires. One thousand (1000) and two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires were administered in Nigeria and Ghana respectively. The disparity in the number of questionnaires administered in the two countries reflected the differences in their populations, 25 million in Ghana against 129 million in Nigeria. The questionnaires contained both open-ended and close-ended questions. Civil servants and politicians constituted 20% each of the respondents in Ghana and Nigeria. Students, religious groups, officials of international agencies, NGOs and professionals each constituted 10% of respondents in both countries, while farmers and artisans made up 5% each. Altogether, 146 in-depth interviews were conducted in both countries. 43 (29%) of the in-depth interviews were held among officials of different groups in Ghana as against 103 (61%) in Nigeria. In addition, 60.2% of interviewees were women made up of 55.5% in Ghana and 61% of women in Nigeria. The secondary sources of data involved extensive and thorough library search in Ghana and Nigeria.

The study revealed that as a result of the prevalence of patriarchal values, male dominance in governance and in various democratic institutions still persist. Although various programmes have been instituted to mainstream women in the countries, women's participation in governance is abysmally low. As of 2000, only 8% of parliamentarians in Ghana was female against

3.1% in Nigeria underscoring the urgent need for a gender policy in Ghana and implementation of existing gender policy in Nigeria. One singular observation is that women's struggles in both countries shared more similarities than dissimilarities in spite of socio-cultural differences. This is due to their colonial past as well as interaction in the international system where conventions, international law and values have influenced domestic policies and activities in both countries. While the First Ladies' Movements came under severe criticisms, 92.5% of respondents in Ghana against 75% in Nigeria, believed they sensitised the public to the plight of women. Only 15% of respondents in Ghana outrightly condemned (DWM). However, respondents in Nigeria were not as generous as 90.1% remarked the two movements were self-serving, 89.2% believed they were unconstitutional and 87.7% considered them elitist. The drop out rate of primary school age girls in Ghana was 26% against 51% in Nigeria. In Ghana and Nigeria 67% female respondents, believed culture, finance and illiteracy constrined women in participating effectively in democratic governance. Regarding male political tactics, 55.2% of respondents in Nigeria belived male political tactics constrained women in effectively participating in democratic processes.

The study concluded that women organisations in Ghana and Nigeria must network more national and transnationally, Besides, governments in both countries should be held accountable for implementing treaties and conventions to which they are signatories. The study also revealed that women's struggles in Ghana and Nigeria have benefited from transnationalism, that has led to the growth of movements and organisations with global values in both countries.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the Study

The African continent has gone through a period of economic, social and political upheavals. Many states have after independence witnessed instability, during which the political elite and the military have been crucial to the political climate and the emerging democracies in the continent as in many Third World countries. (Hutchful and Bathily, 1998:ii), Nigeria and Ghana have not been spared of these political turmoil and democratisation processes. Starting from 1966 when both countries first witnessed military coups, they have since experienced more coups and counter coups especially in Nigeria. In African countries such as Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Togo and Zaire, one-party authoritarian regimes were in power for decades (Ake, 1991:32-34). According to Ahmed Yusuf (1994:111), independence neither improved the material conditions of the African people nor did it bring about democracy. Yusuf (1994:250) goes on to say that the nationalist leaders who took over power more or less continued with the oppressive rule, more like their erstwhile colonial masters.

In the last three decades of the Twentieth Century, the prospect for the entrenchment of democracy as a political choice became brighter all over the world. This was the result of the global trend that favoured democracy as opposed to autocratic political alternatives. Specifically, the impoverished masses demanded for political change in many African countries, including Ghana and Nigeria. Various groups such as trade unions, the media, students as well as women demanded for change and for political freedom. The third

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wave of global democratisation did not leave African countries and women behind. This was due, in the main to internal repression and oppression, as well as the revolution in the communist Eastern European States in the 1980's. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War between the Super Powers made the world to focus more attention on and increasing interest in human right issues and good governance. In the preamble to the Vienna Declaration adopted on June 25, 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights recognised that

> all human rights derive from the dignity and worth inherent in the human person, and that the human person is the central subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and consequently should be the principal beneficiaries and should participate actively in the realisations of these rights and freedoms.

The preamble goes further to consider the major changes taking place on the international scene and the aspirations of all the peoples of the world for an international order based on the principles enshrined in the Human Rights Charter of the United Nations. These principles include; promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and respect for the principle of equal rights and self determination of peoples, peace, democracy, justice, equality, rule of law, pluralism, development, better standards of living and solidarity. The preamble also expressed deep concern about the various forms of discrimination and violence to which women are exposed all over the world. It therefore recognised the need for the international community to devise ways and means of removing the existing obstacles and meet the challenges to the full realisation of all human rights and to prevent the continuation of human rights violations occurring all

over the world. As a result of the changing political climate, dictatorial regimes that were hitherto tolerated and encouraged in the Third World were not only being put on the run, where possible they were encouraged to democratise. Claude Ake (1991:33) among others, expressed the view that issues of democratisation and human rights are increasingly dominating the global agenda in Africa. As a result of this global development, increasing the representation of women in politics and decision-making processes consequently became one of the most remarkable developments of the late Twentieth century. The Nordic countries, for instance, have been making remarkable progress in this direction as indicated in table 1.1.

Today the scenario is also slowly changing in Ghana and Nigeria. As a result of favourable changes in the international system which favour democratic governance, and which are ensuring in various ways that despotic and military rulers are put on the run. Women are now making conscious attempts at changing their subordinate roles and impoverished status which they claim had been forced on them by the socio-cultural structures of the patriarchal and matriarchal societies. They are re-appraising the social conditioning that works against them and their self-worth. There is a noticeable, albeit gradual, paradigmatic shift in international relation's position on matters relating to the sexes. Cook (1994:63) writing on human rights and women in national and international perspectives says 'prior to the new era of democratic dispensation, international law almost excluded women. They were not part of the important human rights forums where standards are defined and monitored'.

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Table 1.1: Women Representation in Parliament in some Nordic Countries

Country	Percentage of Women
Finland	39
Norway	36
Sweden	34
Denmark	33
Iceland	24

Source: - Report of the Equal Status Council
Conference held in Oslo, November 1991.

However, the preference for democratic rule, the resultant frustration occasioned especially by autocratic military regimes, and the willingness of the west to embrace democracy and promote human rights as contained in the United Nation's Charter, have led to the enthronement of democratic regimes in sub-Saharan African (SSA). These developments, coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the spread of democracy and the insistence on human rights as conditionality for aid by western donors have assisted women in their quest for equity in the socio-economic and political processes. Democracy just cannot thrive where about 50% of the population are not involved in the governance and democratic processes.

More than ever, women issues have now become foreign policy issues. The role of women in agricultural production, violence against women and women in development, which were hitherto unnoticed, are now receiving international attention. As a result of this new awareness, the granting of loans for agricultural and farm services which were hitherto a privilege only for men, is now being extended to women, while women issues have become conditionalities for obtaining loans from international agencies and donors (Sesay and Obadare, 1998:181). Efforts are also being made to ensure that women's reproductive duties are included in the calculation of the Gross National Development Product (GNDP). Bodies such as the World Bank, European Union (EU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Commonwealth, to mention a few, are paying increasing attention to women's development and empowerment all over the world. The period starting from 1970 is of particular importance to the women empowerment programme in the world, and in the

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Third World especially. Before this time, the UN did not take women issues seriously. However from 1970 on, the world body began taking great interest in the plight of women and started working for their empowerment in diverse ways.

In 1970, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution titled 'Programme of Concerted International Action for the Advancement of Women'. Since the 1970s there has been no looking back for women. World bodies such as the UN, World Bank, UNDP, IMF are no longer blind to the gendered effects of their policies. During the Women's Decade (1976-1985), women issues were discussed at various international fora, such as the Mexico Conference in 1975 and Nairobi Conference of 1985 where the "Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000" was adopted. Women from various parts of the world met and exchanged ideas on how to ensure that women's programmes and rights were integrated in the socio-economic and political developments of their countries. The Beijing Conference of 1995, which was attended by women from about 151 countries, including Ghana and Nigeria, was held to review the progress that women had made since the Nairobi Conference of 1985 and other world conferences that centred on the empowerment of women and the enforcement of human rights (Sesay and Odebiyi, 1998:182). The diverse representations at these international fora confirmed that although the degree of oppression and exploitation of women vary from place to place, the problem of women's empowerment is a global phenomenon. Udegbe (2001:4) talks of cultural feminism, which emphasises differences but stresses qualities that are characteristic of women that have been devalued. The industrialised,

feudal and developed nations are in one way or the other engaged in an attempt aimed at empowering women and ensuring equity with men. There is consequently, a demand transformation toward a female – valued society.

It has been documented that in no country of the world do women and men enjoy equal political status, access or opportunities to influence the direction of the society. As of 1996, women held only 12 percent of parliamentary seats and five percent of cabinet seats worldwide, while women constitute 70% of the absolute poor. (UNIFEM Report, 1996:17). It is however, unfortunate that the subjugation of women is more pronounced in developing countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, the two countries chosen for this study. It was indeed to alleviate this problem that UNIFEM made funds available to the two countries for translating the Beijing Conference decisions into the local languages to assist the women.

The subjugation of women in most countries of the Third World has been attributed to myths, folklore, culture, laws, traditions and religion. (Kolawole 1998:1, 15-29:86-121). Similar to the beliefs in other parts of the world, women in Ghana and Nigeria are destined for reproductive roles and supporting the men. Gender discrimination exists at all levels in both countries. This is being perpetuated among other things, by traditional systems and practices such as the legal systems that discriminate against women, the under-representation of women in formal political organisations and institutions, widespread poverty, poor access to productive resources and low levels of education. The political cultures of Ghana and Nigeria are influenced by the strong patriarchal assumptions that have put culture above nature. (Bryson, 1992:154). It is assumed that as a result of long period of

neglect and exclusion from the formal public sector, women do not organise formally. Many observers have come to agree that this has led women to seek alternative strategies to shape and control their lives, which are usually informal in nature, and as such, it is often difficult to match the men in almost all spheres of life, especially in politics. These developments, coupled with public policies, have contributed to the maintenance of patriarchal systems of governance. (Bridge 1995:41).

Women's struggle for emancipation and visibility in public spheres in Ghana and Nigeria is an age long struggle. Women in both countries have been involved in the struggle since the colonial period. This is evident in the Aba women's riot of 1929 and the Abeokuta women's demonstrations and sit-ins of 1947 in Nigeria. In Ghana, the women organised the cocoa trade boycott and supported Kwame Nkrumah's Convention Peoples Party (CPP) for the liberation of Ghana from colonial autocracy. According to Manuh (1985:9), 'in the struggle for independence, one market woman was worthy any dozen Achimota graduates....'. These fearless women took part in the struggles and took active part in the 1948 general strike against colonial rule. Tsikata, (1991:50-52) in an article 'Women and their organisation during CPP period' traced women's anti-colonial struggles until independence was won in 1957. The women sponsored rallies and demonstrations and made various contributions at CPP functions. In addition, they were involved in political struggles. The market women fought against their removal to obscure points in Accra, increases in market tolls and rents on stalls. Retail traders participated actively in the cocoa-holdups of 1917-1918, as the monopolistic activities of the European trading firms adversely affected women's business.

The earlier struggles by women in both countries were not, however, to challenge male dominance within the home or in public life. As demonstrated by the anti-colonial and independence struggles in the two countries, the early struggles were directed at the imperialists who were undermining their economic interests as well as dominating the political terrain at the expense of the traditional institutions. In Ghana, for instance, women protested against the suspension of the Ga Mantse, a female ruler. However, with feminism permeating SSA, there has been a change in their orientation and demands. These two countries are active actors in the international system and are greatly influenced by global developments. The growth of information and communication technologies has opened up new prospects on a global scale for women. Civil society is growing and is getting better organised, and collaborating with civil society in other countries. Women are now challenging male dominance in governance in their respective countries. Hassan (1992:6), writing about Nigeria posits that the enfranchisement of women benefited only a few women, a situation which the new feminists are determined to change by ensuring that women have the same opportunity as men to vote and be voted for. In a similar manner, Chukukere (1998:141), talks of the emergence of women 'on the geo-political and socio-economic scene determined to mobilise themselves for participation in the growth of their countries.

Democratic processes and women's empowerment programmes in Ghana and Nigeria owe a lot to the efforts of developmental agencies and international organisations, most of which are no longer interested in purely male oriented development or autocratic rule, and more in carrying women along in the on-going political liberalisation processes. More than ever, they

are insisting on women's rights as human rights and it is becoming conditionality for international assistance. Emphasis now centers on the promotion of the rights of women and the elimination of forms of discrimination and practices against them. This has led to the adoption of Women in Development (WID) Programmes by some donor agencies such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Bank. The UN has specially focused on women and their interests. As members of many of these international organisations and signatories to their charters, Ghana and Nigeria are equally affected by their decisions, many of which are binding on them. In 1979 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted, and both Nigeria and Ghana are signatories.

The argument here is that one important fall-out of the third wave of democratisation projects going on in Africa, is that groups that have hitherto been disempowered and politically disenfranchised through political exclusion are now demanding a space in the centre stage of politics (Ibrahim 1995:123). Previously muffled voices have become increasingly assertive and militant, demanding that they have a stake in the governance projects that must be recognised and respected. Most of these groups including youths, labour, the poor, the media and women, are no longer contented with remaining at the outer fringes of the political space, as they demand mainstreaming (Okojie, 1999:8). Collectively, they have since the turn of the 1990s, challenged the domination of the political space by despotic military cum civil regimes that give little or no attention to the upliftment of their segments of the society. Women are no longer satisfied with token appointments; they are demanding

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equality or equity with men. It has been argued that no country can claim to be democratic if the principles of social justice and respect for human rights and women's rights are not upheld and when about 50% of the adult population is excluded from the decision making process as a result of socio-cultural arrangements. Ibrahim (1997:18), is of the view that civil rights can be said to exist only when 'the liberty of the person.... And the empowerment of women....are maintained'.

Although various authors have identified many obstacles to the political mainstreaming of women and their struggle to achieve equality/equity with men, some contemporary radical feminists are of the view that the subordination of women is in men's interest. (Okojie, 1999:16 &18) emphasise that women's economic and social empowerment will be limited without political empowerment. Until women are adequately represented at the decision-making table, their concerns will remain marginalised. Brown et. al. (1996:6-10) in their work on women in local government in Ghana assert that women should be involved and play active roles in decision-making at all levels if their interests are to be protected. The need to realise or achieve this objective has given women the vigor to demand for political empowerment, which has become one of the major demands of the NGOs in Ghana and Nigeria as in other SSA States.

1.2   Research Problem

Much of the contemporary literature on women focuses on gender imbalance in the socio-economic and political spheres of the society. They assert that the socio-economic and political processes have worked to

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marginalise and inferiorise women. As a result of their long socialisation process, women especially in SSA have been psychologically tuned to accept their inferior status. In most of the available literature on the role of women in governance in Ghana and Nigeria, all the ethnic groups do not consider women as equal to men. (Okwuosa, 1992:15-16, Waylen 1996:1, Olaitan, 1998:73, Oquaye, 1980:239-240 and Steel and Cambell, 1982:236). There are however, some writers who strongly believe that women are not appendages of men, as women have been known to hold important political positions in their communities. (Sofola, 1998:32-34, Awe, 1991:39, and Mba, 1989:6). However, as a result of the recent worldwide feminist movement and democratisation, the issue of gender parity is high on the agenda of every civilised society. It is an issue that transcends national boundaries.

The world is currently concerned with democratisation and feminine issues including Ghana and Nigeria. It has been widely reported that women, children and the youth are especially vulnerable, and they have been the objects of focus for the last three decades. As a result of inherent structural and institutional discrimination (ISSER, 1998:1, Perbi, 1992:69-70), made worse by draconian government policies, women are politically and economically disadvantaged. Garba (1999:4) writing on the feminisation of poverty says 'women are generally subjected to varying kinds of discrimination at the household, societal and national levels'. They are discriminated against in employment credits, in land and ownership of other productive resources, leaving them vulnerable and poor.

This study looked at the roles women have played, are presently playing and will play in the governance and democratisation processes in

Ghana and Nigeria. There are varying arguments as to the political power of women in pre and postcolonial Africa. Some have argued that inequality between the sexes is a product of the Arab invasion and British colonisation as women had earlier played political roles as paramount chiefs, and in some cases even as first class rulers. However, the argument has been that despite the prominent roles of women in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, they are marginalised in the formal political arena in post-colonial Ghana and Nigeria. As their political roles became submerged, women have been reduced to burden bearers of the family and are unable to take active part in formal politics as they are always engaged in economic survival strategies that consume their time and energy.

It is however unfortunate that while women in some countries, especially the Nordic countries, are making steady progress at challenging and competing with the men in the socio-political and economic spheres, the disparity between the sexes in politics, governance and democratic processes in Ghana and Nigeria is still highly. It is however pertinent to mention here that in Ghana and Nigeria women are making inroads into the job markets and positions, which were hitherto the preserve of men. Nonetheless, women still have many obstacles on their way to achieving the much-desired political power which is essential for building their capacity, and the attainment of their leadership roles.

Military incursions into government in Ghana and Nigeria further reduced the chances and active participation of women in governance. This is because military establishments in both countries are patterned after those of their former colonial masters. They are male oriented and dominated. In view

of this, only a few women were ever appointed into important positions compared to the myriad of men in government.

On the whole, many narrow the invisibility of women in government to the biological divide and the countries' cultural past. Social biologists say women are naturally inferior to men and that differences between the sexes are the necessary and effective causes of the division of labour by sex in all societies. It has been argued that gender bias against women explains women's absence in high profile politics, hence their inability to decide or plan their future. This study examined the roles women have played, are presently playing and will play in the governance and democratisation processes in both Ghana and Nigeria.

1.3   Objectives Of The Study

The objectives of this study are divided into two main categories, the broad and the specific.

Broad Objective

Broadly the study to examined and compared women's participation in the governance and democratisation processes in Ghana and Nigeria as well as identify the impact of international organisations and globalisation on women, governance and democratisation in Nigeria and Ghana.

The Specific Objectives were:

- to probe the extent to which existing socio-cultural factors and arrangements in Ghana and Nigeria have affected the roles of women in governance and democracy;

- to identify, analyse and compare the obstacles to women's active participation in governance and democratisation in the two countries; and

- to propose the way forward for gender equity/equality in both countries.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1   Gender and Power Relations in Pre and Colonial Ghana and Nigeria

Issues of democracy, governance and women have of recent attracted the attention of scholars and practitioners of politics and governance globally. Most of the early literature is western in origin. However, African writers are increasingly involved in writing and documenting the African experiences of women in varying human endeavours including their participation in governance, democratisation and development.

According to Parpart and Staudt (1989), women constitute half or more of the electoral franchised population in African states, yet by the mid 1980's women constituted only 6% of the national legislative members in Africa. Since the 1980's, women in both countries have been making some in-roads into male dominated careers, with increasing numbers of women in paid employment. The question, however, is; are women in both countries making enough headway into governance and democratisation processes? There is little progress in achieving the 33% target of women in decision-making in Ghana and Nigeria as proposed by the UN. In Africa, it is only in Uganda and in Southern African countries that women are making some headway. By 1996 there were 50 women (18.1%) in a parliament of 276 in Uganda. In south Africa in the same year, there were 100 women (25%) in the lower house. At the same time, in Ghana women constituted 8% while in Nigeria, as at 1992 women constituted only 5.5% of all senior administrators and

managers in the country (National Council fo Women Development Report 1993).

According to Ama Aidoo (1988, 40-41), unlike in the west, the bravest, most independent and most innovative women of this world are from Africa. Many scholars and writers in the African context of feminism claim that African feminism is different from that of the west. This argument is based on the fact that the African women have played major and prominent roles in shaping the history and the destiny of the continent. Pre-colonial African women were not subordinate to the men, but were complementary to them. The sex segregation that existed amongst the people allowed the women to control their own affairs. Many writers including Ityavyar (1992:31) have expressed this view. While women in Ghana and Nigeria continue to stress the importance of women in pre-colonial times, the men maintained that absolute power belongs to men. Africa was known to have produced women fighters and leaders of note. For example, history has it that Nzingha of present day Angola fought the Portuguese to prevent them from taking over the country. Aidoo (1998:40) records that she put up a good fight against the Portuguese invaders, although she was eventually defeated. The history of the fight against apartheid in South Africa can never be complete without mention of the women who were actively involved and were prepared to pay the highest price along with their men. This conclusion is similar to Mba's (1987:89) and Awe's (1991:3) accounts of the developments in Nigeria. In Yorubaland, the Iyalode used to be an important part of the Oba's council of chiefs. As the council became marginal in the governance process so did the position of the Iyalode who used to be the spokesperson for the womenfolk. Madam Tinubu

of Lagos and Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwura of Ibadan are examples of Iyalodes who were so powerful that even the male chiefs respected and feared them. In the two countries under study, the Bristish indirect rule system focused exclusively on male traditional rulers. The British destroyed women's power base, which had not been put together even after independence.

Nwanunobi (2001:3) while discussing Nigerian women and colonialism says, "There were different rights for the sexes, but there were mechanisms for protecting the rights of women and for redressing violation of their rights". There were taboos rituals that upheld the rights of women. The colonial administration was not prepared to tamper with our traditional laws and customs as the position suited them. Yusuf (1991) and Ibrahim (1994) have expressed this same view. The seclusion of women in the north was an advantage to the British administrations rule.

In like manner, Manuh (1984:8) is of the view that under British Colonialism there was no attempt to deal with the position and status of women in traditional society. Instead, colonialism took advantage of their traditional practices, such as communal labor to ensure that both men and women worked on roads when required. While explicating these women, she says colonialism 'introduced' Christianity and 'Victorian morality and values into Ghanaian society and worsened the position of Ghanaian women. Awe, (1991 & 1992) and Alao (1998) share similar view on the impact of colonialism on Nigerian women.

Like colonialism, authoritarian modes of governance took power away from Africans, including Nigerians and Ghanaians. It took from women theIR ability to influence their leaders, and totally negates the principle of

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democratic governance, that was central to the anti-colonial struggles. Popular participation, rule of law, transparency, equality before the law, justice and regular elections, which are the bedrock of democracy and good governance were sidetracked to the benefit of a minority in the society. It is arguable that good governance and democratic governance are indeed not alien to Africa. The traditional institutions ensured there was accountability, justice, fair play and checks and balances. In these institutions, women were known to have played important roles as chiefs, priestesses and even as queens or palace women. This view has been corroborated by Jell-Bahlsen (198:39 & 40) while discussing the roles of the water priestesses of the Oru-Igbo in Easter Nigeria. Aidoo, (1998:47), and Amadiume (1995:36) express similar opinion. According to Yoroms (1994:48), before the colonial invasion into what later became Northern Nigeria, the caliphate system and the Borno Kingdom had an organised administrative, legal and political structure that involved every segment of the society-an order he says '..... runs from the highest authority down to the hamlet' (Ibid:49).

However, lately, many countries of the world that were hitherto authoritarian are changing their authoritarian structures of governance and are embracing democratic reforms. In Sartori's words (1991:449), 'liberal democracy suddenly finds itself without an enemy'. Many authors, like Ake, (1991:33) and Fawole, (1994:11) also maintain this stance. This development has been mainly attributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dramatic political changes that took place in Eastern Europe. These developments changed the East-West rivalry, and thereby ended the cold war, which has led to the expansion of the 'New World order'.

(Olowu et al, 1995:IX, Amuwo, 1992:3), and Kaela, 1994:174). Mbachu, (1994:18) also presented the view that the Gorbachev led political liberalisation and glasnost in the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe has finally caught up with the African continent and the rest of the Third World. Soremekun (1999:84) further states that with the recession of the power play between Moscow and Washington, the United States now focuses on the seemingly high minded ideal of democracy. The American Human Rights Group's annual report of 1996, attests to the growth of democracy in the world About a third of the 171 countries surveyed were willingly transforming from autocratic to democratic rule. Most of the countries in SSA are now under democratically elected governments. Ogbonnaya and Ofoese (1994:11) writing about the wave of democratisation in the African continent note that, 'Africa is in the grip of change that it did not author and cannot direct'. This gives credence to the external influence of the change sweeping through Africa. This political development is bringing in a new era of multi-party democracy in many African countries including Nigeria and Ghana (Mbachu 1994:11). The developments in Cote d'Ivoire since 2001 where the people rose against the overthrow of the democratically elected government is of interest to the discourse of democracy in Africa. With this development, the ideas of some African leaders such as Arap Moi of Kenya and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia that democracy cannot thrive in a plural society without it resulting to chaos are no longer tenable. The popular demand for democratic governance by many African states shows that,

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> '...the dusk seems to be fast approaching on the
> era of prolonged sit-tight rulership, one partyism,
> praetorianism and autocracy, while the dawn of
> democratic succession, pluralism and liberalism
> seems to be in the horison on the African political
> landscape' (Kawonise, 1992:129).

Many other scholars and writers such as Ake (1991) and Yusuf (1994:111) share this view. Oyong Peter Oyong, (1995) explains that even under authoritarian regimes in Africa many interest groups had been organising and mobilising, although it was not an easy task. The favourable international environment towards the end of the 1980s assisted Africans in their demand for democratic governance.

There is general agreement among African writers that democracy is not alien to Africa. Ahmed Yusuf (1994:113) says 'that the argument that democracy is alien to African tradition and culture is false'. He further explains that although the Asante, Oyo and Benin Empires and the Sokoto caliphate had their limitations, they practiced one or other form of democracy, different from western styled democratic governance, which many African countries, including Ghana and Nigeria, are imitating today. This is one of the reasons why Ake (1992:6), is of the opinion that African countries rather than "....try to reproduce they create new institutional forms and practices appropriate values and principles of democracy".

Discussing the level of women's participation in politics in Nigeria, Awe (1991:30) comments that 'throughout the whole of their history, the factor of gender has always been present and significant in the sharing of political power'. Even Mike Oquaye (1996:3-4) who attempted to differentiate between women's indirect power and men's authority still believes that women in some traditional societies wielded considerable power and influence. This view has

been well documented by Sartori, (2000:46-55) and Karl, 1995:1-5) to mention a few.

Oquaye (1996:4), in Women, Politics and Administration and quoting Aristotle notes that 'Only men were endowed with deliberative power and, therefore only men were fit to rule'.

> ....Women possessed the ability to deliberate only in an inconclusive from and should best be ruled by men in every body's interest... The male is naturally fitter to command than the female'. He further states that in Africa women are not expected to have power but to influence men in private.

Manuh (1984:3) places her discussion of Ghanaian women power on the argument that 'power and independence are possessed by only a tiny percentage of women, and even these women suffer from the traditional prejudices and beliefs'.

This leads to the issue of power and authority. Perpart, (1987:9-11) distinguishes between power and authority. The power of women has been linked to their indirect power over men as wives, priestesses, and palace women and in some cases, as chiefs. She further expresses the view that the authority to wield power is vested in their men, and maintains that, 'direct authoritative power held through elected or appointed offices, with its concomitant control over resource allocation, has been less available to women'. Until recently, great leadership was supposed to be the attribute of men. This is why Oquaye (1996) opined that women are ignored in drawing development plans. Their needs are examined from a male perspective and not meaningful discussed or provided for as dictated by democratic governance.

2.2 Impact of Culture and Tradition

The inability of women to participate adequately in the governance and democratic processes in African countries was hinged on biological reality on which the social stratification is also based. Various socio-cultural factors are believed to be responsible for this. The sex role of the female gender that dictates women's jobs has gone a long way to subordinate women to men. Some scholars and social biologists hold the view that biologyis the determinant factor in gender relations. A good example here is Olaitan (1998:1). In like manner, Haralambos and Heald (1988:369 & 373), contend that 'anatomy is a destiny'. These social biologists believe that women by nature of their sex are inferior to men. Imam (1998:2) also corroborates this view. She posits that women's biological role confines them to their homes, hence their exclusion form political decision-making, processes.

African traditional languages are replete with proverbs and wise sayings that depict the cultural perception of an African woman. A lot of these sayings have been documented by Kolawole (1998); in 'Gender Perceptions and Development in Africa'. Uformata (1998:66) gives an illustration of this using Nancy Nwendamseke's example of a belief in Tanzania that says '…if a boy gets into the kitchen and begins to cook, he will grow breasts like girls'. These cultural perceptions confirm Nhiwatiwa's, (1989:36) earlier view that societal expectations of a woman's behaviour have slowed her down.

Many African scholars of feminism hold culture and tradition responsible for the stratification and the subordination of women. The women are subjected to many discriminatory practices such as negative inheritance 'laws', early and forceful marriages and the law of widowhood. All these

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factors put the women at a disadvantage. Brown et al (196); Parpart and Staudt (1990), Afonja (1981), Shettima (1995), Mama (1998) lend their voices to this belief. The Inter-Parliamentary Report of 1989 explains that the societal expectations of a woman's behaviour put her at a disadvantage. The perception by society of a woman as a docile being hinders them from engaging in hot arguments or get involved in controversial debates. As in most parts of the world, the women's acceptable role in the countries under study is that of supporting their husbands. Maggie Humm (1997) has this to say, that patriarchy hinders the women from entering into the productive sphere.

Dzodzi Tsikata (1996) noted that in Ghana only a few women are able to break away from the socio-cultural arrangements that tie them down and enter the male dominated professions and activities such as politics. Despite the fact that some parts of Ghana are matriarchal, female subordination is still evident even in those areas. In the matriarchal society, the women and children can live apart from their husbands, a situation that adds to the women's economic burden, Steel and Campbell (1982), Oquaye (1980). The observation of Aina (1998:8) that, "the Nigerian woman is born into a culture of male supremacy", corroborates this view. Woodford-Barger (1997) contends that gender conceptions by most men and women in both patriarchal and matrilineal groups include the 'pervasive' notion of gender division of power in which the males are associated with authority and power.

There is more or less a consensus that in the traditional Ghanaian and Nigerian societies, women have only a limited measure of power. In the past, women's political participation was limited in both countries, despite the fact

that political participation is the only avenue to power. Lithur (2000:2) commenting on the newly constituted House of Chiefs in Ghana, criticised the government because there was no female member of the house as even revered Queen Mother of the Ashantis was not included.

Jegede (1994) in his work on women and political participation in Nigeria noted the sexual inequality in power sharing in traditional African societies. He also posited that in Africa, the status of the woman is lower than that of the man; and that the husband's status usually determines a woman's status. Inequalities in political representation or at the workplace are intricately tied to inequalities in the family or household. In the traditional African society, certain roles are the preserves of the men. Awe (1991:36) writing about the political power of Nigerian women in pre-colonial times, says '....that virtually in all cases the men had a constant and greater grip over the political life of their society'; Manuh (1988:17 & 1998:44) says women have always had a lower status than men and have only been able to make some inroads, as a result of persistent struggles. She noted the lower status of women as 'married woman is under the full control of her husband and she is expected to obey him'. The above observation tallies with Aidoo's view (1998:44) that 'women have been in trouble for a long time in Africa', a situation that led to the call at the Kampala Conference in 1985 that for women to participate in the public sphere, women must first advocate a 'democratic home' (Tripp 1991:36). This will involve a socialisation that will change the cultural norms of gender relations, including parental attitudes and practices regarding the position of sons and daughters. The undemocratic home front or family structure is central to gender discrimination, a situation

that has continued to marginalise women in capacity building or in taking part in democratic processes or governance.

In both Ghana and Nigeria, numerous cultural practices work against the political interests of the women. Unfortunately, role stereotyping of women in both countries is very strong, making it difficult for women to 'transcend the barriers and successfully capture political power positions (Okwuosa 1992:15). Gender stereotyping is a major problem and factor contributing to the low participation of women in developmental processes. (Okwuosa , Ibid: 15-17), states further that the problem of child-marriage prevents a good proportion of the women from taking part in their country's governance. Culture and biology are interwoven in determining the status of women. According to Nhiwatwa (1989:34) the evolution of roles is borne out of the biological differences between men and women, since prehistoric times when men dealt with the external environment and women attended to the home and children. She says further '....that traditions and attitudes die hard, which makes the woman to choose between the competing demands of her family and her job in an environment that is usually hostile as culture assigns gender roles'. Polygamy, widowhood practices, girl-child marriage, inheritance rights are some of the factors that subjugate women to the men, a process which is passed down through the socialisation process. Aina (1998:69-70) and Manuh (1984:4) like many others, believe that although women had a measure of power in pre-colonial times, traditionally, power to participate in active governance belonged to men. For Offei-Aboagye (1996:29) '....female authority is considered to be mainly advisory as in the case of the role of a queen mother' in Ghana and the priestesses of the shrine in Nigeria.

2.3   Religion and Gender Relations in Ghana and Nigeria

Religion has always been a major factor in the disparity that exists between men and women. This is largely based on the gender bias interpretation of religious injunctions, where only a few women possess power and independence which Manuh (1984:4-6) says is limited to a tiny percentage of the women. Historically, religion has been a major vehicle for gender ideologies that oppress women (Mama, 1996:29). In the realm of religion, African women have played active roles as priestesses of the shrines. The traditional African religion allows for women's participation and many positions were under the sole control of women. In Nigeria and Ghana, as in many other African countries, religion, tradition and government could not be separated. Because of this, only a few women had a level or semblance of power, which allowed them a measure of political participation. For example, the Onitsha women had important political power that was based on their religious connections to town shrines.

On the other hand, many writers including those writing on the advantages opened to women in the pre-colonial period agree that tradition and religion also discriminated against women. Henderson (1997) observed that the Omu's role was only complementary to the role of the Obi. In addition, 'no woman under the age of menopause could know the secrets of the masquerade society. It was not until the early 20th century that women could belong to age-sets. Age –sets were major aspects of town-wide political action, (Henderson, 1997:219). The situation in Ghana is similar; Women's primary role is primarily, that of a wife and mother and not as political activist and community leader, (Brown et al 1996:9).

In Nigeria and Ghana, traditional religions were respected before the British arrived. Religion; the cults and deities served both spiritual and governance purposes in the pre-colonial societies of Ghana and Nigeria as in many other SSA States. Women also played prominent positions in the cults. These priestesses were central to good governance in pre-colonial Ghana and Nigeria. They provided the checks and balances, which are essential components of good governance, as well as checking the arbitrariness of the kings. Unfortunately, the African religion, which produces these priests and priestesses was not recognised by the British colonialists. The leaders of cults such as the Ogboni, Sango were no longer recognised, thereby destroying the African practice that politics and religion go hand in hand. The women's political power bases as custodian of the shrines were no longer of importance to the new British colonial administration, a situation that continued even after both countries had attained their independence.

Thus, beginning in the colonial era, there has been a gradual process of masculinisation of the political administration in the two countries. Okonjo (1976:100) as the 'unisexual framework of politics has referred to this. Of note, here are the Akans, where the queen mothers used to be powerful. As in some West African countries, the Chamba of Benue in Northern Nigeria, and the Ashanti of Ghana had a record of female rule and power sharing with men. The British refused to recognise the female titles and even made the lesser chiefs superior to the women titleholders. This, in a way, was similar to what operated among the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria. In Okonjo's (1976:103) words:

All the Igbos of each political unit to the West of the Niger were subject to two monarchs, both of whom were crowned and acknowledge heads who lived in palaces and ruled from thrones. The two monarchs were male (obi) who in theory was acknowledged head (father) of the whole community but also in practice was concerned more with the male section of the community and the female (Omu) who in theory was acknowledged the mother of the whole community but who in practice was charged with concern for the female section.

The British ignored the traditional cosmologies where women had a comfortable and acceptable place, and made a distinction between political and religious matters and introduced new forms of societal organisations that challenged the existing institutions and norms. The divine water-Goddess of Igbo cosmology, was pivotal in the political life of the people. The deities in the other parts of Nigeria, for example, the Binis, the Itshekiris which were central to their political life, were relegated to the background significantly, the status quo was preserved after independence, as the new mode of governance and laws became the acceptable norms in both countries.

Apart from traditional religion, Islam and Christianity as practiced in Nigeria and Ghana encourage male supremacy. Yusuf (1992:92), and Callaway and Creevey (1989:80), among others, have discussed the influence of Islam on the political participation of women. They claim that Islam regulates all aspects of human life, as it does not separate the society from religion. It regulates the relationship between the sexes and believes that the family is the centre of the Islamic social order. The Quranic provisions were interpreted in the light of the standards of the tribal law. The Islamic law has continued to reflect the patriarchal nature of society based on male superiority. Islam in Nigeria and Ghana as in the other countries, has

tremendous influences on the lives of the people, as it constraint women's activities. This study has revealed that Islam presents a religious dimension to women in development. The Islamic ideology defines women primarily in relation to men as stated below:

> *Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them excel more than the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. her chastity, property etc). as to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their beds, (and last0 beat them (lightly if it is useful) but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely Allah is ever Most High, Great. (Surah IV:34).*

Islam, like Christianity, sanctions the dependent status of women on men. This is more so as the women end up in seclusion, through early marriage and purdah. These are barriers to adult females' exercising their fundamental rights as they are cut away from exercising their rights very early in life, and have literally prevented a large proportion of women from participating in governance and democratic processes. Very early, in life, girls are removed from exposure to political stimuli, talk less of running for public offices, which negates Okwuosa's view (1992):16-17) that 'Politics is about the competition for the control of the public policy-making process within the organised framework of government'. To attain these positions of power there is the need for participation. There can be no political power without political participation, that is, a woman in purdah is not likely to be involved in the governance and democratic processes of her country. Similarly, Christianity initially preached subordination of women to men.

In the Christian religion, women have lower status than men. Christianity, like Islam, emphasises the superiority of the man as shown in these verses from the Holy Bible.

> *But I would have you know that, the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the women is the man; (1st Corinthians 11:3).*

> *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence (Ephesians 5:22)*

Religions have been used as a major 'vehicle' of gender ideologies that have oppressed women. Although traditional religion gave women a measure of power, religion, whether traditional, Islam or Christian, is a major hindrance to women's emancipation. Christianity stresses the domestication of women, resulting in the public-private dichotomy with the men securely in change of public affairs.

2.4   Women and Economic Empowerment in Ghana and Nigeria

While some scholars hold biology, culture and tradition responsible for women's position in society, many are of the opinion that women in Africa unlike those in the west, played active roles in the political processes in their communities before the arrival of the colonisers. Akande et al (eds) (1997) and Oppong (1983) like others, agree that African women had always enjoyed some measure of power based on the 'dual-sex' system of the socio-political power sharing developed by the African peoples. The stance of writers like Sofola (1998:53-54) is that important changes occurred in the socio-economic and political arrangements in the SSA because of

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colonisation. In short, the colonial powers were blamed for the political subjugation of women in Africa today. Mba (1989:2) holds the view that colonialism exploited both men and women, but says the women were more exploited than men, as their power bases were not recognised. The belief, of many of these authors and scholars is that colonialism altered the material base of Africa, and with it, the social and political spheres of life.

The introduction of capitalism through colonialism had adverse effects on the role of women. Colonialism brought to the people a new social order that was forcibly imposed on them. The introduction of cash crops that were needed for the European industries led to the British export trade. Men were introduced to the production of cash crops while the women continued with the production of subsistence crops. The effect of this is that the men were engaged in the British-export trade, which was a male dominated while women engaged mainly, in internal trade. This development gave the men greater economic power over women. The limited wealth of women made them subordinate to the men who by virtue of their paid labour, in the cash crops, the export trade and mining become wealthier. As a result of this set-up and development, there was a change in the social life of the people, and women's status significantly, became inferior to that of men. The trend whereby men because of the introduction of paid labour, moved to towns and cities, thereby leaving the women to care, and in some cases, also to cater for the family, is largely a legacy of colonialism. Women were exploited because of increasing responsibilities, as they often had to be father, mother, husband and wife. This added burden reduced the chances of women's participation formal commercial activities, and consequently their status vis-à-vis that of

men. This trend is still common in both countries, as women are still unprepared for public office. It is also much easier for men to change jobs and relocate than women who are usually tied down by family responsibilities. This restriction is a major constraint to women's political participation. In the civil service, men were at advantage as they were preferred to women. When women were employed, they had to leave their jobs after marriage or when the get pregnant.

Gender differential has also been attributed to the better economic status of men. Men's economic advantage over the women explains the social and political situation of women in Nigeria and Ghana. Many scholars have argued that the British-export trade became male dominated while internal trade remained primarily a female affair. Thus, at independence, the men were more economically active and in terms of work experience, they had gathered better experience. Female labour participation was at the lower level, and usually they entered the service at a later age than the men. Culture has continued to affect their growth. A report by the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Legon, Ghana, (1998:1) noted that, '.....though Ghanaian women had traditionally combined reproductive and productive roles, the colonial government obliged them to choose either a career or the family, and as late as 1951, was still recommending that all serving female officers should leave the service on their second pregnancy'. Akande (1997:13) is of the opinion that the feminisation of poverty is a global phenomenon affecting the advancement of women and development in particular. Women tend to experience poverty more acutely and differently due to socio-cultural factors. Women tend to opt

for the creation of self-employed activities. Baden & Milward 91995) observed that there is a great concentration of women in the informal sector and that one of the major reasons why women are more vulnerable to poverty than men is their differential access to employment and women's lower earning capacity within the labour markets since there are institutional and ideological factors which operate to exclude women or narrow their employment options.

Haralambos (1980:401) writing from women and society advocates liberalising economic class structure among others to end men's domination. In addition he suggested an end to discrimination in the labour market which would also involve the abolition of the sexual division of labour and the removal of distinctions between 'men's jobs and 'women's jobs. Although the percentage of men vis-à-vis women in highly paid employment is still much higher, there is however an emerging trend, where women are entering the labour market more than ever before.

2.5   Education and Women Empowerment

Much has been written on the importance of education: that is, formal and informal education are critical factors for empowerment and emancipation. Manuh (1985:5) stresses that the limited education that was open to girls encouraged them to continue their 'domestic functions by emphasising good behaviour and feminine skills such as needlework, crochet and cookery'. As noted earlier, the education was to produce good wives for the new crop of African civil servants. Colonial education produced women with low status jobs and poor economic status compared to men. In like manner, Islamic education emphasised male education. Yusuf (1991:105) is

of the view that in Islamic education, only men were privileged to be educated. She noted further, that the educational for girls or women was just enough for them to pray or help their children.

There is however a general view that unlike Islam, Christianity encourage women education. Clark (1998:79) sees education as an essential tool for women's empowerment. Clark also maintains that Christian Religion exposed the women to limited organisational and career skills. Manuh (1984:38) witting on Law and Status of Women in Ghana noted that the colonial education conceived for girls was to produce 'young women to be fitting companions for the rising crop of educated young men'. This is in line with the views of Awe (1991) and Alao (1998) that the colonial education for girls in Nigeria was to make them good wives. It has been documented that illiteracy is the bane of African development. It is a major constraint to women's struggle for empowerment as their illiteracy level is much higher than that of men. The percentage of primary school aged girls who were not attending school by 1999 in Ghana was 26% and in Nigeria 51%. This is rather high, especially in Nigeria where over 50% of school aged children were still kept out of school. According to Alao (1998:84) between 1988 and 1989 female enrolment in primary school was only 45%. Chief Nike Akande, (1997:4) observed in a paper delivered at a conference at the Legon University in Accra, Ghana, that women make up half of the population in Nigeria and most do not have formal education', and so cannot enter the decision-making process. Many African scholars also share the view that in the colonial period, schools were opened for men much earlier than for women. The missionary school that actually catered for the girls opened much

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later. It was argued that men's early access to education made them an important pressure group and indirectly prepared them for the future. The early exposure of men to education also gave them a lead over the women in other important spheres. According to Awe (1991 & 1992), it was an education which taught the women to be "good wives, good mothers and good ornaments of society", a view also shared by Alao (1998:93).

2.6 United Nations and Gender Mainstreaming

Within the last two decades women all over including those in Ghana and Nigeria, have made important stride into political processes. UNIFEM Report of the world, (1996), states that as a result of the global initiative, women are coming together to form new and stronger national, regional and international networks to demand for mainstreaming in the political processes of their nations. Prugl (1996) observes that as a result of globalisation, African states are being encouraged to take women issues serious. The UN has been credited for championing women's demands. It is a well-acknowledged fact that women's rights were not taken seriously before the women's decade of 1976-85. According to Sesay and Obadare (1998), prior to this time, women issues only occupied the 'backburner' as they remained the 'silent majority'; a view also shared by writers such as Lithur (2000) and Ezeigbo (1996:103).

The UN position on women issues, according to many, scholars has gone a long way in encouraging women to organise. The conferences it held and the agencies it established have contributed to women's empowerment. The Beijing Conference of 1995 for instance, was well attended by both government and non-government bodies. The Beijing Platform For Action

(PFA) is an important document for women's empowerment in all countries including Nigeria and Ghana, for it committed the members to two strategic goals:

- To take measures to ensure women's access to full participation in power structures and decision-making.

- To increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

The activities of the UN have further sensitised the civil society and encouraged the growth of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) dedicated to empowering women. Democracy's basic principle of popular participation is of advantage to the women empowerment project as democracy asserts that all people should be given equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes and administration of the State[18]. The hitherto marginalised groups, minorities, including women, are seising the advantage of the removal of roadblocks in their way to demand for (1992:2) and Jegede, (1994:97-98) also reinstated this view. Tsikata (1996:9) observed in the case of Ghana, that the chances of women are affected by inequalities in gender relations. Manuh (1984:3) confirmed this view when she said 'in all the ethnic groups in Ghana, women are not considered the equals of men', a belief she says, is "reinforced by social practices and religious beliefs". The problematisation of gender relations in the family has transferred to the society. As a result of democracy, more women's groups are coming up to challenge their marginalisation in both countries, as is the case in most SSA countries.

Many scholars and authors believe that women who constitute 50% of the population are nonetheless marginalised in the political processes. This has been corroborated in the UNIFEM Report (1996:17) and the Parliamentary Union Report, No. 6 (2000:6). It has been stressed that for democratic governance to be put in place, women must participate in public affairs. The Parliamentary Union Report concludes that "….if women are not present at policy and decision-making levels, there is a democratic deficit".

Feminism is out to understand the nature of the oppression of women and devise strategies to end the oppression, a view upheld by Lovenduski (1996:6). Yates (1977:2), says 'Feminism as an emancipatory project specifically aims at the total liberation of women from the yoke of traditional exploitation in various dimensions in different historical epochs'. Because of colonialism, most African countries did not benefit from the early feminist movements. By the late 1960s, Feminism had taken a more dynamic turn; a stage popularly referred to as the 'third wave', and had penetrated the south, including Ghana and Nigeria. Because of global developments, human rights have come to the centre stage of developmental strategies; as a result of which, contemporary socio-political discourse is giving women issues a significant measure of concern.

Women in Third World countries are seising the opportunity and are demanding for enhanced chances and opportunities for political participation. Although feminism is a global phenomenon, it is important to note that African feminism differs from that of the earlier feminist movements of the West, because of ethnographic differences. African feminism includes categories peculiar to Africa such as matriarchy, colonialism and slave trade. Mama

(1999:30), Aina (1998:77) and Udegbe, (2000:1) contend that feminists differ in their analysis of the causes of gender inequalities and therefore in their recommendations for changing the imbalance. Udegbe states further that feminist perspectives differ from culture to culture, and explains the various feminist perspectives. Unfortunately, the West, being the dominant group in the feminist movement, has given the movement on overwhelmingly western outlook, Oakley (1981:39). But as result of the 3rd wave of feminism and democratisation in most African countries, African women including those of Nigeria and Ghana, are organising to ensure that women are made the central issues in sustainable development plans.

The Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) has been on for a long time, yet many governments have not done much about it. Sesay and Obadare (1998:181), observed that 'the growing attention which women issues are given, both in scholarly discourse and public policy belies the reality of gender being mainly a 20th century phenomenon'. They further posit that until 1972, when the General Assembly proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year, not much was being done for empowering women as they were the silent majority. Although the UN affirms its faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity and the equality of men and women, not much was done until the 1970s. This is despite the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 proclaimed.

> *All human beings are born free and equal indignity and rights… Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedom set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status…(Article 1 &2).*

The adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), should thus be seen as a step in the right direction in women's emancipation and participation, as it called to respect for

> *...the full and complete rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community.*

Prior to the 1970s, the United Nation did not take women's rights issues seriously, for its activities were centred on women as mothers and sponsored World Conference of the International Women's Year held in Mexico in 1975, was the first United Nations World Conference on Women. With the declaration of 1975-1985 as the Decade for Women, during which many conferences were held, the consciousness of women in the Third World as in other parts of the world was raised. The decade changed the global attitude to women issues. It gave international recognition to the women's movement and the UN became an international pressure group. The UN insistence on the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and maintaining the cause of peace required the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields, and it is yielding fruits. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) of 1995 is an added impetus for the in the decision-making processes of their respective countries. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Report of 1995 re-emphasised this view, as it stated that development should be woven around both men and women on equal terms.

2.7   Civil Society and Women's Political Participation

According to MacGraffe, (1988:168) "the civil society is an arena where manifold social movements and civic organisations from all classes attempt to constitute themselves into an assemble of arrangements, so that they can express themselves and advance their interests". These groups usually organise to ward off repression, they are different from government, but are designed to influence public policy. The Civil Society is an intermediate associational realm situated between the state on one side and the basic building blocks of society on the other. Pereira (2001:156) holds a similar view as many other scholars. She says that the concept of the Civil Society has been variously descried as a relational one, 'in which the Civil Society connects state and society..' She states further that the Civil Society is central to contemporary discourses on democracy and democratisation. She also noted that the concept of the civil society is important for the understanding of women's associational like across Africa since 1985. These groups have formed an important link between the State and the people. One notable thing about women's Civil Society groups, is that they are seen as having important roles to play in improving the lot of the people especially the women. This is in agreement with Cohen and Arato's position (1992:18) that '...without active participation on the part of the citisens in egalitarian institutions and civil organisations, there will be no way of maintaining the democratic character of the political culture or social and political institutions'.

With, the re-emergence of democratic rule, there are new forms of societal organisations and interactions that are now challenging existing institutions and norms. There has been a phenomenal growth in people

oriented groups including women's groups to challenge the autocratic governance structures of both the military and civilian oligarchies. African women have become adept at organising both within and across borders and making some important legal and political gains in the struggle for equality.

Jaquette (1994:4) tries to differentiate between the old-style interest groups whose goals were narrow with the contemporary ones that focus 'on grass-roots politics, create horisontal, and directly democratic associations, and target the social domain of civil society rather than the economy or the state'. The new social movements are reintroducing the normative dimension of social action into political life for women. Although Ake (1992:1) sees Africa as far from the notion of Civil Society, while Mandani (1995) sees woman anti-colonial struggle in the realm of Civil Society. Besides, Mba (1997) documents the activities of women's organisations during the colonial era. She refers to women's anti-colonial administration groups even during the repressive and autocratic British rule. In like manner, Amadinme (1987) refers to the various riots and demonstration by women against the British.

2.8   Conclusion

The above review suggests that women in Ghana and Nigeria share some historical experiences that subjugate and inferiorise them in pre and postcolonial era. Though different in geographical location, Ghana and Nigerian women were pawns in their men's world. The study is to compare the similarities and dissimilarities in women's experiences in both countries thus underscoring how these affect their empowerment in the political arena. My findings, I hope, will enable governments in both countries, women's

organisation, and other Civil Society groups to institute programmes that will change women's conditions for the better, as well as enhance their participation in governance and democratisation processes in their respective countries. Since a comparative study of this nature has not been done, it will also provide information to researchers in the field.

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CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

3.1   Feminist Political Theory

The study adopts the Feminist Political Economic Theory. According to Amina Mama (1998:11-12), feminist theory of the state tells us that states, like other forms of social organisation, are gendered, and that international studies suggest that the manner in which gender politics is articulated and played out vary widely across the different types of states. Many African feminist scholars affirm this view. The significant differences in the politico-legal status of women across the diverse political systems in the world predispose the use of the same theoretical framework in analysing different peoples. Stamp (1989:9), among others, shares this view. The argument is that no single theory can explain women's position. This is based on the premise that women come from varying classes, races and cultures. Lewis (1983: 70-85) further explains that 'class, race and culture are also powerful determinants and therefore create differences that must be taken into account.... The category "women" is pluralistic, so treating women as a homogenous group results in a theorising process no better than that of the traditional andocentric approach'. The adverse reaction of women at the Mexico Conference of 1975, to the imposition of western gender values on Africans confirms this. Unlike in the west where the women inhabit the private sphere, African women occupy both private and public spheres along with their men.

Liberal Feminist Theory

Liberal feminism has its roots in the 16th and 17th centuries with the ideals of liberty and equality based on man's rationality and the premise of sharp demarcation between public and private spheres, and that the individuals are paramount. Stamp (1989:15) reachoes this principle, "the primary object of any study in liberalism is the individuals', which Bryson (1994:159) corroborates, saying 'women are individuals possessed of reason and that as such they are entitled to full human rights and they should therefore be free to choose their role in life and explore their full potential in competition with men'. This was the guiding principle during the first wave of feminism when women demanded for the right to education, employment, property and the vote. Unfortunately, liberal feminism does not conceptualise all the structures of oppression. Stamp (1989:15-16) Simone de Beauviour in Bryson (1992:159). Even for the women in the West, the theory was not adequate, as it has not met the gola of legal equality or addressed the crucial issue of revealing 'to women the possibilities of freedom and fulfillment outside the home and the artificial nature of the restrictions that currently confined them'. Liberal feminism ignores biological differences between the sexes and the fact that women have interests opposed to that of men. The ideal of equality of sexes is wrong. Boucher (1998) writing on the same issues, states that '... the ways which they are different from each other and that these differences should be celebrated rather than ignored'. The liberal approach is sex blind.

Traditional Marxist Feminist Theory

Another feminist theory is the traditional Marxist theory that rejects biological differences as basis for varying gender roles. The theory of based on family, private property and the state which result in the defeat of the female sex, the defeat of mother-right and the establishment of the family. Amadiume (1995:35), criticizing Marx and Engels in her work on "Gender, Political Systems and Social Movements', says that women's oppression does not arise solely from the division of society into classes and the development

The Marxist Feminist view that it is, only under modern conditions of production that women could realise their potential for free autonomous action has been criticized extensively. It rejects biology as basis for gender differences, a position that is clearly seen even in modern day Ghana and Nigeria where despite the introduction of some modern conditions of production, women still do not have a fair share of government or executive appointments. This theory concentrates on states, family and class structures of oppression, Amadiume, (1995:40-41) argues that this theory does not fit Africa as it speaks about the defeat of the patriarchal family and there was no defeat of matriarchy, a system that existed long before class formations. The female-headed matrilineal culture of Africa is different from the passive nature of women in the western marriages. The pre-colonial governance of the various communities in Ghana and Nigeria testify to this. Another criticism of this theory is that Marx did not use it as feminist theory, as used today. Histories dealt more with conflicts between social classes, with the dominant class oppressing the other classes. Contrary to this view, women interests unite them in a common sisterhood that transcends the division of class or

race as can be seen at the international level at which women issues are considered.

Marxist feminism sees women in a class struggle, but that alone cannot adequately explain the situation of women in Africa. The African's dual-sex and other non-western issues must also be considered. Therefore a holistic concept must be adopted which will be more embracing and which will capture the experiences of the African woman.

Radical Feminist Theory

On the other hand Radical Feminism that uses Marxist language of oppression, sees women as an oppressed class and the oppression is based on patriarchy. Pereira (2000:6) says 'We cannot understand radical feminism's emphasis on all women forming a sex class'. This theory is baed on the assumption that patriarchy is universal as it is in Europe. According to Bryson (1994:181) patriarchy is the key term. This claim is wrong as can be seen in Africa, where patriarchal, matriarchal and matrilineal lineages exist. The single sex system of Europe does not hold in SSA. For example, the Akans of Ghana are matriarchal and there exist the matrilineal Arochukwu clans of Nigeria. Hence, theorising on Africa, based on the patriarchal theory is faulty, and it will produce faulty results, as it reduces cultural diversity, and impedes feminist progress especially in the Third World, to which Ghana and Nigeria belong.

Social Feminist Theory

Social feminism is about the best theoretical framework of the feminist theory, as it embraces historical, materialist method of Marx and Engels with the radical feminist idea that the 'personal is political' and that gender oppression cuts across class lines. The fact that it considers gender differences in its concepts and female biology endeared it to many. It believes that an individual life is shaped by her sex and gender assignment, and that politics cannot be separated from economics Pereira (2001:8). It does not give priority to class or gender oppression.

Although western feminist concerns are also inherent in Africa, African feminist scholars tend to combine theories in their research, as they are not ready to use western categories for explaining African situations, since there are inherent differences in gender relations in the two societies. Pereira, (2000:3) is of the view that in Europe and North America, feminist theory grew out of 'an organic connection between feminism in the academy and women's movements'. This, she says, is not quite the same in Africa, because she believes that women studies in Africa are 'charting their own course'. Mama (1996:67) also posits that although international development has assisted African countries, other regional and national developments must be considered. Thus, exclusive dependence on western values and theories in explaining African situations will not be adequate for this study. In order to address the issue of feminism in Nigeria and Ghana therefore, it is necessary and expedient to rise above any concept that will limit the work in explaining their situations in the developing countries. The approach must of necessity, be multidimensional, embracing all facets of human endeavour or experience.

It must take into account the society's customs, environment, beliefs, material well-being, institutions, economic situation and globalisation. Patricia Stamp (1989:3) is of the view that the most appropriate feminist theory that will capture the diverse societies should be pluralistic in nature, and she refers to this as 'Feminist Political Economic Theory (FPET). We recognise that feminists differ in their analysis of the causes of gender inequalities, which has also influenced the various recommendations for change.

In view of the feminist diversity, there is no acceptable single concept but concepts of which the most frequently cited are liberal, radical, traditional Marxist and social feminists. This study did not rely on concepts that are narrow in scope and simplistic, as that would not produce the desired results. It therefore utilised a holistic approach to the study of Ghanaian and Nigerian women based on their socio- cultural experiences in the pre, colonial and postcolonial periods. Amadiume (1995:55), explains that the earlier theories (Liberal, Radical, Marxist and Social Feminist) cannot singly explain the pre-capitalist and capitalist societies of the Third World to which Ghana and Nigeria belong. She agrees with Stamp that combining the socialist and liberal theories will be appropriate for the study of African Feminism. For example, Marxist feminism sees women in a class struggle, but that cannot adequately explain the situation of women in African. Thus, African's dual-sex roles and other non-western issues must be taken into consideration.

Commenting on the African dual-sex role, unlike the European 'single-sex' role, Amadiume (1995:35-36) asserts that African women have contributed immensely to the socio-economic and political development of their communities. African women also have different kingship and family

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relationships that are different from those of the West. In deciding on using the Feminist Political Economy Theory in this study, the differences between the West's and Africa's economic, political and gender relations were also fully taken into cognisance. Cook (1994:10-12) shares the view that women do not have the same attributes and experiences as a result of which international standards cannot be set for the position of women in the society. African women do not support the idea of the universality of causes of subordination. Cook stated further that western feminism was designed to meet the needs of white women; a feminism, which Africans believe, is characterised by racist arrogance. This study, accordingly, focused on the unique experiences of African women in its choice of theoretical concept. The Feminist Political Economy Theory (FPET) that builds on socialist theory is a more encompassing one and it is pluralistic in its approach, involving more non-western categories than others do. It incorporates ethnocentrism and economics as well as African experiences including colonialism, thus making it adequate and appropriate for the study. While Marxist Feminism sees capitalism as the primary cause of gender differential treatment, and Radical Feminism sees men as the oppressors who refuse to see gender inequalities in the arena of public life, Feminist Political Economy Theory (FPET) addresses the social, economic, political and cultural inequalities in women's lives. FPET represents the concrete aspirations and struggles of African women, and points to certain experiences and realities that are not sufficiently accounted by existing forms of struggles and practices of social science. As it is didactically engaged with other forms of consciousness and struggles, it is more 'likely to leave us clearer and more incisive in the end' (Ake, 1992:40).

In choosing the FPET framework for the study, the social, political and the economic environments in which women in Ghana and Nigeria operate, as well as their history were also considered. Apart from the devaluation of women's labour in both the developed and developing countries of the world, there are some values that are specific to African women generally, and for this study, women in Nigeria and Ghana, in particular as a result of their experiences and locations. The two countries' political-economy experiences differ from those of the capitalist west. First, it was the slave trade, followed by almost one hundred years of British Colonial rule. African women's struggles have, accordingly, been shaped by forceful imperial domination, which in various forms took away from the women their leadership roles, and substituted the African dual-sex system with the British single-sex (passive sex) system. Harrison, (1997:123) maintains that feminist struggles in Africa have been grounded in anti-colonialist and nationalist struggles; variables that are absent in women's struggles in most parts of the West. Besides, apart from the autocratic colonial rule, Ghana and Nigeria have after independence witnessed violent takeovers of power and imposition of military rule by their armed forces. The coercive incursions of the military into the political and economic arenas have accordingly adversely affected women, as the military in both countries is almost exclusively male dominated, especially at the upper echelons.

Another factor that makes SSA different from the West is family relationships. The kin relations in pre-colonial Africa, unlike those in the West, were very strong. Stamp (1989:20), writing about kingship relations in Africa says that "economic work and fulfillment of kin obligations were inseparable

both conceptually and in practice". In addition, African Feminism is different from western feminism as it does not antagonise men. There is a communality of struggle as demonstrated in the struggle for independence. Furthermore, African feminism also reveres motherhood and wifehood institutions. African women are generally committed to the institution of the family and do not want to do without their men. The bane of their struggle, therefore, is that they ,and eradicate gender discrimination, (Udegbe, 2001). In short, the inadequacies of Western-oriented feminist theories render them unsuitable for this study. In the same vein, the broader, all-encompassing and more elaborate FPET easily recommends it as the most suitable.

3.2   Definition of Concepts

Governance

According to Olowu and Erero (1997:4-5) 'governance' refers to the relationship between the rule, ruler and the ruled. It consists of the State, the citisens and the rules (law). It deals with rule making and how rules are legitimised and enforced. 'Governance is the relationship between State and society institutions'. Nkom, and Sorkaa, (1996:42) are of the view that governance as a concept has two dimensions: the political, that is the will to govern well and the technical, that is the capacity to handle public affairs efficiently and competently.

Government therefore exists in any given society for the formulation and implementation of public policies. The essential purpose behind the existence of human governance in any given state, usually, is to answer the question: do the governing strategies, activities, administrative arrangements

and roles lead to the achievement of its purpose or objectives. That is, governance in the political literature connotes the administration of the masses in order to achieve the ingredients of human welfare such as happiness, peace, belongings, actuation, stability and above all prosperity. However, Mamdani (1995:53) has some reservation with the use of 'public interest; good government' and 'peace' in relation to good governance, as it has been used to undermine pluralism. According to Adeniji (2000:112) governance '...embodies the overall direction and management of each country's affairs in accordance with its established constitution, its institutions, its cultural values, norms and procedures'.

The plural nature of African democratic values have been debased by both colonial rule and the succeeding civilian and military governments, that monopolised the instruments of power, setting aside the basic principles of governance as spelt out above. Postcolonial Africa was dominated by authoritarian regimes that violated the political rights of the people. Olowu et al (1995:IX) remarked that independence did not bring Africans the much needed economic well being so desired. This is more so for women, as issues concerning women were put on the back burner until late 80s.

The argument here is that in the governance process, women of Nigeria and Ghana have been marginalised in the socio- economic and political aspects of life. This is a carry over from the colonial administration, a situation that continued unabated until the women's decade of 1976-1985. Nuhu, (1994:150) says, for example, that colonial rule has long lasting effects on Nigeria's democratic development. The socio-economic and political Non-African scholars. Their activities and contributions have been documented in

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detail by Callaway and Creevey (1989:88-90) and Ellis (1995:5). However, these same women who have been part and parcel of the struggles and aspirations of their countries are not adequately represented in the governance processes. Within the modern political setting, Ghanaian and Nigerian women have been more or less sidetracked and given only token representation at the Federal, State and Local government levels in Nigeria,

The feminist struggle and discourse have continued to draw attention to this subordinate position of women. According to Jazairy (1997:26) discrimination against women leads to devaluation of their contributions to society, which he says, is the result of the people's attitudes. Ghana and Nigeria have not been left out in this feminist struggle to throw off the yoke put on them by the male-dominated society and reject the welfare attitude towards women, both at the national and international levels. In various ways, these women are challenging the men and demanding that they be adequately represented in the governance and democratic processed of their countries. This demand has been strengthened by both internal and external development. It is widely believed now, that except women are represented at the decision making table, issues that affect them will not be given appropriate attention.

Democracy

The classic definition has remained 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'. The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (1968:112) defined democracy 'as a system based on competitive parties, in which the governing majority respects the rights of minorities'. The discussion

is focused on the concepts of representation, majority rule, opposition and competition. It is an alternative to autocratic governance, such as colonial, military and one-main rule experienced by many African countries. Ake, (1991:34) puts it this way 'democracy means popular power, rule by the demos' – as used by the Greek inventor and the French during the revolution. Mbachu, (1994:12) defines it as 'a political system in which the eligible people (electorate) in any country participate actively not only in determining the kind of people that govern them, but also actually participate actively in shaping the policy output of the government'. Mamdani (1995) however posits that there are varying conceptions of democracy, ranging from the British Colonial authorities permission for African representation and involvement in politics. This was classified as democratic. But for the purpose of this study, we are relying on Olowu's (1995) definition which "is a system of governance that underscores the plural nature of politics and it gives recognition to the diversity of social forces in any political community", such as the ethnic, religious, social, political and economic groupings that abound in Nigeria and Ghana. He goes further, 'the bottom line of a democratic regime is that it serves the citisens rather than the other way round'. It has been argued that successful democratic rule, must enshrine popular participation, accountability, transparency and a good human rights record. These issues are contained in the demand for democratic governance in Africa. Formal British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd made this call to countries under authoritarian rule in 1991:

countries which towards pluralism public accountability, respect for the rule of law, human rights and market principles should be encouraged. Governments which, however, persists with repressive policies should not expect us to support their folly with scarce and resources. (Bluwey 1992:42).

The west tends to generally equate good governance with democratic governance. As a result of internal and external demand, and since the early 1990s – Africa has been turning away from authoritarianism, away from the exclusion of the people from governance and turning to democracy and the rule of law (Ibrahim, 1995). The characteristics of democracy are (1) a government with elected officers that are responsible or answerable for their actions to the people (2) No privileged class, as individuals rise to top positions of power and influence by their ability and hard-work, (3) It stresses equality, liberty, individual rights, tolerance, freedom of discussion and association. If the concept of democracy is to be taken seriously in the countries under study, women's rights must also be taken seriously. In a democratic setting, no group in the society should be discriminated against as a result of gender. Unequal treatment of the sexes as a result of traditional practices, religion, authoritarian rule a host of other factors, have made women in the two countries subordinate to men.

The unequal status of the men and women is glaringly expressed in the political processes of the two countries. Women's right to participate especially at the formal level of politics has been tampered with, thereby enhancing the present feminist movements in Ghana and Nigeria. Military dictatorship as witnessed in both countries also violated the basic principles of democratic governance. Most of the military regimes' policies took away from

the people, especially women, their basic human rights as women representation during the military was very low. During the military era, as in many of the civilian regimes, women's rights were hardly respected. According to Robert Moss, (1975:8) democracy is the best method that has been put in place 'for creating a broad social consensus'. According to Allan Ware (1979:4), 'equality is the defining principle of democracy'. As one of the fundamental principles of any democratic system of government is respect for basic human rights, it is our contention that women's rights are now also are integral part of those rights. For according to Funmi Roberts (2001:4), to restore the true spirit of democracy, gender parity is an essential issue that must be addressed in any country, and in particular, Nigeria and Ghana, the subject of this study.

According to the Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women (2000:304).. 'Global feminism has brought a great deal to the discussion of democracy. Not only have feminists focused on the more substantive dimensions of democracy as social justice, but they have demanded the full participation of women, ... to achieve democratisation around the world'. This has been done by challenging the dichotomy between the public and the private and insisting that "the personal is political"

Gender

Gender is the classification of people according to their sex. A gender system contains two mutually exclusive categories into which all human beings are divided: Male and female. However, the content of these two categories vary from society to society and there are role overlaps in some societies. Gender is a universally accepted social concept with historical

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relativity. It is a social concept that has been widely used to describe fundamental differences between female and male by sex.

In most of the literature, gender refers to the male and female sexes. Gender now transcends classification along male, female and neuter usage. It is no long used to describe the biological sexual characteristics by which each sex is identified, but applied to social defined sex roles, attitudes and values communities and societies ascribe as appropriate for one sex, or the other. Cultural conceptions of the sexes are intimately and systematically linked to the organisation of social inequality. Ivowi (2001:1) delivering a lecture on gender discrimination linked discrimination against females to cultural factors, which he says, have been practiced for many years. This practice has become the norm of many societies, and it is quite difficult to convince both sexes to work against such practices. However, sex, as used by social scientists and biologists, refers to certain biological categories; female and male. Femininity and masculinity lines denote one's gender, which allows for gender role-arrangements.

Writing on gender in the Third World, Waylen, G. (1996:6) comments that many sociologists and psychologists refer to gender in a simplistic manner, equating it with socialisation – a process in which the boy-child and the girl-child are socialised into different role in society. According to Stoller (1968:343-364), gender is 'inextricably related to sex'. This biological expressing, he claims is a socio-cultural and psychological fact. That is, gender consists of the issue of gender identity and gender role assignment, rather than the anatomy. As earlier stated application of the concept of femininity and masculinity tend to vary from culture to culture. This can be

seen in the two gender states of the patriarchal west, while Africa, with a history of matriarchy, has three gendered systems namely; male, female and the non-gendered categories. These, Amadiume (1995:55) says, distinguish '... the traditional African political systems from western systems. For the purpose of this study, gender is perceived from the perspective of femininity and masculinity.

Sex

Sex is the state of being either male or female. Gender does not imply the sex of an individual, but the cultural and social mechanisms to which an individual is subject on account on his or her sex. Sex is biologically and anatomically construed. On the other hand biology and analtomy do not answer the question fot he male female gender, as gender includes gender roles assignement.

Classification according to sex produces specific biographies, professions, interests and social status according to an understanding of sexual attributes that limit individual potential and perpetuates the hierarchical connotation of roles. Stiegler (2004) says, by virtue of sex, women are paid less for their work, have less material power and less social influence, while men have better paid jobs, more material power and more influence in society. This relationship produces have political consequences for gender relations in the society. This is a relationship in which women are dependent and subordinate to men.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a process that aims at creating the conditions for self-determination of a particular people or group. The issue of women empowerment has been central to women's movements. Women empowerment alludes to women's awareness of their subordinate status and the implications in relation to power. According to Routledge Women Encyclopedia (2000:554), empowerment involves struggle over issues of financial resources, access to information, dynamics of social relations, role of culture and tradition in shaping peoples lives, legal rights, and political representation and participation. Control over resources, enables peole to make decisions that affect their lives which enable them to partake in decision-making; that is central to women empowerment. The second UN World Conference in 1980 defined women's power as the ability to control their own lives within and outside of the home, a fundamental goal of the women's movement. This in essence gives internal strength and confidence to face life; the right to determine choices in life; the ability to influence the social processes that affect women's lives and social change.

Improved standing in society, as principle actors, has been the major concern of international agencies and NGOs. Governments, NGOs and international Agencies have been working together to formulate new solutions and pilot innovative approaches in support of women's empower.

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- That the struggle for women's empowerment in Ghana and Nigeria have been greatly influenced by the international concern for women's integration in development.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1   Research Methodology

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. The nature of the information required, determined the type of respondents, while the sources of information dictated the type of data collection instruments and the methods.

Primary Sources

Quantitative and quantitative data were generated through diverse field surveys, at the end of which the results from the various methods were compared to each other through the process of triangulation.

The study embraced the sample survey method, as the study focused on a defined population in the two countries. Both cross-sectional and longitudinal survey designs were used in the study. The cross-sectional design gave room for description, exploration and explanations where necessary, while the longitudinal design took care of the changes in time and locations. This suited the study as it covered different periods in the history of the two countries. The study of the similarities and differences also made the longitudinal design suitable. Care was taken to ensure that there was a good representation of the targeted groups in each of the countries.

Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The research questionnaires contained both open-ended and close-ended questions. In all, one thousand (1000) questionnaires were distributed in Nigeria, while two hundred and fifty (250) were distributed in

Ghana. The disparity in the number of questionnaires administered in the two countries was due to the differences in the population (4:1) and the number of target agencies and organisations purposively selected in the two countries. This was done by physical contacts to facilitate quick response. Of these numbers, 972 representing 97.2% were retrieved in Nigeria, while 235, representing 96% were retrieved in Ghana. The questionnaires served as yardstick for assessing women's participation in governance and democratic processes, as well as for assessing the attitudes of respondents towards women's emancipation. The institutions targeted for the study which were purposively selected were classified into three: governmental institutions, non-governmental organization (NGOs) and international institutions. The political parties were also major focus, since important decisions that affect women and their leadership roles have been linked directly to the decisions taken at this level.

In-depth interviews were conducted with samples of women and men from the selected groups and institutions. They also included in-depth interviews with some male and female politicians. On the whole 146 in-depth internview were conducted in Ghana and Nigeria (Table 5.3). Out of the 43 interviews conducted in Ghana, 25 were with women and 18 with men. In Nigeria 103 interviews were conducted of which 63 were with women and 38 with men. These were done to find out the institutional gender culture, career practice and advancement of women in governance and democratic processes in the two countries. The respondents varied from politicians, to public servants, religious and community leaders and leaders of non-governmental agencies (local and international). In addition, some husbands

of the female politicians were involved in the study. Interviews were also conducted with people who were knowledgeable on the subject matter, and not just a matter of giving opinions, as the study did not depend on randomness. The in-depth interviews gave room for the clarification of important issues. The following groups were selected.

- Male and female politicians.
- Important women office holders
- Scholars
- Leaders of NGOs and their field officers.
- Government officials
- Leaders of religious organizations.

A section of the research instrument for the study was designed to find out the views of the people on the activities of the First Ladites in respect of women's empowerment in their respective countries. Among others, the questions were designed to find out if the First Ladies' activities transformed into concrete political power for women and their effective participation in governance and democratic processes in Ghana and Nigeria.

The agencies and organisations were purposively selected. The following were targeted in Nigeria and Ghana respectively: international agencies (8/4), local agencies including Non-governmental Organisation (NGOs) and Community Based Organisation (CBOs) (20/10), professional bodies (10/5), religions groups (10/5), community leaders (10/5), scholars/authors (15/5), government functionaries (10/4) and politicians (30/10). The chairpersons of the target agencies and organisations and their field officers were chosen for the in-depth interviews. The chairpersons knew

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the objectives and the goals and how much had been achieved, while the filed officers were closer to the people as they interacted more with them. They were therefore in a position to give the necessary information about their operations and their problems. In the government offices, the targets were directors and field officers in charge of programmes and policies designed to enhance women's political participation and status.

In addition civil societies, government agencies, religious leaders, traditional leaders, politicians international agencies were used for the study. In Nigeria, respondents were drawn from various international organisations, such as UNIFEM, USAID, UNICEF, UNFPA, and British Council. Similarly, in Ghana respondents were drawn from UNDP, UNICEF, USAID, CIDA and Friedrick Ebert Foundation.

These agencies were purpositvely chosen, as they had worked extensively on gender, and gender related issues internationally and in Ghana and Nigeria. In like manner the NGOs and other institutions were chosen because they were established to take care of various gender related issues. Some of them were even established primarily or solely cater for women's interests.

The age range of the respondents was between 20 to 70. Others who did nto specify stood at 6.1% and 4.5% respectively in Ghana and Nigeria. The study captured a high percentage of educated respondents (Table 5.2). This was the result of the nature of the selection of respondents which did not depend on randomness.

In Ghana, 79.1% of the respondents were Christians, while 15.5 were Muslims. The outstanding 5.4% belonged to the traditional religion. The trend

was similar in Nigeria as the majority of respondents 50.1% were Christians, 40.2% were Muslims and 9.7% belonged to the traditional religion. However, Ghana recorded a higher percentage of Christians, while Nigeria recorded a higher percentage of Muslims. In both countries, the percentages of traditional worshippers were low.

Secondary Sources

The secondary sources of data collection involved extensive and thorough library research, including a comprehensive literature view and examination of existing literature, archival documents in the subject areas in Ghana and Nigeria. This bibliography search on the critical issues in the research constituted the first step of the study.

- Books

- Journals, Newspapers, Newsmagazines. Government Publication (e.g. gasettes, reports of vision 2010 in Nigeria and 2020 in Ghana)

- In house publications of NGOs and CBOs

- Publications of UN and its agencies such as UNIFEM, UNICEF and UNDP.

- Publications of other agencies such as USAID and CIDA

- Relevant published and unpublished speeches and papers

- Internet Search

Data Analyses

This comparative study on the problematic of women in relation to governance and democratic processes in Nigeria and Ghana was analysed using SPSS. However, simple statistical analyses such as tabulations, percentages and figures were employed. Essentially, the strength of the

analyses dependend on descriptive interpretation, critical argumentation, narrative report and comparative analyses.

4.2   The Universe of Study

Ghana and Nigeria are located in the West African sub-region of Africa (Figure 1). They are two former British colonies located on the coast. Both countries have been influenced by the wave of democratisation that swept through Africa in the 1990s. This has resulted in the growth of civil society groups in alliance with international donor agencies that put pressure on the governments in both countries to ensure human rights, and for this study the rights of women.

Ghana

The population is about 25 million, of which 51% are female. Ghana fronts on the culf Guinea. It is bounded by Cotes des Viore to the east, Burkina Faso to the North and Togo to the west (Fig. 2). Ghana attained independence in 1957. It covers an area of 92,100 square miles, with a tropical climate and temperatures that range from 70^0 to 90^0 F (21^0 - 32^0C). The mainstay of Ghana's economy is farming with cocoa being the chief crop. Ghanaians are Negroid and consists of diverse eithnic groups. Fourty-four percent of the population, that are based in the southern part of the country are matriarchal, while the remaining 56% are patriarchal. Many dialets are spoken but English is the principal language. The country operates a unitary government, with an elected president that serves a four-year term with a vice-president. There are 9 adminsitrative regions (Figure 2), headed by

ministers who are appointed by the president. There is a cabinet and legislature, that are also elected.

Since independence in 1957, the country had witnessed civilian and military rules. The fourth republic came on board in 1992, when president Rawlings became an elected president after over a decade of military rulership. Ghana, like other countries in the world, is undergoing organisational changes of which democracy, good governance and human rights of which the right of women is a major concern. Since the last two decades, there has been a growth of civil society groups of which women have been very active. They, like their counterparts all over the world are demanding mainstreaming along with men.

Nigeria

Nigeria, like Ghana is a republic. Nigeria attained her independence from Britain in 1960. Nigeria is bounded by Niger, Ghad, Cameroun, the Culf of Guinea and Benin (Figure 3). The country's area is 336,669 square miles and lies between 4^0 to 14^0 north of the Equator and has a tropical climate that varies from south to north. The average temperature is 80^0F (27^0C) with a small daily and seasonal variation. Agriculture provides a livelihood, but the country is a major producer of crude oil and it is the major export. The country's population is 129 million of which 49.8% are female. There are over 250 ethnic nationalities, making Nigeria a complex administrative unit. Nigeria is divided into 36 adminsitrative regions known as states; with a federal capital territory in Abuja, which is centrally located. A president and vice-president who are democratically elected for 4-year term rule the country. There is a legislature, the upper hosue is the senate and the lower house is the house of

representatives. They are elected for a 4-year term. There are 36 states headed by governors, who are also elected for a 4-year term.

Since independence in 1960, the country had been unstable as a result of military coups and counter coups. In 1999 president, Obasanjo became the democratically elected government of the fourth republic. Since the last three decades the issue of gender mainstreaming has been on the country's agenda. With the aid of international concern for gender, there is a constant growth of women focused NGOs working in diverse ways to ensure Nigerian women are mainstreamed in development.
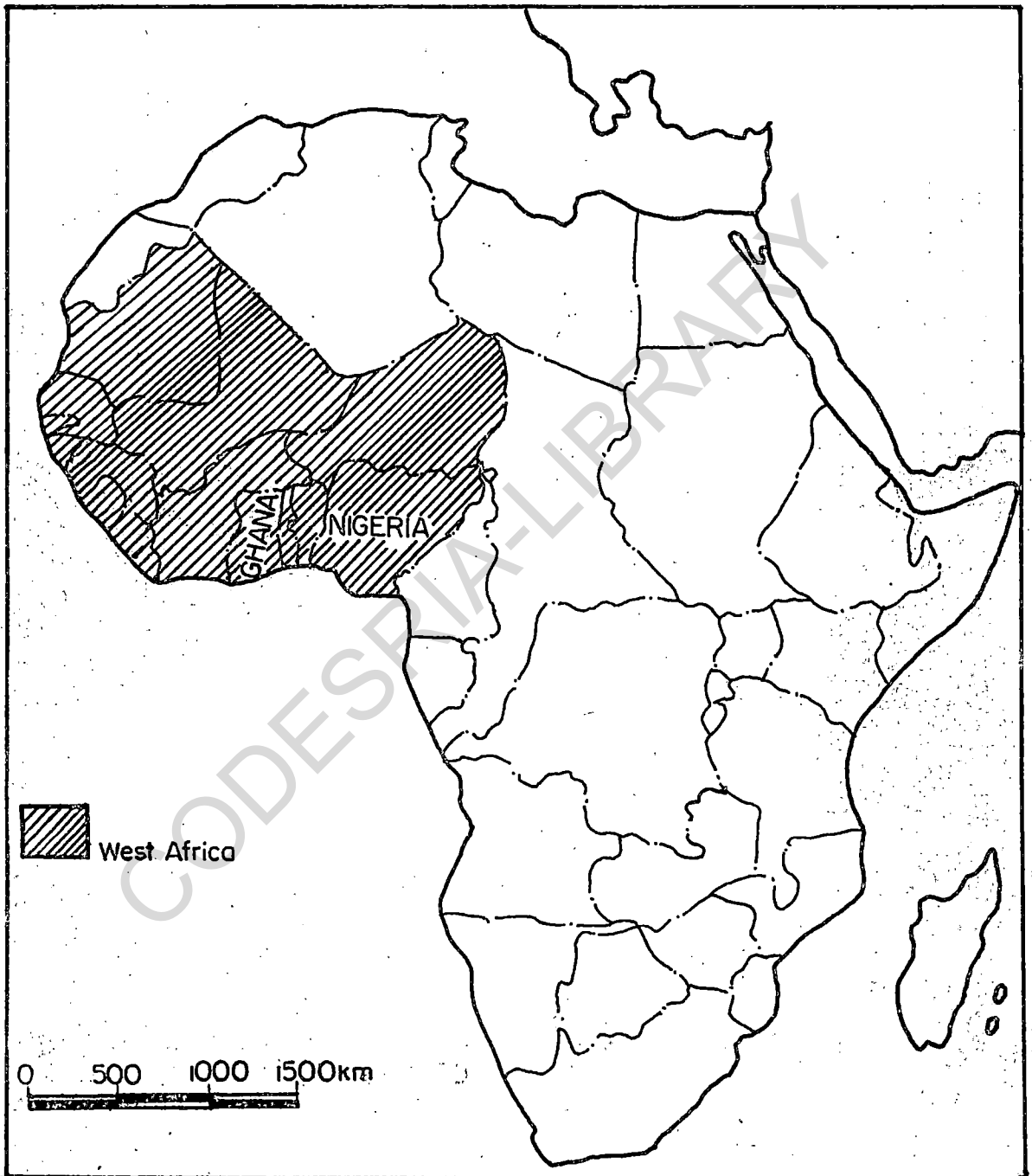
Fig.1 Map of Africa showing the locations of Ghana and Nigeria

Fig. 2: Map of Ghana
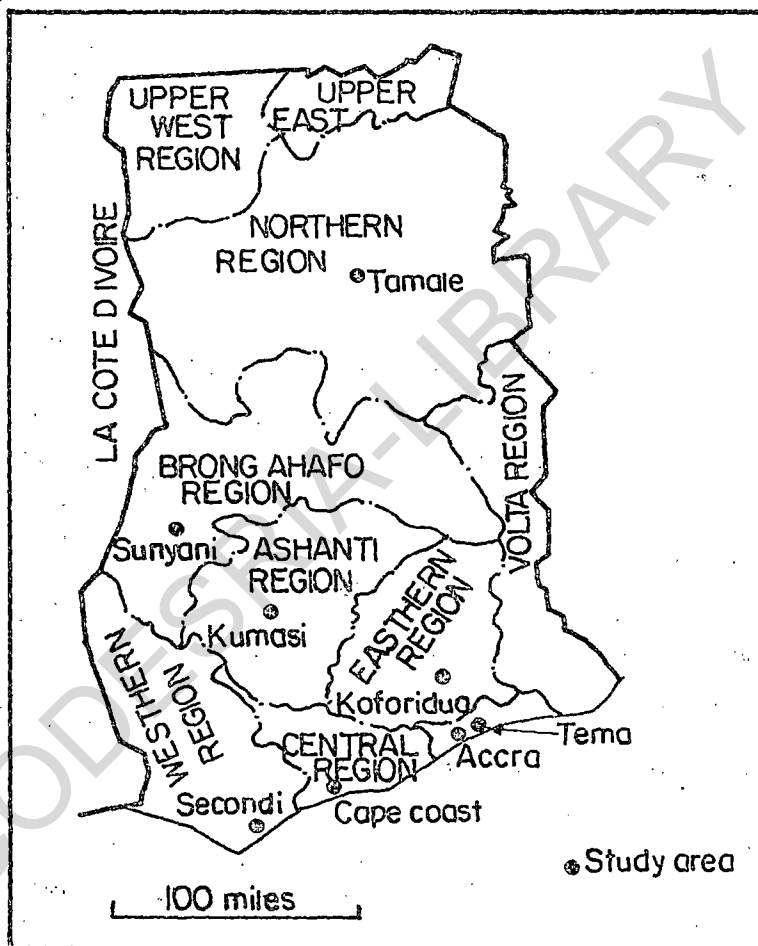
Fig. 2 Administrative map of Ghana showing the study area
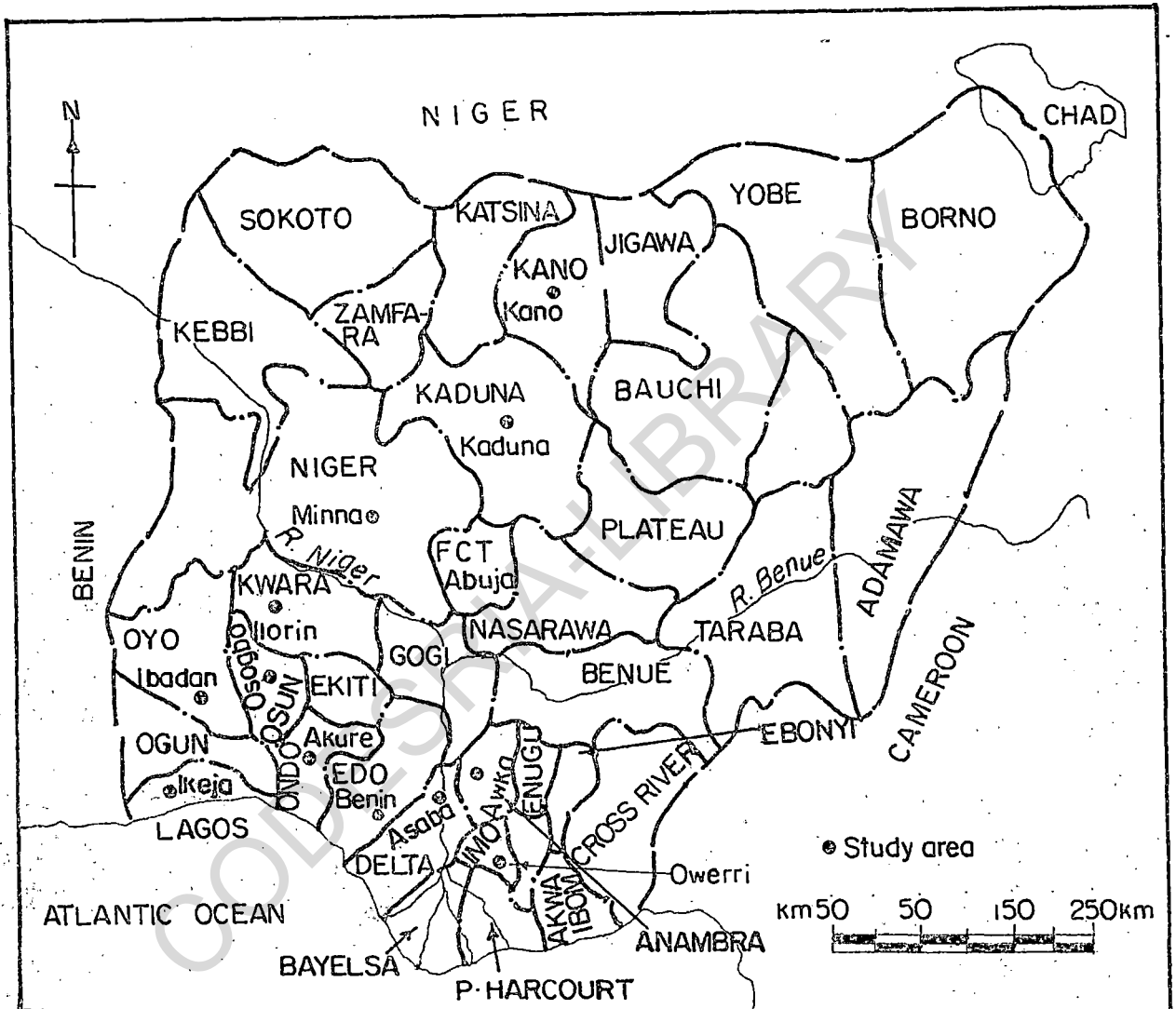
Fig.3   Administrative map of Nigeria showing the study area.

4.3 Scope and Rationale of the Study

The study covered Ghana and Nigeria, two former British colonies. Since their independence in 1957 and 1960 respectively and up to the end of the twentieth century. The two countries have been governed by both military and civilian regimes in which only a few women took part. The early concern of women as demonstrated by their anticolonial struggles was mainly economic. Unlike their previous concern with economic prosperity, women are now demanding political mainstreaming and adequate representation in leadership positions. The study was conducted in the two countries. The study areas reflect the major culture and regions in the two countries (Figs. 2 and 3). The areas also covered represented the major cultural groups, which were important to this study.

The two countries were chosen because of their broad similarities in terms of race, culture, multiplicity of religions and location. Ghana and Nigeria are also two of the most important countries of West Africa. Apart from specific cultural differences and languages, women from both countries share many things in common. For example, they were active participants in the struggle against colonialism. They are two important countries of West Africa. In addition they share similar historical past, as they were both colonised by the British. This study was also conducted as the world is concerned with gender mainstreaming and the Third World of which Ghana and Nigeria belong have been major focus since the human rights record is very poor. In addition, Ghana and Nigeria are two developing countries with broadly similar human rights records; and are also signatories to International human rights conventions such as CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action. As a result of

the global nature of the Third Wave Feminism, governments, civil society groups and international bodies had been active since the late 20th century in both countries.

4.4   Limitations

There was insufficient and up-to-date dis-aggregated data on gender in both countries. Where available, they were not current. In addition, government officials were rather uncooperative.

CHAPTER FIVE

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN AND POLITICS IN GHANA AND NIGERIA

5.1   Introduction

This chapter addressed two issues. The thrusts of the chapter is to analyse and describe the characteristics of the respondents in Ghana and Nigeria. The chapter gives the synopsis of the respondents. Secondly, the data on women's political participation in Ghana and Nigeria will be presented and analysed.

Synopsis Of Data Collected In Ghana And Nigeria

The study did not depend on randomness. The distribution of the questionnaires was done purposively to ensure that respondents gave useful information on the theme of women, governance and democratisation in Ghana and Nigeria. Male and female respondents were used as indicated on the tables. The ages of respondents were mainly between 20 and 70. Those outside this age bracket were 6.1% in Ghana and 4.5 in Nigeria.

Distribution of Respondents by Education

In both countries, most of the respondents had some level of education. In Ghana, 57.2% of the respondents were college graduates, while 22.9% had secondary school education. The remaining 19.9% had only primary school education.

Table 5.1: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation and Sex

Occupation	Ghana (%)			Nigeria (%)		
	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Civil servants	20.0	6.0	14.0	20.0	8.0	12.0
Professionals	10.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	5.0	5.0
Farmers	5.0	2.0	3.0	5.0	3.0	2.0
Traders	15.0	5.0	10.0	15.0	6.0	9.0
Students	10.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	5.0	5.0
Religious groups	10.0	6.0	4.0	10.0	5.0	5.0
Members of international agencies/NGOs	10.0	4.0	6.0	10.0	5.0	5.0
Members of political parties	20.0	12.0	8.0	20.0	10.0	10.0
Total	100.0	45.0	55.0	100.0	47.0	53.0

Source: Field Work, 2000.

The result of this study shoed a high percentage of respondents 61.9%, 57.2% had tertiary education in Nigeria and Ghana respectively. Similarly, 27.9% and 22.9% of respondents had secondary school education in Nigeria and Ghana respectively. The percentage of respondents with primary school education in Ghana was 19.9% compared with a lower percentage of 5.6% in Nigeria. About 4.7% of respondents in Nigeria had never been in school Table 5.2 and figures 1 and 2.

Table 5.2: Level of Education of Respondents (%)

Level of Education of Respondents	Ghana (%)	Nigeria (%)
Tertiary education	57.2	61.9
Secondary	22.9	27.9
Primary	19.9	5.6
Others	0	4.7

Source: Field Work, 2000.

Fig. 4: Level of Education of Respondents (%) in Ghana

Primary 20%
Others 0%
Secondary 23%
Tertiary education 57%

■ Tertiary education ■ Secondary □ Primary □ Others
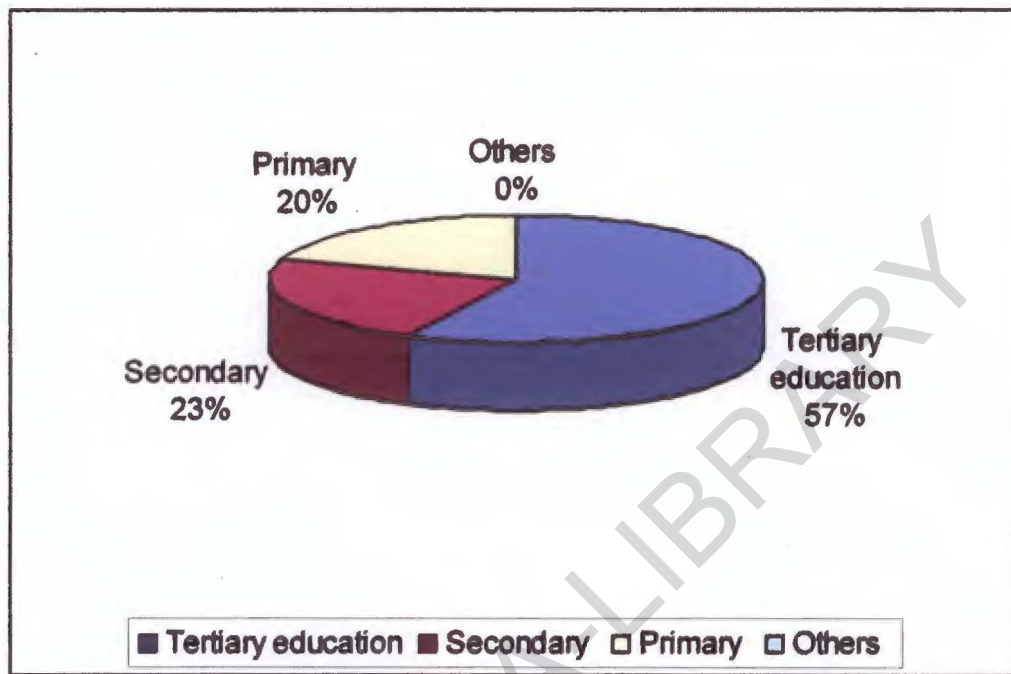
Fig. 5: Level of Education of Respondents (%) in Nigeria
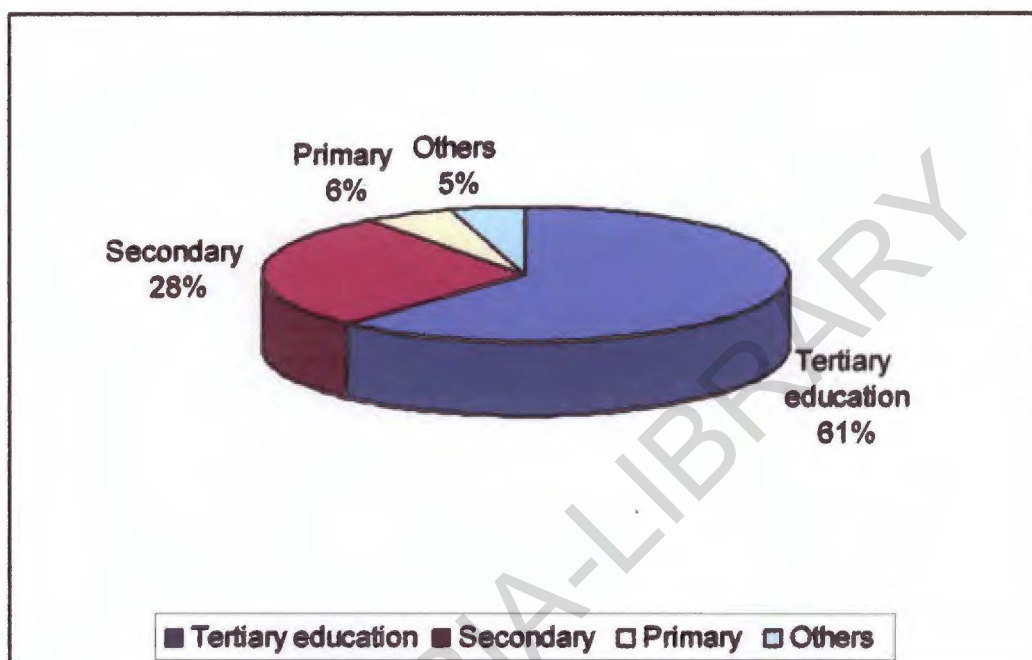
Distribution of Respondents by Religion

Altogether 79.1% of the respondents in Ghana were Christians, against 15.5% Muslims. The others 5.4% belonged to the traditional religions. The trend in Nigeria, is similar, where 50.1% of respondents were Christians, 40.2% Muslims, while 9.7% belonged to the traditional religions. The trend however, differ as only 15.5% of the respondents in Ghana were Muslims compared to 40.2% in Nigeria.

In addition to the administration of questionnaires, in-depth interviews were conducted with the following individuals in Ghana and Nigeria as shown in table 5.3. The choice of the individuals in the table was informed by the following; career, status, religion and membership of political parties and agencies.

Table 5.3: Distribution of in-depth interviews conducted in Ghana and Ngieria

Category	Ghana			Nigeria		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
International agencies	4	2	2	8	5	3
NGOs	7	5	2	15	10	5
Professional bodies	4	3	1	8	5	3
Religious Bodies	5	2	3	8	4	4
Religious groups	5	2	3	8	4	4
Scholars	4	3	1	12	8	3
Government functionaries	4	2	2	10	6	4
Politicians	7	4	3	25	15	10
Traders	4	2	2	10	6	4
Farmers	4	2	2	7	3	4
Total	43	25	18	103	63	38

Source: Field Work, 2000.

5.2   Gender and Power Relations in Ghana and Nigeria

There is a slow rate of increase in the number of women in gladiatorial politics; governance and democratic processes in both countries. The study revealed a similar trend in both countries. The level of women's participation in national politics has been put at 10%. Men at all levels outnumbered women. In Ghana, the average disparity is in the range of 1:13. Since independence in 1957, women's representation in politics has been poor. The lowest participation was recorded at the initial stage of the First Republic, when there was no woman in parliament.   The percentage of women increased from 2.0% to 7.2% in the Second Republic. By the Third Republic, women representation was only 3.6%. At the district level, women have not faired better. Nearly 40% of the Districts in Ghana do not have women elected to their Assemblies. By the end of the 20th century, there were 19 women parliamentarians out of 200 members, one Cabinet Minister, six female ministers out of thirty-seven (37).

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 show women's dismal representation at the decision-making positions in Ghana as at 2000, inspite of national and international concern for gender mainstreaming in developmental processes. Similarly, table 6.3 shows similar trend within the parties.

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Table 5.4: **Women in top level decision-making positions in Ghana as at 2000**

Categories	Men	Women	Total	Percentage of Women (%)
Ministers	31	6	37	16.2
Deputy Ministers	30	4	34	11.7
Chief Directors	15	0	15	0.0
Directors	138	15	153	10.0
Total	200	22	222	9.0

Source: From the study

Table 5.5: Women in Policy Influencing Positions in Ghana as at 2000

Members of Parliament	8%
Council of State	8%
Assembly Members	8%

Source: From the study

Table 5.6: Examples of female representation at the regional executive level of the parties in Ghana in 2000

Name of Party	Name of Region	Male	Female	Total
NDC	Greater Accra	20	2	22
NCP	Northern Region	11	2	13
PNC	Northern Region	9	2	11
	TOTAL	40	6	46

Source: Field Work 1999.

Similarly, women in Nigeria have continued to record low participation in governance, which has directly or indirectly affected the level of their participation in democratic processes. In the First Republic, there was one senator out of 36 and no woman in the House of Representatives and the Federal Cabinet. In the Second Republic, 1998, four females contested for the Senate but only one of them won the election into Senate. In 1983, only one female was elected Senator out of fifty-seven. The trend continued in 1992 when out of 91 senators, only 1 was a woman. In the House of Representatives, there were 12 women out of 638 members, the dismal outing of women despite international concern in the feminist movement is shown on Table 5.7.

A democratically elected government was put in place in Nigeria in 1999. Women had hoped that democratic governance would ensure more women would be involved in governance. But by 2000 when this study was carried out, women's representation at the important policy making institutions stood at 3.4% only. Tables 6.1 to 6.5 show that women are still far from achieving their rightful positions in their societies as stated in Beijing PFA.

Table 5.7: Women in Government as at 2000 in Nigeria

Position	Men	Women	Total
Senators	106	3	109
House of Representatives	348	12	360
Ministers	93	6	99
Speakers	35	1	36
Governors	36	0	36
Deputy Govenors	35	1	36
Local Government Councils	653	23	676

Source: Field Work 1999.

Table 5.8: Comparative analysis of gender representation on some high-level institutions in Nigeria and Ghana as at 2000.

Institution	Male (%)		Female (%)	
	Ghana	Nigeria	Ghana	Nigeria
President	1	1	-	-
Vice President	1	1	-	-
Speaker of Parliament	1	2	-	-
Deputy Speaker of Parliament	1	2	-	-
Ministers	18	93	2	6
Total	22	99	2	6

Source: Field Work 1999.

Respondents from both countries were interviewed on this poor showing of women in decision-making, which translates into their poor participation in the governance and democratic processes, and what should be done to redress this imbalance. As in Ghana, the low level of representation of women in the executive and the legislature and at other decision-making levels of government was attributed to various factors, such as culture, education, religion, the family and societal values and even the women themselves. Since independence, women's representation has been nominal on the governing bodies. Unlike in Ghana where Nkwame Nkrumah identified with women's struggle for independence, and initiated affirmative action that brought ten women to the Ghanaian Parliament in 1960, the founding fathers of Nigeria used women and their movements but did nothing to get them involved in decision-making. Some even campaigned against women in politics. The dominant leader in the north, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the late Sadauna of Sokoto, was quoted as saying that if women were given the vote they would not know what to do with it.

Women are still mainly in the informal political sector where they constitute the greatest percentage of the voters. Although some women are making inroads into leadership positions in both countries, political power is still dominated by men.

Table 5.9: Obstacles Identified by Respondents to Women's Participation in Governance in Ghana

Obstacle	Total percentage (%) of respondents	Female (%)	Male (%)
Culture	100.0	67.0	33.0
Home	75.0	45.0	30.0
Religion	60.0	35.0	25.0
Finance	100.0	67.0	33.0
Illiteracy	100.0	67.0	33.0
Political tactics	55.2	50.0	5.2
Socialisation	20.0	12.0	8.0
Husbands	40.1	31.1	9.0
Legal constraints	27.0	22.0	5.0
Negative perception	7.0	6.0	1.0
Women elites	9.3	9.3	00.00
Women in parties	15.0	15.0	0.00
Solidarity	10.0	2.0	8.0
Government	77.0	59.0	18.0
Violence	24.0	19.0	5.0

Source: Field Work 1999.

Fig. 6: Obstacles Idnetified by Respondents to Women's Participation in Governance in Ghana

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Table 5.10: Obstacles Identified by Respondents to Women's Participation in Governance in Nigeria

Obstacle	Total percentage (%) of respondents	Female (%)	Male (%)
Culture	100.0	67.0	33.0
Home	86.0	40.0	46.0
Religion	95.0	65.0	30.0
Finance	100.0	67.0	33.0
Illiteracy	100.0	67.0	33.0
Political tactics	95.0	80.0	15.0
Socialisation	32.2	24.2	8.0
Husbands	70.2	55.2	15.0
Legal constraints	51.1	43.1	8.0
Negative perception	20.0	18.0	2.0
Women elites	-	-	-
Women in parties	-	-	-
Solidarity	15.0	2.0	13.0
Government	62.0	49.0	13.0
Violence	65.0	38.0	27.0

Source: Field Work 1999.

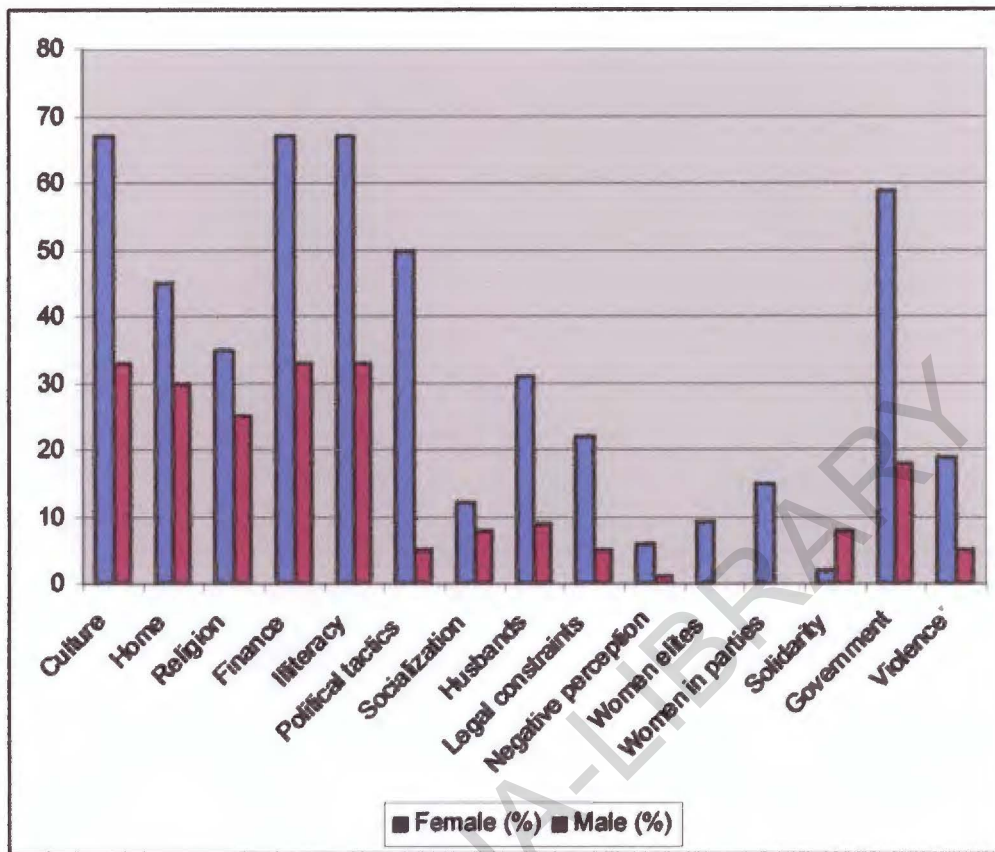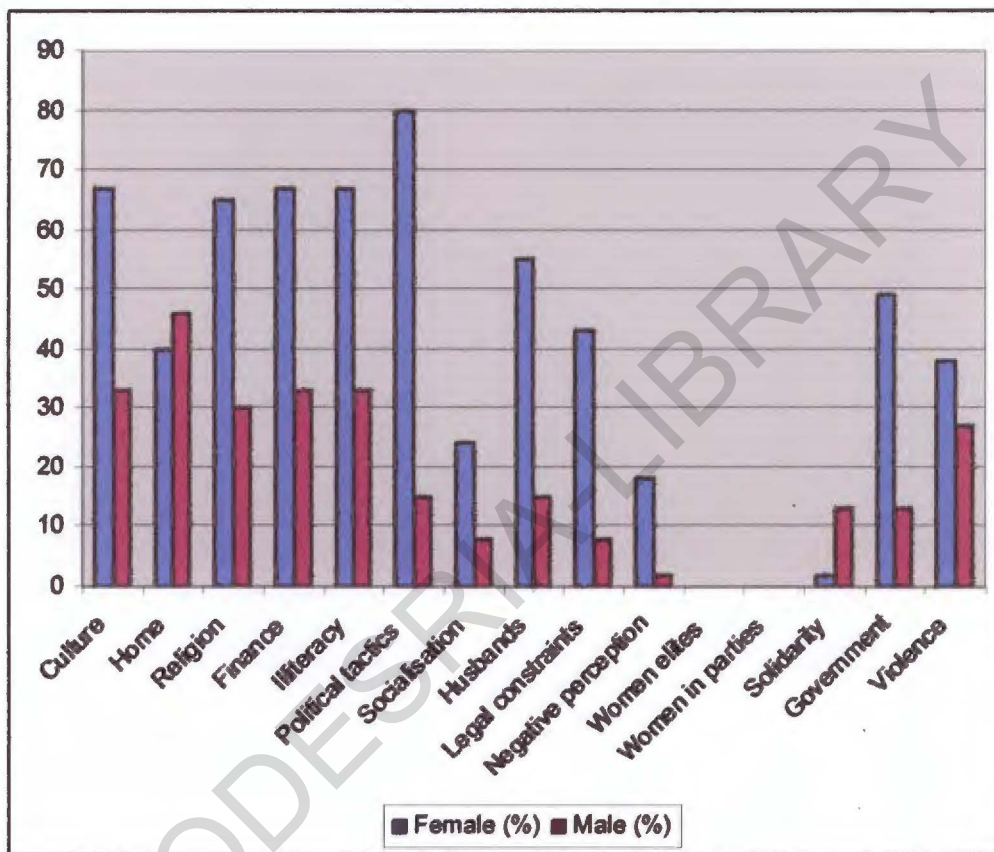**Fig. 7: Obstacles Identified by Respondents to Women's Participation in Governance in Nigeria**

5.3   Gender and Party Politics in Ghana and Nigeria

The result of the study revealed that women in Ngieria and Ghana, do not have equal opportunities with men to compete for political office at the national, state, regional and local government levels. There is a wide gap between the percentage of women in the population and their political participation. The general complaint by women was that women were used for registration and voting, while men occupied the leadership positions.

The failure of women to participate adequately in governance and democratic processes has been attributed to the nature of party politics. Women politicians and other female key informants emphatically expressed their displeasure about the male dominated political parties and the way the parties were run. The complaints ranged from the parties' discrimination against women, selection and nomination to offices, and how the parties were dominated by cliques. The failure of political parties to put up female candidates for positions, has considerably reduced the chances of women in gladiatorial positions. This is despite the fact that interviewees, including men and women, agreed that women are effective in whatever position they occupy.

In Ghana, only 10% of the sample population out-rightly condemned women's participation in party politics. 29% of the male respondents will not allow their wives to join political parties, but would not mind their getting to the top of their careers. On the other hand, only 16% would prevent their daughters from joining political parties. The reasons adduced were related to issues of culture, the family and biology. However, those who would not prevent their daughters from joining political parties gave three broad reasons.

- they have their own rights;

- when they are married the decisions should be left to the new family, and

- the favourable global disposition to women's participation.

In Nigeria, 40% of the male respondents would not allow their wives to be active politicians, while only a minority of 2.5% would discourage their daughters. The reasons advanced were similar to those expressed in Ghana;

- Party activities disrupt the home;

- May lead to broken marriages;

- Religion;

- Violence

In an interview with a male politician in Nigeria, he said, "...unscrupulous party big wigs might be making indecent advances to women in return for nomination for offices and favours". Asked further if he knew of such incidence, he answered in the affirmative but he was not ready to go further. Three female politicians were requested to comment on his insinuations. They did not share a similar opinion on the matter. Promiscuity they said, was not limited to the political party arena, it is found everywhere. Mrs. Akinnife from Ondo State, asked, " ... why should women be singled out, when men are known to flirt either within or outside the party arena".

In both Nigeria and Ghana, all the key informants (males and females) agreed that all political party structures were male dominated. NDC had only six women out of a national executive of 50, while the PNC had 4 out of 16. The trend was not different in Nigeria. None of the political parties have a woman chairperson or secretary. Women politicians were questioned as to

the poor showing of women in politics and the on-going democratic processes in the two countries. The perceived obstacles to women's empowerment are presented in Tables 5.9 and 5.10 show the obstacles to women's participation in governance and democratic processes are similar in both countries although they do vary in intensity in some instances.

The general complaint was that because of culture, women are saddled with child-care and related activities at the domestic level, even when they are engaged in full-time paid employment. Both male and female politicians expressed the view that women's roles as mothers, as home-keepers and health givers tended to keep them out of the gladiatorial policy making arena. In Ghana, 75% of respondents of which 45% were female and 30% male, agreed that as a result of the childcare and domestic activities, women are not able to take part in activities that could enhance their positions in public life. The situation is only slightly better than in Nigeria where 86% of the respondents out of which 57% was female and 29% male were of the view that women's roles as caregivers in the home is a major constraint to their advancement, may it be in politics or in other areas. All the female politicians interviewed in both countries affirmed the view. These responsibilities also accounted for women's entering politics late compared to men. Although 50% of women in Ghana and 40% in Nigeria complemented their husbands for their encouragement, it was obvious that a good percentage of husbands still frowned at their wives playing active roles in politics. Apart from a minority who said their husbands easily agreed with them to go into active politics at early stages of their marriages, most of the respondents were middle age women who had past the child-bearing age bracket before venturing into

politics. In Ghana, apart from one of the four female politicians who was 32 years old at the time of interview, others had passed their child bearing age. Two of them were between the 41-60 age bracket. The remaining one belonged to the 61-70 age bracket. One of the four female politicians in Ghana and three in Nigeria, said they had to reassure their husbands before they could gain their support. For others, they had to assure their husbands that being politicians would not affect the home and the children. For instance, Mrs. Atibi said when she first became a politician, she had a strained relationship with her husband but she had to stand her ground. She revealed that the relationship was normalised much later. One of the female politicians in Nigeria said that she separated from her husband after becoming active in politics. A female member of parliament in Ghana expressed a similar view. When questioned if the separation was the result of her becoming a politician, she revealed that even before her decision to go into politics, she had had some problems with her marriage.

One thing that came out clearly in the interviews was that husbands were not ready for any career change to give room for their wives to be in active politics. Apart from their career and politics, these female politicians, and those holding important positions had to arrange for how their homes would be taken care of while they were away. The women in matriarchal Ghana did not fair better either. The result of the interviews showed that colonisation and the on-going penetration of Western influence and globalization in Ghana, the matriarchal system is no longer intact. Much has been written about the power of women in matriarchal Ghana. However, the study revealed that as a result of colonisation and the on-going globalisation,

much of the tradition and the power of women are withering away, and some of the cultural practices are now wearing a patriarchal look. A male Fante scholar based in Legon remarked he had told his sister and her husband to educate their children as he was not ready to do so. He was going to train only his children. We were informed that traditionally, matriarchy imposed added restrictions on women, as heads of households, which added to their responsibilities, leaving the men relatively free. All male respondents corroborated the view that culture is central to women's subordination and invisibility. It was found from the agencies that the issue of culture and tradition must be addressed if women were to take their rightful places at the decision-making tables along with men. Similarly, culture and women's domestic responsibilities have been identified by scholars as responsible for the subordinate position of women in both Ghana and Nigeria. The study revealed that women in SSA are born into an environment of cultural subordination. The view was that in both countries, the nature of the gendered institutions was central to male dominance. In both matriarchal and patriarchal societies of Ghana and Nigeria women are subordinate to men. In addition, the nature of women's family responsibility deprived them of active participation in decision-making. The cultural perceptions of the African woman are replete with negative proverbs and "wise" says. As a result of societal belief that culture, tradition and human biology go hand in hand, many women have had to choose between their careers and their homes.

In an interview, Allah-Mensah, a scholar at the University of Ghana, in Legon, she emphasised the point that the Ghanaian society has not reached the stage where people would believe in equal opportunities of women in

certain polity, which had affected the way the children were brought up. The stereotyping of girl/boy roles has gone a long way to affect women and the society at large. This situation arose as a result of the socio-cultural values of society that make the boy-child 'sacred' at the expense of the girl-child. In the two societies, the girl-child and the boy-child are brought up to assume different roles. This has implications for women's participation in political and leadership activities in the two countries as such participation is considered within the totality of women's role in society. In Ghana, 20% of the total respondents (12.% female and 8% male) shared this view. In Nigeria, the percentage is higher, 32.2% of the total respondents in Nigeria of which 24.2% was female and 8.0% male held similar view.

In the interviews conducted in both countries obstacles to women's adequate participation in governance and democratic processes were linked to culture, which ranged from the attitude of husbands, perceptions of women in politics, lack of support from men and sometimes even from the women. Some respondents mentioned the fact that women, as a result of their sex, are culturally bound to support men and not to lead, which has greatly affected male/female disparity in participation in decision-making processes. In Nigeria, 55.2% of the female respondents and 15.0% of the male agreed that husbands' restriction of their wives is a major obstacle to women's emancipation. Similarly, in Ghana out of the 40.1% of the total number of respondents mentioned husbands restrictions as to women's empowerment.

The result of the interviews from both countries revealed similar trend as the negative perception of women in politics continued to affect their involvement, especially at the important sectors where decisions are taken.

Although the percentage is marginal in Ghana, it was much higher in Nigeria. In Nigeria 20% of the total respondents of which of 18% was women and 2% men held this view. In Ghana, out of the 7% that held the same view, 6% was female and 1% male. The result of the interviews corroborated the views of the respondents.

All female respondents identified male political culture, male chauvinism and domineering attitude as factors in explaining women's inability to participate adequately in politics. In Nigeria, Dr. (Mrs.) Dorgu said, the major complaints was the timing of political meetings. The women complained that meetings were usually held at night or in places far from home, making it difficult for women of child-bearing age to be in active politics. However, two of the women politicians disagreed with others on the issue of time and place of meetings. They tended to agree with the view that since most politicians have businesses to attend to during the day, night seemed to be the most appropriate time for meetings. This is in consonance with the views of most male politicians. The male politicians were of the opinion that politicians have to attend to their personal businesses as well as engage in politics. An honourable from the Lagos constituency said, " ... politics is about being able to combine many things. Women who want to venture into politics must be prepared to work hard". A male member of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), said " ... women should not expect to have positions handed over to them; they must work for them like the men". Like many others, he was of the opinion that the timing of meetings was not to discourage women, as it is the most convenient time for most party members. Only 12.1% of the male politicians interviewed sympathised with women and shared the concern that

the special position of women should be considered when taking certain decisions in the party.

Similarly, 55.2% of the respondents in Ghana blamed women's inadequate participation in party politics on the attitude of men. The male politicians said they rose through the ranks before reaching their leading positions. Alhasan Iddrisu, the Northern Regional Organiser of the PNC (2000) recalled his involvement in politics which began in 1960 with the CPP, as a junior party member who only assisted in arranging party activities. The men in Ghana stressed the political training of men. Most of the male MPs, had a history of political activism, unlike many of the women whose entry into politics was either accidental or through encouragement by others. This demonstrated that early in life men plan to enter politics. However, the inability of women to go into politics early in life is due to their reproductive role. This was clearly evident in the lives of the female politicians interviewd in both countries. Female politicians refused to accept the notion that women did not put themselves up for political positions. They argued that the belief that women could not win when they contested election with men has been proven wrong, because women have stood against men and won. For example, one of the respondents in Ghana, said she won the elections beating two men. She added that being a woman was an added advantage for her. She also noted that the inability of the women to stand for election was because the party did not field them. The majority of the respondents said that their parties were not doing enough to encourage women's nomination and elections.

A majority of the female respondents in Nigeria, as in Ghana, criticized political parties for not putting up more women for elective positions or for

appointment into important government positions. The political parties and the governors were also criticised for the poor representation of women in governance in both countries as the political parties continued to promote gender insensitive men into positions of power.

On the whole, it could be deduced that women in both countries, were not in the leadership structures, as the parties continued to field men for important positions. Although the women politicians claimed that once within the party the men did not display any hostility towards them, they all agreed that the leadership would however rather nominate male than female candidates. The arguments were that there were more important considerations than gender if they were to win elections. This included the issue of regional or religious and ethnic balancing. The PNC Northern Regional Organiser in Ghana stressed the importance of ethnic factors over gender considerations. It was found that a woman who was to be considered for the post of district Chief executive was turned down, simply because the MP belonged to her ethnic group. The need for ethnic balancing necessitated she had to be dropped for another candidate.

In an era that emphasised good governance and human rights more women should be fielded for political positions. For example, a female politician who had spent so much money on the party with the hope of being put up for the chairmanship position of her local government in Ondo State was dropped at the last minute. She was so disappointed that she vowed never to go in for elective positions again. In the 1999 elections, some women won the primaries but their parties supplanted them with male candidates, which is a gross violation of the rights of the women. In the primaries in Ondo

State, Mrs. Osomo scored 11,653 votes against her challenger's 2,765, but the Alliance For Democracy (AD) went ahead to nominate Chief Adefarati, her opponent who eventually became the governor of the State. Mrs. Osomo later gave a Press Conference where she informed the public that the decision of the party was driven by the belief that 'women do not win elections'. There were other cases in the other parties and States. In Anambra State, the PDP schemed out a woman of her senatorial victory, while Chief Adinkwu-bakare was schemed out of the gubernatorial race in Lagos by the same party. The point here is that except women are put up for elections, or be part of the leadership of parties, they will continue to be marginalized in the society.

However, male politicians interviewed were of the view that the phenomenon was not peculiar to women. Men as well, suffered from this syndrome. The complaints from both male and female respondents are as follows:

- the major initiators of the parties were tood dominant;

- they tended to impose their friends and family members on the party, and

- the over dependence of the parties on their funding, allowed for their indirect or direct control of party activities such as nominations for election.

A male respondent, a politician form the NCP in Ghana, disclosed that as a result of the above, politicians male or female, from families with a tradition of active political involvement tend to do well in politics. Lack of solidarity among female members of parliament was singled out as an important constraint to women's political participation. Men have continued to

use this against women. In Ghana, only a total of 10% of the respondents, of which women consistituted 2% attest to this. The trend is similar in Nigeria, where 15% of which 2.3% was female said lack of solidarity amongst women was a problem. This showed that men tend to exaggerate the lack fo solidarity among women. In Ghana 9.3% of respondents who were all women complained fo the domineering attitude of women, which did not encourage other women. The result of the interview in Ghana showed that female members of parliament have been criticised for not doing enough to encourage women into politics and for taking on most of the available international opportunities without considering other women. One of the accusations levied against the women in parliament and other women elites was that their paternalistic attitude discouraged younger women politicians, who would rather seek assistance from male politicians than from their female counterparts.

Again, about 15% of the respondents in Ghana, identified the absence of many women in political parties as a source of discouragement to others. Many respondents shared the view that the MPs could do more to get more women into active politics. Two of the female politicians, one from Accra and the other from Tema were of the opinion that the inability of women to join party politics was the result of the inability of the women at the top to organise other women. The view was that these women were too pre-occupied with self and not gender balancing or women issues. This might be likened to the view of prominent Nigerians, Professors Awe and Akande as well as the Secretary of the NCWs, that women appointed into government in Nigeria are not gender sensitive. In the interview they said that women were usually

appointed on the basis of their personal relationship with the people in government, family background, ethnic considerations or religious balancing. Such people tended to give little consideration to gender or women's issues.

Although, the male respondents believed that most of the female politicians could cope with intra party politics, they still believed that the history of political violence has continued to keep women away; such as thugery and political killings. In Ghana, political violence at election time was identified although more emphasis was placed on the nature of the military rule. This may not be unconnected with the violent way Rawlings took-over power in the country.

In both countries, the political scene showed clearly that women were largely absent from the high levels of party and State power structures, although one of the major developments of the late 20th century was the call for democratic governance, human rights in which the woman was central. The phenomenon made it imperative on all governments and civil societies to do something about gender relations. Thus to gain acceptability or respectability in the comity of Nations, developing and developed countries must be seen to be advocating for the empowerment of women. This development is reflected in the Charter of the newly constituted African Union (AU) as well as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Female respondents shared the view that women could win electiosn if nominated. This view was also shared by the majority of key informants.There is the need for women to actively participate in politics. Since politics is about human beings making important decisions for themselves and the society. Politics has to do with public decisions that have serious consequences for

the society. Politics is embedded with formal power which is vested in individuals or groups. There is growing acceptance of the notion that more women need to be involved in national decision-making processes and politics. This is part of a growing worldwide movement about women's participation and representation in power – structures and institutions. The general opinion is that women are largely absent from the highest levels of state and power structures in the civil society, but active in mass political activity and in political parties especially around elections, which do not transform to power and authority.

5.4   Women Wings and Political Participation

In Nigeria and Ghana, there is no woman chairperson or a secretary of any of the political parties, which are key positions central to decision-making within the parties and for nominating oppointees for government. But all political parties that existed in Nigeria and Ghana have Women's Wings. The functions of the women wings as perceived by respondents are stated in table 5.11 below:

Table 5.11: Perception of Respondents of the Functions of Women's Wings of Political Parties (%)

	Ghana			Nigeria		
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Women's needs	67.0	33.0	100.0	67.0	33.0	100.0
Meetings	38.0	17.0	55.0	22.5	15.0	37.0
Policies	9.1	10.0	19.1	13.0	12.0	25.0
Converts	36.0	29.0	65	40.2	30.0	70.2
Campaign	67.0	33.0	100.0	67.0	33.0	100.0
Encouraging youths	22.0	29.0	51.0	14.8	5.2	20.0

Source: Field Work 1999.

Fig. 8: Perception of Respondents of the Functions of Women Wings of
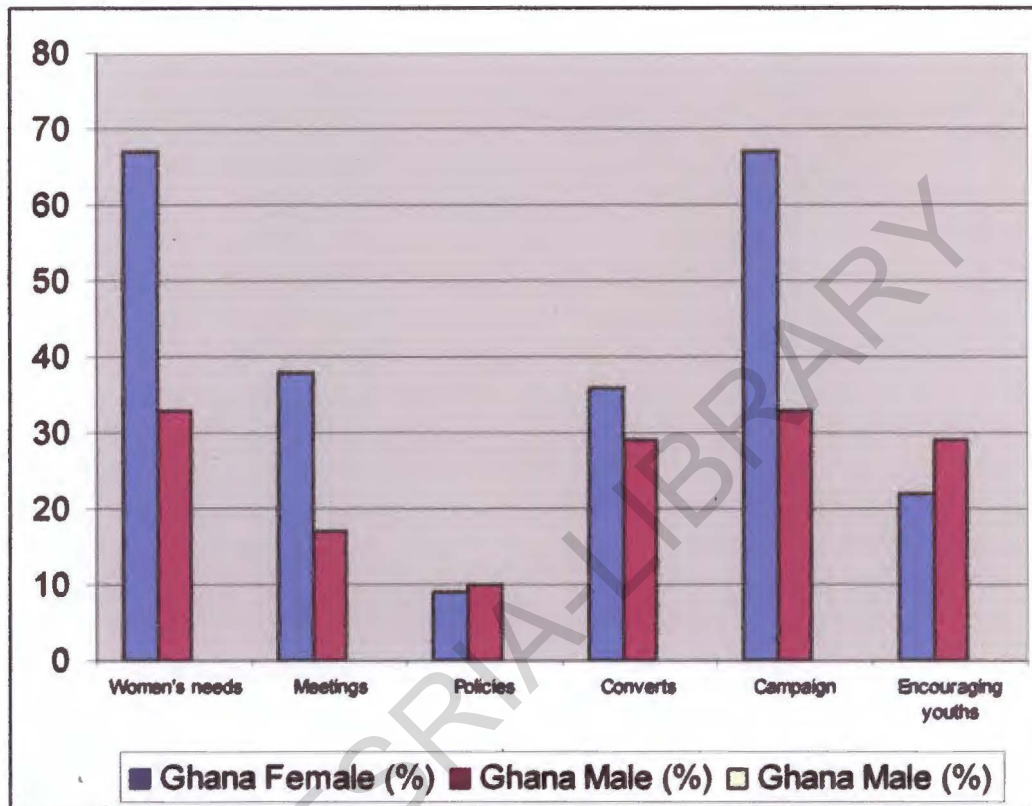
Political Parties in Ghana
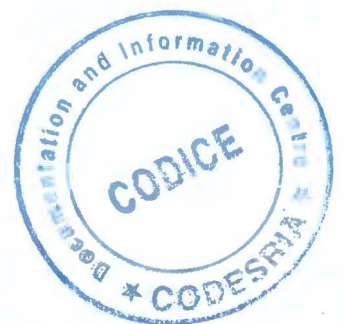
Fig. 9: Perception of Respondents of the Functions of Women Wings of Political Parties in Nigeria
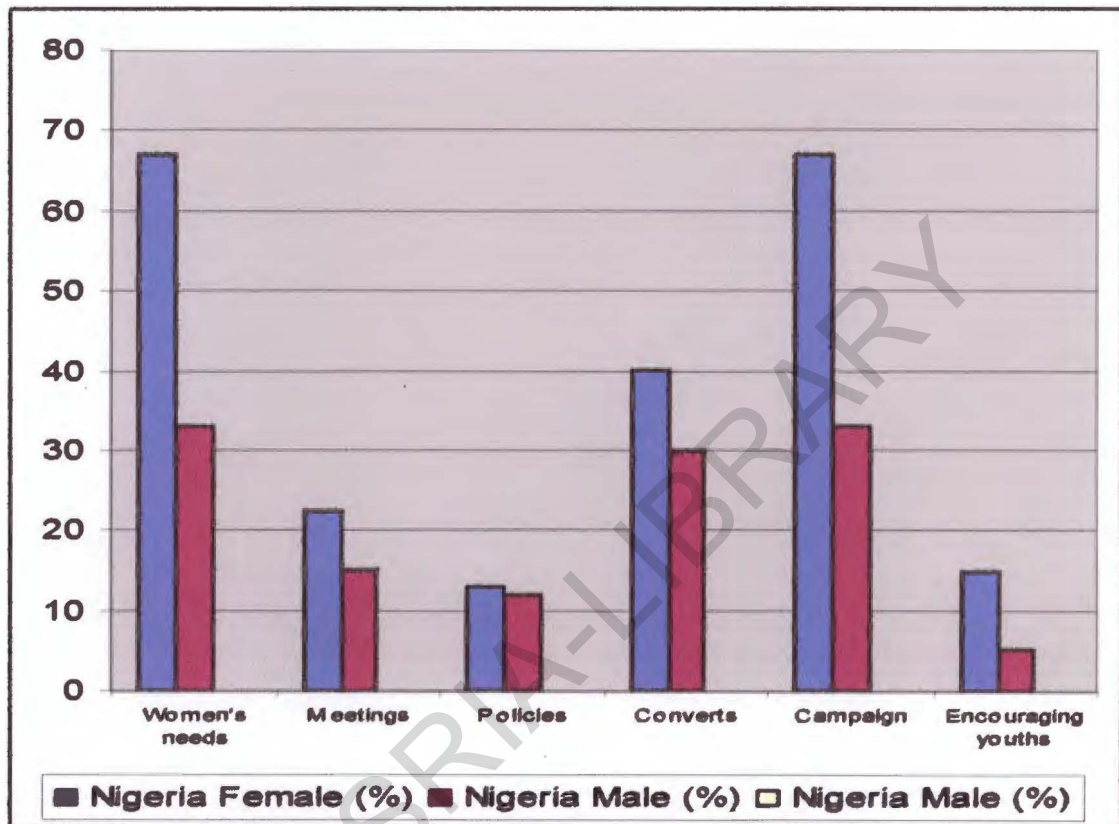
Table 5.11 (Fig 8 and 9) illustrates that all (100%) respondents in Ghana and Nigeria agreed that the women's wings of political parties in both countries were set up primarily to meet the needs of women and assist with political campaigns. In Ghana, 55% of the respondents remarked that the women's wings assisted in preparing for meetings as compared to 37.5% of same in Nigeria. In both countries, the respondents remarked that women political wings assisted in wining new converts into the parties. 65% of those respondents in Ghana took this view as against a slightly higher 70.2% in Nigeria of which 40.2% was female. Interestingly, 51% of respondents in Ghana believed women's wings encouraged youths in participating in party politics. In contrast, only 20% of respondents in Nigeria was of this view. In Nigeria, 25% of respondents believed women's wings of the party was involved in the formulation of policies. However, only 19.1% of respondents in Ghana shared this view. In both countries, women officials occupied party positions that could not be described influential Adereti, a female scholar from Lagos State University said, "...the underrepresentation in executive capacities led to women's limited participation in decision-making processes of the parties and their inability to be part of decisions in choosing candidates for elections and for government appointments".

All politicians supported the idea of having women's wing of political parties. The women's wings were regarded as a way of improving women's participation in the party as a whole. This was seen as a way of solving some of the women's political problems. In the course of the interviews, it was found that male politicians from both countries thought women's wings were synonymous to women's integration into the governance and party processes.

Women politicians' view differ as the wings were not central to important decisions in the parties. They argued that with time they might be able to make the necessary input. A feminist scholar in Ghana expressed the view that if only the women's wings from the various parties could come together on issues that affected women in general, they would form a formidable advocacy group, a group to be reckoned with by the different political parties and even by government. This strategy migh be a way of ensuring that political parties and government implement the Beijing PFA, which could ensure women's effective representation and participation within the party and in government. She further observed that it would remove men's domination of governance structures, and would increase the level of women's participation in government and decision-making bodies, especially the parliaments. From the information obtained in both countries, the view commonly expressed was that male politicians liked the idea of the women's wings as it was a way of organising women and their activities, but they were not designed to be a major policy formulation group. A concerned male activist from the PCP and another one from the NCP in Ghana, actually considered women's wings as a dead end, as they are not vested with any significant power. This was also expressed by other interviewees. In Nigeria, female politicians agreed that there was the need for women's wings as they were able to work with other bodies outside the political parties to sensitise the population. However, both male and female politicians interviewed held the view that women's wings were not actually central to the political power play within the parties. The major constraints of the women's wings as perceived by a female leader of the PNC in Ghana is that once in

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government, female MPs seized to be active in the women's wings. The second reason is the high percentage of illiterate women in the wings. A female member of the AD in Nigeria lamented that the high illiteracy level among women within the party constituted a serious problem. It would be recalled that 100% of the respondents in Ghana and Nigeria shared the view that illiteracy constitute a major problem to women's emancipation and involvement in leadership positions. Many of the women only need contract jobs, making it difficult to organise the wing. However, UNIFEM in collaboration with other NGOs, had set-up activities to transform the women's wings into political power bases in both countries.

There is broad agreement that culture has continued to forge the fate of humanity and that it has been hostile to women's political career and career orientation as a whole. Intricately linked to the issue of culture is biology. Respondents tend to believe that the biology determines the cultural perception of the sexes. The reproductive activities of women reduce their mobility and availability for party politics early in life. When this issue was taken up with the four female politicians in Ghana and ten in Nigeria, it was found that apart from a few exceptions, women found difficult to join political parties early as a result of family reproductive responsibilities.

5.5   The Impact of Gendered Institutions on Women Empowerment in Ghana and Nigeria

The asymmetrical roles assigned to the female gender hinder women from participating actively in party politics and their taking up careers that would consume their time, or take them away from their families. Generally,

women from both countries did not plan to enter politics early in life. From the study, it was found that women's marginal status could only be removed if they participated in politics, and the professions. Women must be able to participate in politics, as politics about the competition for the control of power and public policy-making process within the organised framework of government. The ability to control and take decisive decisions is achieved by persons and groups, irrespective of gender, through a process of participation that eventually leads to having various positions at the pinnacle of power. That is to say women cannot have political power if they fail to participate. Women have come to realise that it is essential for them to take part to be adequately represented in the power institutions.

Unfortunately, the undemocratic family institution has continued to prevent women from going into the productive sectors of the economy and politics. The family in Nigeria and Ghana is a gendered institution with men playing the dominant role and women the subordinate role. In both countries, husbands have continued to prevent their wives from joining politics as noted earlier. A male scholar in Legon, Ghana, agreed that men knowingly or unknowingly hindered women's progress as a result of the perceived belief that women are the home-makes. As a result of this belief women are handicapped in the home.

One thing that is common among men in the two countries is that they want their wives to pursue career goals that would take them away from home for too long and at odd times. Most of the men shared the view that while men, the 'bread winners' try to take care of the family, the women's work or career must be such that they would be at home most of the time. The

implication of this view is that the work of the men is 'more important', and that the women must adjust to this popular notion.

Patriarchy was widely practiced in both countries. Patriarchal psychology produces the dominant and subordinate social groups. The dominant groups the subordinate ones, thereby perpetuating the dependent nature of women on men. The family structure in Nigeria and Ghana demonstrates this situation. However, male supremacy over female was not limited to the patriarchal society as the matriarchal Fantes demonstrated the same trend.

5.6   Religion and Women's Power

Earlier studies on gender relations have revealed the role of religion in the position of women in society. The views of respondents were sort on the role of religion on gender relations, and women's involvement in public life in Ghana and Nigeria.

A large proportion of respondents 95% made up of 65% female and 30% male believed religion played a significant role in Nigeria in limiting women's participation in governance. However, only 60% of respondents consisting of 35% female aginst 25% male believed so in Ghana. The study revealed that religion whether traditional religion, Christianity or Islam is a major ideology that has continued to oppress women in diverse ways. Feminists tend to believe that all religions marginalise women. The reviw was corroborated by the study. Religion, like culture, is a major vehicle for gender ideologies that keep women down.

The result of the interviews was that Islam is more restrictive than Christianity because it restricts women's movement. However, a keen observer in Ghana noted that women's representation in government in that country did not show that Christians have any lead over Muslims. She however, added that she was aware that Islam restricted women more than Christianity. It is important to note that in Ghana only about 10% of the population were Muslims and they are found mainly in the northern region. On the contrary, Islam is more widely spread in Ngieria. This might also be related to the fact that 95% of the respondents in Nigeria posited that religion was the problem. As a result of purdah, early in life, young girls and women do not have access to education and are also denied access to the modern labour market. By so doing, Islam directly and indirectly denied women access to poweer. Again women in Muslim north, unlike those women from the south, were more restricted from participation in public life.

A former President of FOMWAN in Osun State, said that there is a misconception of the role of women in Islam. Most of the Muslim clerics shared this view, except for two, who strongly believed that women should not freely move with men. To them, politics is the domain of men. They did not perceive Muslim men as oppressing their women, but see them as their protector. The two FOMWAN presidents interviewed held that masculinity in the broad culture, is also expressed in Islam. The president from Osun State, observed that it was in line with this phenomenon that the association was set up to educate women and reduce the rate of illiteracy among them.

Respondents reported that Islamic fundamentalism is sweeping through Nigeria. This was not widely reported in Ghana. However, the

secretary of FIDA (2000) in Ghana reported that husbands prevented many women from attending rallies when her group visited northern Ghana. She also added that, many of the women who attended had to rush home when it was about time for their husbands to arrive home. Olukoshi also advanced the view that Islam has been greatly influenced by culture. Although the politicians interacted with were not discouraged by religion or religious leaders, they were all of the view that for the critical mass to be in politics, women must first scale the religious barriers.

Interviews were held with religious leaders in both countries 10 in Nigeria and 5 in Ghana as shown below:

Religion	Ghana	Nigeria
Islam	2	4
Christianity	2	5
Traditional	1	1
Total	5	10

Of the 5 christians in Nigeria, only one, a Catholic, believed that women should stick to the private sphere. His argument was that, whatever a woman wanted to achieve, her home should come first. He was not opposed to women holding important government positions or other gladiatorial appointements, but he argued that politics and elected offices tend to take women away from the home, which might lead to separation, divorce and poor up-bringing of children. This view did not reflect the general positon of the Catholic faith, as another catholic priest favoured women's political participation for good governance. In both countries the traditionalist were not opposed to women's seeking leadership roles.

5.7 The Way Forward

The result of the field work in both countries revealed that for women to adequately take part in governance and democratic processes, there is the need to address some pertinent issues. For women to break through the barriers created by socio-cultural beliefs and religion, the following strategies were identified in both countries.

- education
- capacity building
- government support
- law reforms
- intervention by international agencies

Education

Scholars from the two countries agreed that the colonial heritage actually heightened the intensity of the present gender disparity. The British colonial administration made little attempt to address the position and status of women in traditional society, as it concentrated mainly on profit making for the colonisers. As a result of this colonial policy, men in Ghana and Nigeria, like those in other countries, had the lead, especially in the professions, thereby limiting the chances of women. Awe in Nigeria and Tsikata in Ghana in the interviews, stated that colonialism impacted negatively on women as the nature of male education gave them leadership roles in public life, a trend that has not changed. The study revealed that illiteracy is still higher among women than men. The percentage of primary school aged girls who were not attending school by 1999 in Ghana was 26% and in Nigeria 51% (Fig. 10).

This was rather high, especially in Nigeria where over 50% of school aged children were still kept out of school. All respondents agreed that lack of education or inadequate education was central to women's inadequate representation in governance and democratic processes, and that there is a need for change.

In 1990, 59% of male population in Nigeria was literate compared with only 38% of female population. The rate of literacy in Ghana in male population was slightly higher than that of Nigeria. In the same year, male literacy rate in Ghana was 70% of male population and while female was 47% of female population. This trend was similar in year 2000 in which 72% of male population in Nigeria was literate compared with a slightly higher female literacy rate of 56%. In Ghana, the rate of literacy in 2000 in male population was 80% compared with 63% of female literacy rate as shown in table 5.12.

Table 5.12: Adult Literacy rate in Ghana and Nigeria

	1990		2000	
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Nigeria	59.0	38.0	72.0	56.0
Ghana	70.0	47.0	80.0	63.0

Source: Field Work 2000.

Table 5.13: Secondary School enrolment ratio 1997-2000

	Male	Female
Nigeria	33	28
Ghana	40	33

Source: UNICEF 2004. The State of the World's Children.
(Tables 4.8-4.10).

Table 5.13 shows the secondary school enrolment in Ghana and Nigeria from 1997 to 2000. In Nigeria, 33% of male population enrolled in secondary schools compared with 28% of women population. Compared to Nigeria, a slightly higher percentage of Ghanaian males' population 40%, was enrolled in secondary schools compared with 33% of their female population, underscoring the fact that males in both countries had a higher percentage of enrolment in secondary schools. A trend that followed that of the primary schools.

Table 5.14 shows the primary school enrolment in Ghana and Nigeria, and figure 10 shown the primary school drop out rate in both countries. The rate of primary school drop out in Nigeria is 51% compared to Ghana 28% in 1999. The fact that the drop out rate in Nigeria is about twice that of Ghana suggests that a lot needs to be done to encourage Nigerian pupils to stay in school as the drop out rate is a national embarrassment.

Table 5.14: Primary School enrolment for the same Period (1999)

	Gross		Net	
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Nigeria	75	65	38	33
Ghana	84	77	60	57

Source: Field Work 2000.

Fig 10: Primary School Drop out rate in Ghana and Nigeria
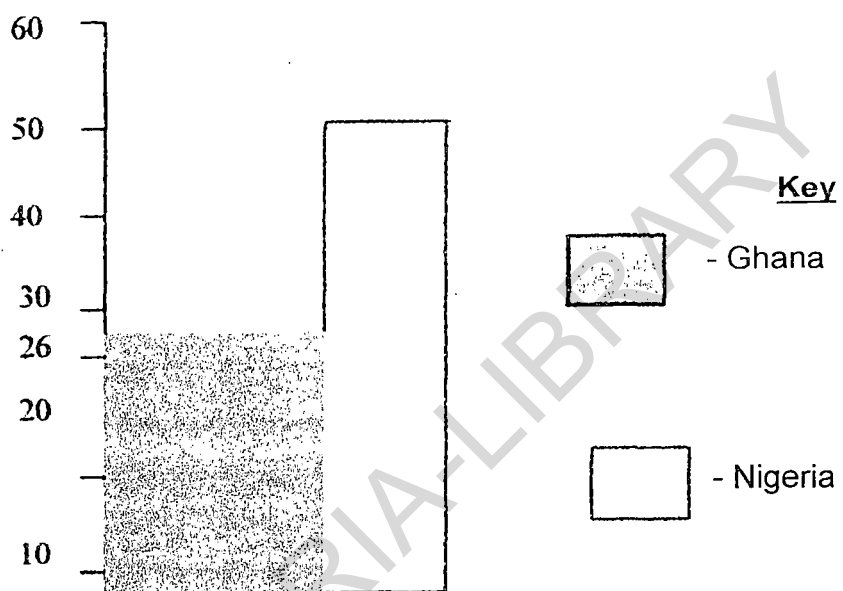
Fig 11: Importance of Education to Women's Emancipation

Educated Girl

Smaller Families

Economically more independent

Healthier and better educated children with better orientation

A gender sensitive socialization process for the children
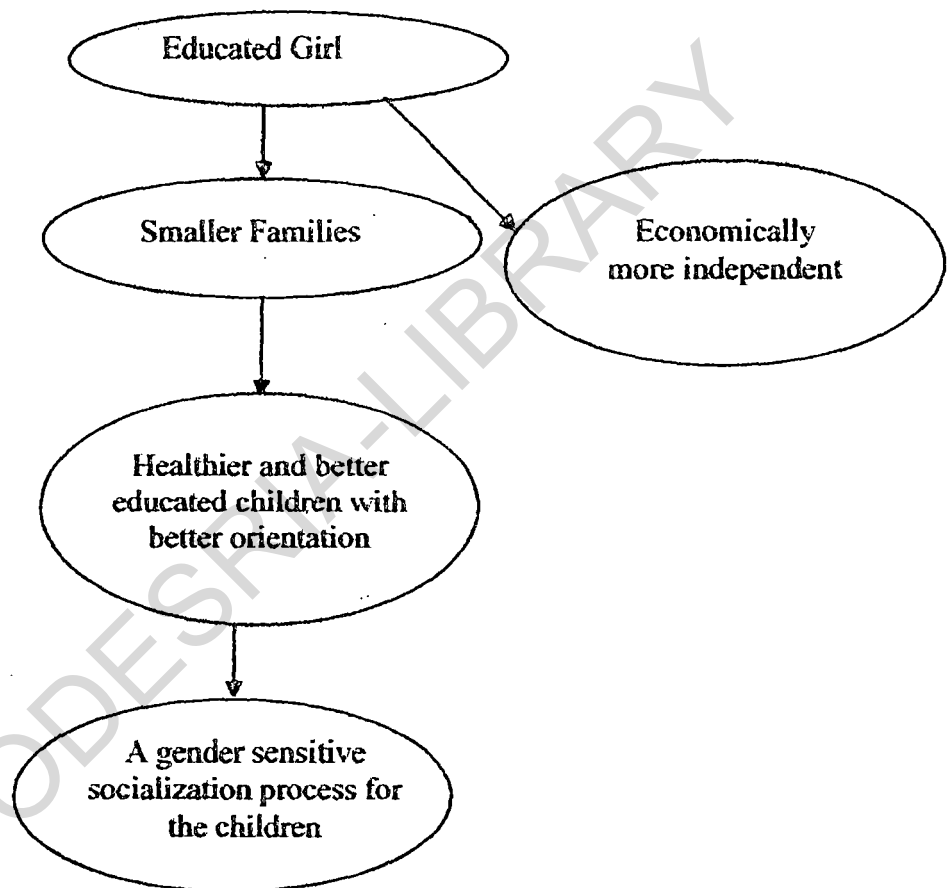
The study revealed that women with better education, especially in the professions, are more likely to compete favourably with men (See figure 11). Educated women are less affected by cultural constraints. They are more aware of their rights under the law and know how to go about seeking redress if need be. It is easier for them to overcome the religious obstacles. It is essential that girls get the necessary education since it is one of the most powerful levers of progress. Girls' education is closely linked to wider opportunities for women.

In an interview with a prominent PDP woman leader and with the Assistant Iyaloja of Oshogbo in Southwest Nigeria, it was found that education is central to adequate political participation. The PDP leader, using herself as an example, noted that she was the woman leader of her area, but as a result of her poor educational background, she could not be put forward for elective positions or for important positions at the state or the federal levels. On several occasions, she had gone on the air to encourage girl-child education. In a similar vein, a regional woman organiser in Ghana with only middle school certificate, said that her inability to come up for political office was the result of her low educational level.

A feminist scholar and the chairperson of an NGO based in Lagos, Nigeria opined that a certain level of education is necessary, but not necessarily the major determinant as highly educated women tend to shy away from active party politics. Using Nigeria as example, she observed that the best the highly educated women were doing was writing and documenting women's experiences and advocacy. She however expressed the view that these roles were also central to the empowerment of women. This tallies with

the view earlier expressed by Professor Akande of WLDC. They have continued to put pressure on government and non-governmental bodies in deciding and making policies that affected the people and women in particular. Women have also by and large continued to act as advocates for the women's causes. In both countries, women in the professions, for example, the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), the National Association of Women Journalists, have been in the forefront of the advocacy for women. FOMWAN also consists of educated women who are determined to assist Muslim women. Women focused NGOs have been established by literate women among other things, to champion women's causes. Nana Amamao a member of the PNC party in Accra, Ghana noted that illiteracy is a major draw-back for the participation of women in politics and developmental processes. With more and better education, more women would be at the decision-making tables and ensure the necessary changes.

Despite the desire for education, the female politicians and scholars were opposed to affirmative action in the area of education. The major concern was that it would make women inferior. They argued that women are as competent as men. What women needed therefore, is a conducive environment and the opportunity to be educated. However, a female scholar in ngieria was of a different opinion. She believed that to make up for the past, affirmative action should be put in place for some time. Ghana has moved a step forward in that direction, as women are bing encouraged to go into the sciences. The government opened sciece summer shools in Legon and Cape Coast. Universities, to coach girls in the sciences during the holidays.

Funding Political Activities

Apart from other obstacles, funding of political activities was identified as a major constraint to women's political participation, which is central to power. In Nigeria, all respondents of which 67% were female and 33% male attested to this view. The response in Ghana was similar. Two female politicians from Osun and Lagos States said that male financiers believed that women were difficult to deal with. Financiers are interested in men who are usually ready to go all the way to ensure their victory at the polls. This is however not necessarily the case for every woman, as two of the female politicians interviewed in Nigeria, said that their husbands and friends who were enthusiastic about their candidature sponsored their campaigns.

In Ghana one of the most mentioned problems facing women in politics was lack of resources to finance political careers. Many of them complained of difficulty in securing funds. One respondent even confessed that canvassers and supporters stick when there is money. A female MP in Ghana explained that women, unlike men, cannot go all out sourcing for funding for fear of being subjected to rumours and demand for sexual favours from male sponsors. Two politicians in Ghana observed that, they were actually put up for election by the 31st December Movement of Mrs. Rawlings who assisted with financing the campaign. They maintained that funding would have been a problem if not for the assistance of DWM. Similarly, FONWIP an NGOs, based in Benin City, Nigeria actually put up candidates and sponsored them for the 2003 election.

Governments, IGOs and NGOs may need to urgently address this issue if women are to take their rightful place at the decision-making tables.

Like the DWM, parties and NGOs may need to look at what could be done to assist women in financing their political campaigns. There is also need for civil society groups to assist women in this direction. This was the view expressed by the women politicians in the two countries. In Ghana, the success of women politicians was attributed to sponsorship by DWM. Professor Akande in Nigeria said that, "for women to take part adequately in political processes are NGOs must do more by financing female candidates".

The study reavealed that economic power is essential for women's participation in governance. Women leaders in conjunction with market associations led the earlier struggles in Ghana and Nigeria. These women had economic power, and were able to organise against any threat to their sustainance. As shown earlier, the study (table 5.9 and 5.10) women as a result of the family, religion, level of education, legal constraints and lack of government supoort were marginalised in the political and economic spheres as a result of their poor status they are unable to compete with men in all areas.

All respondents (100%) in Nigeria and Ghana, maintained that culture was a major contributory fact to the powerlessness of women. As indicated above, women need finance to support their political activities. As a result of the poor economic status of women, the NGOs and international agencies have targeted skill acquisition programmes. For instance, in Ghana 80% of the respondents agreed that DWM worked with women at the grassroots to raise their economic capacity. In both countries, skill acquisition was central to the activities of most of the NGOs. In Nigeria for instance, COWAN which started in Ondo State had continued to work with the agarian people, forming

cooperatives and implementing modern farming tehniques. The fieldwork in Ghana revealed that one of the greatest achievements of DWM was the ability to organise women into cooperatives, and also open up loan facilities for the women with some banks.

The major concern is that there could not be authority and political power without economic power. In addition to the above, the international agencies link women's economic power to their health and that of their nations. This had led agencies such as UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP to give assistance to the governments in the following areas in the two countries apart from the encouraging girl-child education.

- campaign against violence against women (VAW)

- assisted the governments with the campaign against major diseases such as Polio, measles and others.

- Provision of vitamin A supplement.

Government and Women Empowerment

There are 3 types of gender bias in urban governance:

- Nominal Bias – more men than women in civil service or – under-representation of women at senior levels;

- Substantive bias – issues of importance to women are marginalised; or women are marginalised from mainstream decision-making; and

- Organisational bias – the structures and cultures of organisations exclude or fail to promote, or devalue culturally prescribed famine norms.

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The president of Ghana Union of journalists, who happened to be a woman at the time of the interview, said she was not ready to credit the military with any achievements, as military rule was anti-democracy. She, like others, said that gender issues became prominent at the time as a result of the international environment that favoured human rights and the rights of women since the 1970s to date.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents in Ghana and 62% in Nigeria maintained that government must be involved if women are to be empowered. The areas identified are listed below:

- Legal Reforms

- Constitutional Changes

- Academic Institutions

- Political Parties

- National Bodies

- Regional Bodies

- International Organisations

In the interviews with the female scholars and leaders of the NGOs and politicians from both countries it was revealed that the governments were not genuinely committed to women empowerment as they failed to implement international conventions on women. Nigeria has since established a Ministry of Women Affairs and the government's gender policy is now out. However, female politicians and chairpersons of NGOs were skeptical about its implementation. The complaint was that the male dominant institutions might make its full implementation difficult. NGOs and the international agencies however, have nonetheless continued to draw the attention of the government

to the provision that 30% of government positions must be reserved for women.

Significantly, 70% of male respondents in Ghana frowned at the idea of a ministry for women affairs. One of them even cynically asked if every problem "… should every problem have a ministry to address it". In Nigeria, however, it was observed that more men were at home with the idea, as only 37% of male respondents criticised its establishment. The differences might be due to the fact that at the time of the study, the Ministry of Women Affairs had been established in Nigeria while it was non-existent in Ghana.

In Ghana and Nigeria gender-neutral laws were the object of focus. Female respondents in Nigeria were particularly concerned about this, as they said neutral laws did not take into consideration the dual reproductive and productive nature of women, which did not allow women to compete favourably with men. 51.1% of the respondents posited that there was need for review of laws in the country to ensure women's adequate representation in national institutions and sponsorship for jobs in international bodies where important policies are formulated. They said that such a policy would remove discriminatory policies, actions and attitudes against women.

The following areas were identified as areas for government action and reform if women were to be equitably represented in governance and democratic processes.

- Inheritance

- Laws prejudicial to women

- Identify the gender implications of rules and practices

- Legislate against childhood marriages

-       Compulsory education

-       Electoral Law.

Although 27% of respondents in Ghana, held similar views, they were more concerned with government's ability to monitor and ensure adequate implementation of laws passed. This might not be unconnected with the fact that women still continue to suffer despite the inheritance and interstate laws that were already passed in the country. The major demand on the governments of both countries is the need for affirmative action. This was identified as the only way that women in both countries could compete favourably with men. All female respondents in both countries agreed on this. However, only 22% of male respondents in Ghana supported the idea. A similar trend was recorded in Nigeria. Some even said it would be tantamount to discrimination against the male gender.

5.8   Conclusion

Politics is about competition for the control of the public policy-making processes within the organised framework of government. It is only through a process of political participation, that women could eventually achieve leadership positions. The societal expectations of women, however, have continued to limit their involvement in politics. Women who carry out multiple roles have not been given enough adjustment within the family and the society to accommodate their numerous roles. For women to participate in gladiatorial politics, and in governance, the governments of Ghana and Nigeria and their societies must recognise that empowerment of women is a human rights and human resource development issues. These cut across a variety of interrelated areas that should be targets of fundamental reforms as

dictated by international institutions where values and norms are determined. The study revealed that in Ghana and Nigeria, governments and political have not worked vigorously at the implemensation of human rights treaties and conventions. The national policies, laws, practices and procedures were not in line with international human rights instruments of which Universal Dclaration of Human Rights, CEDAW and Beijing Platform of Action are significant.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FIRST LADIES' MOVEMENT

6.1   Introduction

From 1966 to 1992 in Ghana, and 1966 to 1999 in Nigeria, power was mostly in the hands of the men in uniform. The military paid little or no attention to women issues because their primary concerns were stability, security and keeping themselves in power. From the data, it was observed that the military's interest in women issues was more coincidental than a deliberate programme aimed at integrating women into the development processes. All respondents in Ghana and Nigeria said women issues gained prominence during the military era. Even those respondents who agreed that women's issues gained prominence during their felt that the military regimes were not more sympathetic to the cause of women than the politicians. The widely held view was that with the UN's declaration of 1976 -1985 as the Decade for women, many activities were geared towards women's visibility in all fields. Thus, it became imperative for even the military governments to put in place some policies that positively affected women's progress. In 1975, Ghanaian and Nigerian women like their counterparts all over the world attended the U.S. government-sponsored conference at which March 8 every year was set aside as International Women's Day, a day set aside to discuss issues that affect women. By this time, also even international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF had begun to encourage women-focused programmes. Above all, to obtain assistance from the West; even the military must be seen as doing something to assist women. This was the view advanced by Lithur in Ghana. By the 80's women's groups were

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recognised as efficient vehicles for promoting small scale and project based
poverty alleviation programmes. They were considered to be particularly
effective at reaching 'vulnerable groups', among which women are prominent.
The various international policy initiatives reflect member government's
commitment and provided them with guiding principles for national actions to
effectively integrate women in development.

With the emergence of global interest in women in the 1980s, there
emerged in Africa a new focus on women and their issues, of which the first
lady's phenomenon became prominent. Mama (1995:40), has this to say
about the new focus:

> ... individual women have capitalised in a number
> the international favourable climate and their
> positions as wives of Heads of State to assume
> powerful new roles, often arrogating to themselves
> the right to represent and lead women.

The First Lady phenomenon, which became prominent in SSA including
Ghana and Nigeria, has continued to generate a lot of discussions on its
usefulness and achievements, even after the military leaders and ladies that
championed them had left office. In both countries under study, the 1970s
and 1980s did not usher the much desired women's emancipation. However,
there emerged a host of NGOs working on various areas of women's
empowerment, including women's political empowerment. According to Tripp
(1989:26), the 1980s ushered in a proliferation of new forms of associations
as well as development-oriented women NGOs. It was a widely held view in
both countries that women's organisations were welcomed development.

organise to make a change. Scholars, politicians and government officials commented on the importance of women's organisations and movements for women to be adequately integrated into developmental processes. As a result of gender divisions in the political-economic arrangements of British administrations which were skewed in favour of men, women in both countries had a history of organising that put pressure on their governments to effect changes that favoured women. The view expressed was that women's organising for change was not alien to the two countries. In the 1980s, with the favourable international environment wives of military leaders in Africa started organising for change, and exercised a lot of influence on the state and international affairs. By the end of the UNs' Women's decade (1976-1985), there had emerged dynamic women's organisation in Ghana, one of which was the 31st December Women's Movement (DWM) that became very prominent.

6.2   December 31st Women's Movement (DWM) in Ghana

Along with other agencies in the 1980s, First Ladies' Movements that were supposed to be non-partisan, non-governmental organisations were set up to make the life of women more meaningful and relevant to national developments. On May 15, 1982, Mrs. Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, Ghana's First Lady, formed the December 31st Women's Movement (DWM). Among the aims and objectives of DWM was the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women in economic, social and political matters. In addition, it was to join the struggle to reform the structures, laws, norms and practices which oppressed women. There was also a provision for

encouraging women to participate actively in the political processes. The movement was established to help women develop a positive image of themselves; raise their consciousness on national affairs as to get them involved in the decision making processes; provide channel for seeking opinions of women on government programmes and obtain feedbacks of government programmes. The movement was also established to encourage women to fully participate in the economic life of the nation, and also to lobby for the abolition of customs, laws and practices which were unfair to women and which impede them from participating on equal basis with men. Another function of the movement was to network with other women groups locally and internationally. DWM started from Accra, from where it spread to other parts of the country. At the time of this study, in 1999, the movement had over 2 million members nationwide of whcih 95% were located in the rural areas.

The data revealed that in Ghana 61% of the respondents supported the establishment of the DWM and only 26.5% was against its formation, while 12.5% were non-committal. Apart from its resolve to fight for change in the social and economic conditions of women, its first objective was to mobilise women to participate actively in the 'revolutionary process' of Rawling's military administration. DWM officials interviewed said that the movement was essentially set up to speed up women's participation in decision-making processes and to bring out their creative and innovative capabilities. They all said it was designed mainly to empower women in the rural areas, as 70% of the women population in the country lived in the rural areas.

There were varying arguments advanced for and levied against the movement. The frequency of the criticisms levied against DWM is contained in the table 6.1 and figure 12. The major complaint was the partisan nature of the movement 70.7% of respondents (52.5% female and 18.2% male) complained that it catered politically and economically for members of the NDC, which was headed by President Rawlings. The politicians from the NDC did not deny this fact, but added that, women that benefited from the credit facilities operated by the movement were not chosen on party lines. Most of DWM projects, for example, the farm projects 'Ken Key' mini- factories were based in various localities in the community irrespective of party affiliation. The regional director of DWM in Accra gave the example of kaneshie market scheme, which was established in collaboration with the market women association. DWM was critised by 51% of the respondents, 40.1% of which were females and 10% males for having attracted most of the available funds. A middle-age respondent stressed that she did not care what DWM achieved as she hated anything military or dictatorial. Politicians shared the view that in terms of political participation, DWM was more interested in women in NDC (President Rawlings' party). Two of the female NDC members also held the view that (DWM) allied with the party, because it was impressed with the party's manifesto. Members from other political parties did not see it this way. The major complaint (Table 6.1) was that DWM, was actually an appendage of NDC. However, politicians, both male and female from other parties maintained that it would have been absurd for Mrs. Rawlings to have campaigned for other parties apart from NDC. Sixty point four percent (60.4%)

of interviewees from Ghana were of the view that DWM was an offshoot of PNDC/NDC, which was primarily set up to sell PNDC's programmes.

Politicians from other parties were of the view that the 'NGO' only empowered NDC women, as the DWM was actually the women's wing of the party and was actually in charge of the women in the NDC. 32% of the respondents critised the movement for not starting as an NGO, as it received both logistic and financial support from the government. The DWM was also inaugurated by the Chairmman of the PNDC. One of the major problems between DWM and other NGOs such as FEGAWO, was that DWM was seen as a government-sponsored organization not an NGO. Although, some government officials interviewed denied investing in the Movement, two officers of the NCWD, confirmed that government made a huge investment in the DWM and that only projects approved by the First Lady could be executed.

Table 6.1: Identified Flaws of DWM

Flaws of DWM	Total Percentage (%) of Respondents	Percentage (%) Female	Percentage (%) Male
Funding	51.0	40.1	10.0
Partisan	70.7	52.5	18.2
Unconstitutional	42.2	22.2	20.0
Not as NGO	32.0	25.0	7.0
Elitist	30.1	25.1	5.0
Wasteful	15.0	13.0	2.0

Source: Field Work 2000.

Fig. 12: Flaws of DWM Identified by respondents in Ghana
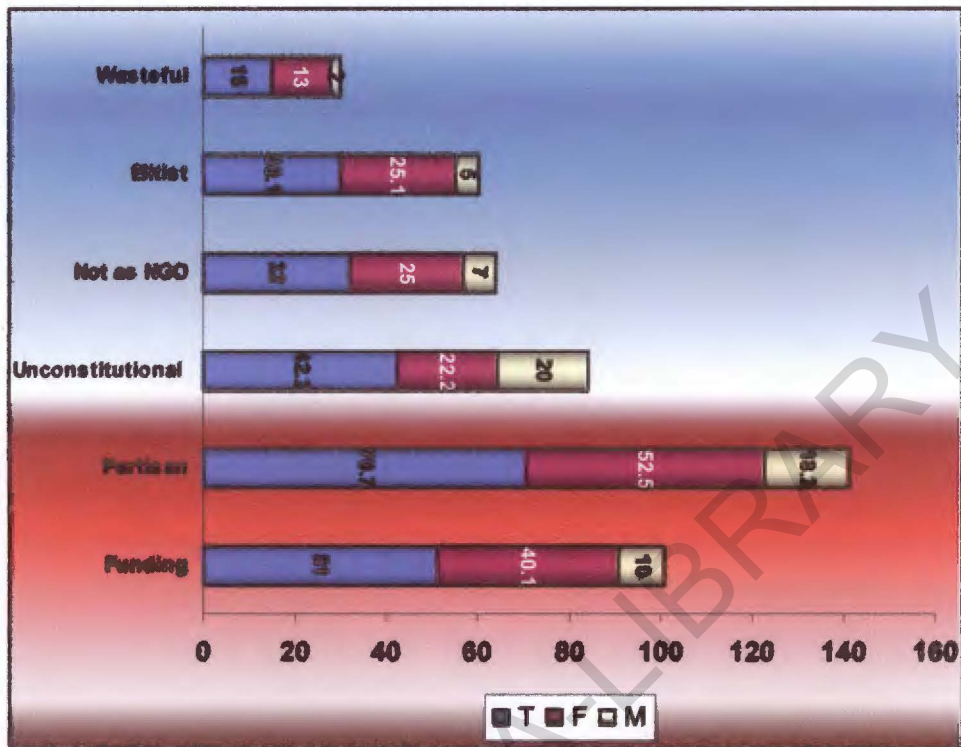
Legend:

T   =   Total percentage of respondents

F   =   Percentage of female respondents

M   =   Percentage of male respondents.

Table 6.2: Identified BLP and FSP

Flaws of BLP and FSP	Total Percentage (%) of Respondents	Percentage (%) Female	Percentage (%) Male
Self-Serving	90.1	70.1	20.0
Wasteful	89.2	66.0	23.0
Elitist	87.7	58.5	29.2
Unconstitutional	80.1	65.0	15.0

Source: Field Work 2000.

Fig. 13: Flaws of BLP and FSP Identified by Respondents in Nigeria
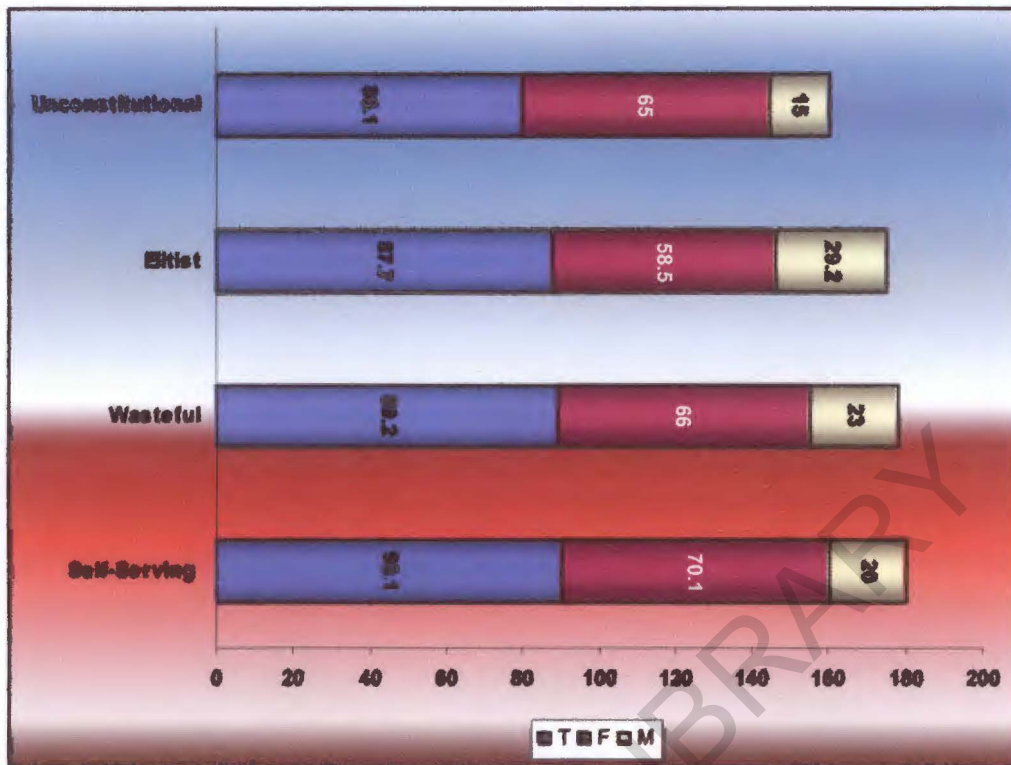
Legend:

T   =   Total percentage of respondents

F   =   Percentage of female respondents

M   =   Percentage of male respondents.

Another serious complaint was that other women's organisations, such as FEGAWO and the All Women Association of Ghana (AWAG) that emerged about the same time with the DWM were later silenced. This view was corroborated by the UNDP coordinator in Ghana who pointed out that a lot of attention was given to DWM by the UNDP and other pro-DWM agencies. She complimented Mrs. Rawlings for working very hard on her pet projects, especially in the rural areas. However President Rawlings came under sharp criticisms for allowing his wife to usurp the functions of the National Council for Women Development (NCWD), as the government greatly reduced allocation to the center, which left it officers redundant. The common complaint was that their officers became more invitees to programmes rather than being the organisers. The argument advanced by the secretary to FIDA and experts on gender relations, was that the officers of NCWD could not perform because they lacked the necessary funds or backing of government to match the DWM. The two senior officers at the NCWD center interviewed also expressed similar views. They complained that Mrs. Rawlings became the unofficial head of the NCWD. One of the women who headed the research section of the Center lamented that it was as if there was a deliberate ploy by government to disempower the Centre. She further stressed that the politician in the DWM did not need the Centre as the DWM became their focus.

Respondents also complained that Mrs. Rawlings controlled the NCWD that was based in the Presidency, despite the fact that she had no statutory power to do so. 42% (22.2% female and 20% male) of respondents (Table 6.2 and figure 13) lamented that although the wives of the president had no constitutional powers, she usurped the roles of government officials and

ministers. The president was also accused of promoting DWM at the expense of other groups in the country. For example, he once directed that all women groups must register with the DWM, making it an umbrella organisation for all women's groups in Ghana. Other flaws (Table 7.1) identified were the elitist nature of DWM. It was considered as a movement for the party leaders and wives of important individuals. Three of the districts officials interviewed attempted to clarify this allegation against the movement by explaining that the movement was founded to assist women at the grassroots. They remarked that the movement was not meant to be elitist because it included peasants and common folks who formed the majority. With regard to the allegation of the movement being wasteful, only 15% of respondents held this view. From our interaction, only individuals who opposed the movement held this view.

Despite the above flaws, the DWM was given a lot of credited with establishing progressive programmes. The greatest admirers of the Movement were the international agencies, who credited Mrs. Rawlings for her accountability and the ability to work with the rural people; and relied more on the Movement to implement their programmes. The DWM was credited with the following:

Table 6.3: Achievements of DWM

Achievements	Total Percentage (%) of respondents	Percentage (%) of female	Percentage (%) of male
Sensitisation	92.5	62.5	30.0
Farming	80.0	58.0	22.0
Pre-school facilities	75.0	51.0	24.0
Empowerment	67.0	40.0	27.0
Capacity building	65.0	36.0	29.0
Skill acquisition	52.1	32.1	20.0
Lobby group	30.8	20.6	10.2
Legal reforms	21.1	12.0	9.1

Source: Field Work 1999.

Fig. 14: Achievements of DWM identified by Respondents in Ghana
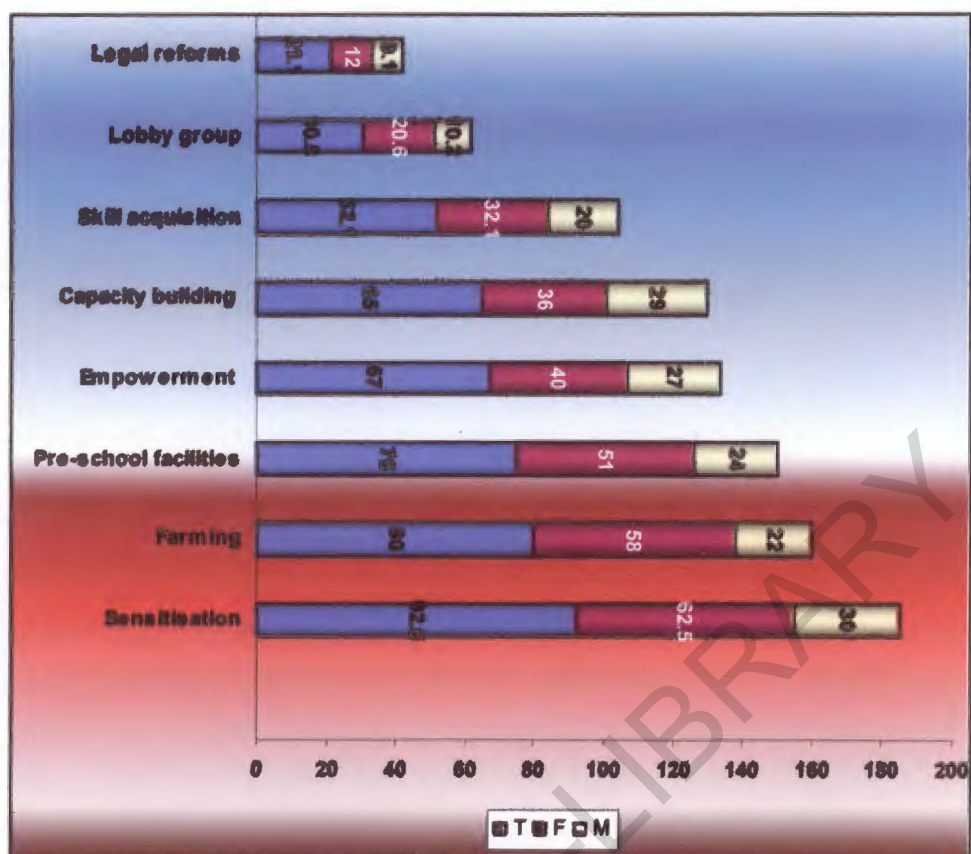
Legend:

T   =   Total percentage of respondents

F   =   Percentage of female respondents

M   =   Percentage of male respondents.

The major achievement of the movement as perceived by respondents (Table 7.2) was that it sensitised the Ghanaian society to the plight of women and the need for women to participate in the economic, social and political life of the country. At the time of this study, the Movement was networking through 10 regional and 110 districts secretariats as well as local units. The movement had also been credited for the assistance given to farmers. 80% of the respondents remarked that the DWM farming initiatives which included the granting of credit facilities, training and formation of farming cooperatives in the rural areas, tremendously assisted the women farmers who were hitherto not integrated into farming assistance schemes. Financial assistance for these farmers was received from agencies such as Agricultural Sector Improvement Project (ASIP). In addition, 67.0% (Table 7.2) respondents was of the view that the day care facilities which were opened mainly in the rural areas, assisted women and made them more productive. As at the time of this study, DWM had 880 day-care centres all over Ghana. To empower women who had been hindered by lack of finance, the movement established credit facilities to women in collaboration with the Ghana Commercial Bank and some Commercial Banks. Some criticised the DWM for taking the credit for legal reforms and political empowering women. However, 21.1% consisting of 12% female and 9.1% male credited the movement for legal reforms (Table 6.3 , 6.4 and figure 15).

Although there is nothing in the Ghana's law or constitution that discriminates against women, the argument is that the law has not taken into account the productive and reproductive roles of women, as a result of which gender neutral laws do not take care of women's interest. 21.1% of

respondents, credited Mrs. Rawlings and her Movement for lobbying for some legal changes. Some of her achievements in this respect are shown in (Table 7.2). With pressure on government, by 1985, the PNDC government promulgated laws governing family relations. This is the intestate succession law, which was to ensure that widows and their children are fairly treated if the spouses die intestate. There was also the law against female circumcision. However, in the interviews with some NCWD and leaders of NGOs such as FIDA and Ghana Union of Journalists, they held the view that the legal reforms were not just due to pressure by DWM, as they had also made representation and recommendations to government.

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents held the view that her programmes encouraged more women to go into active politics, although she was condemned for only helping women from her husband's party. In addition, there are now more women in active politics in the country right from the district levels. The result of the study showed that 30.8% of respondents saw the movement as a lobby group. Even some indivudals, who criticized Mrs. Rawlings, still remarked that being the wife of the president was an advantage in lobbying government officials and getting positive results.

Although DWM was criticised for taking up most of the available funding and taking over governmental parastatals without constitutional authority, the situation on ground in Ghana at the time of this study, showed that it was well received. DWM activities impacted positively on the lives of women. The economic empowerment of the grassroots women, through provision of credit scheme and the involvement of the movement in small-scale industries which were dominated by women have been beneficial to

women and society. Furthermore, the Movement tried to empower women through the skill acquisition programmes provided for girls and women, and through pre-school facilities for children who were not yet of school age to enable their mothers engage in gainful activities.

6.3   Better Life and Family Support Programme in Nigeria

Mrs. Mariam Babangida established the Better Life for Women Programme (BLP) in Nigeria in 1987. When Babangida was succeeded by another military leader, his wife, Mrs. Mariam Abacha, abolished BLP and set up the Family Support Programme, (FSP) in 1995. Much has been written about the activities of these women, who arrogated to themselves the roles of women leaders only because of their positions as wives of powerful military Heads of State.

As in Ghana, the First Ladies have taken up issues of women empowerment in Nigeria since the 1980s. Prior to the 1980s, Nigerian women had been making demands on the governments, be it civilian or military. But it was not until the 1980s that there emerged powerful First Lady programmes in Nigeria. Prior to this era, the wives of civilian presidents or military Heads of State were not powerful and did not demonstrate a major concern for women issues. This situation was compounded by the strong religious tendencies especially in Northern Nigeria. The wives of the first core of Northern leaders were never in public glare. The perception of women as supporters of the men explains the performance of the earlier First Ladies. However, Mrs. Flora Azikwe, the wife of the first Nigerian President, saw women as having important roles to play in national development. Hence, she

campaigned tirelessly for women's education at school, college and university levels. Mrs. Asika, wife of a former military administrator of the then East Central State, organised women at the grassroots into a forum for easy mobilisation, and for enhancing their political awareness.

In Nigeria, 32.5% of the respondents agreed that the BLP and FSP were welcome developments, 57.8% condemned them, while 9.7% were neutral (Table 6.4 and figure 15). As in Ghana, most of the respondents held the view that the favourable international environment and the nature of military regimes gave a lot of power to the First Ladies. The emergence of these groups has however been seen as a major fall-out of the International Decade for Women of 1976-85. The decade, declared by the UN, heightened women's awareness of their social, economic and political positions and roles; including the First Ladies syndrome in SSA. In addition, the development of what has come to be termed 'Femocracy' has been linked with the character of the women. Mrs. Babangida, the initiator of the BLP, was described as a self-opinionated person. She, like Mrs. Rawlings in Ghana, was described as a woman with a strong personality. Respondents held the view that being wives of powerful military leaders was an added advantage for the women. In an interview with Professor (Mrs) Bolanle Awe, who had the opportunity of working closely with Mrs. Babangida, she remarked that the military training of their husbands which stipulates that military officers must support their wives was advantageous to Mrs. Babangida and Mrs. Abacha. This perception to some extent, explained the financial and moral support given to the ladies by their husbands.

Table 6.4: Achievements of BLP and FSP

Achievements	Total Percentage (%) of respondents	Percentage (%) of female	Percentage (%) of male
Sensitisation	75.0	47.0	28.0
Commission/ministry	37.0	12.0	25.0
Rural enlightenment	12.5	4.5	8.0
Capacity building	5.5	2.4	3.1
Women centre	3.0	2.0	1.0

Source: Field Work 1999.

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Fig. 15: Achievements of BLP and FSP Identified by Respondents in
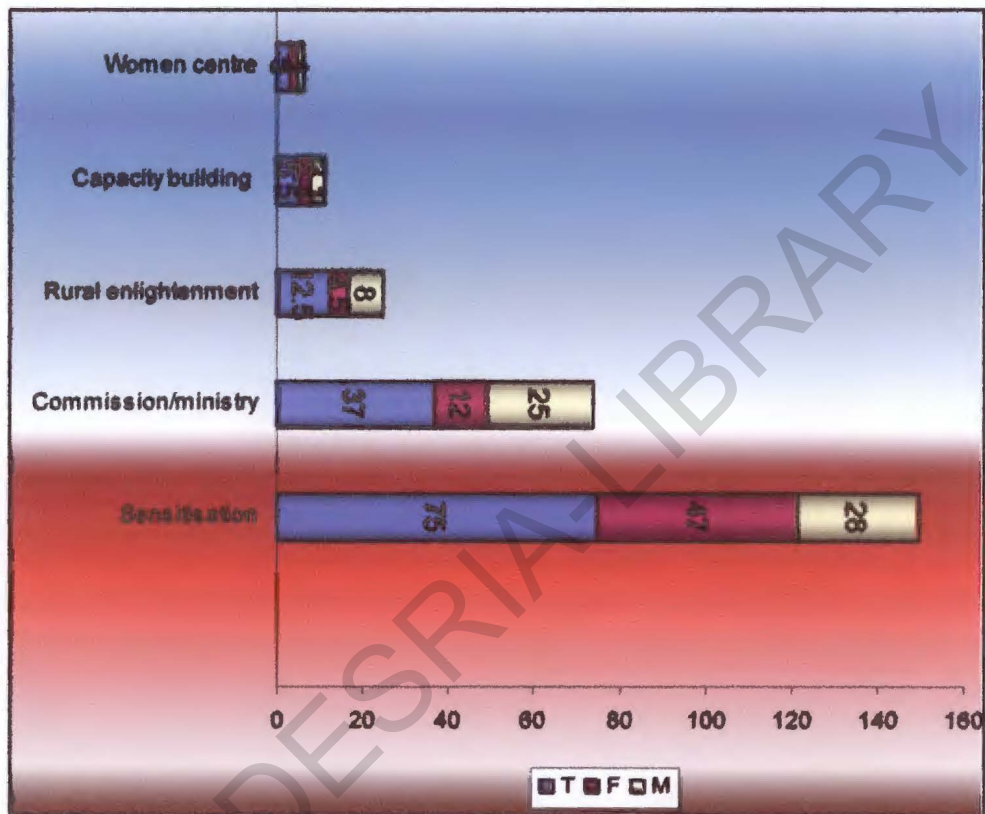
Nigeria

Legend:

T   =   Total percentage of respondents

F   =   Percentage of female respondents

M   =   Percentage of male respondents.

The better Life for Rural Women Programme (BLP) was established in September, 1987, by Mrs. Mariam Babangida in recognition of the role of the rural dwellers towards national development. The rural women were targeted because the majority of women, especially in the rural areas faced serious hardships in their daily life. The programme aimed at:

- promoting the welfare of rural women;

- drawing the attention of the nation to their condition;

- skill acquisition, and

- ensuring the women acquire education and knowledge.

On the other hand, the Family Support Programme (FSP) of Mrs. Mariam Abacha focused on the plight of Nigerian women. The programme aimed at disadvantaged women. In the study carried out in Nigeria the flaws and merits identified are shown on table 6.3 and figure 14. The two programmes, that is the BLP and the FSP came under sharp criticisms from respondents.

As shown on the Table 6.4, 90.1% of respondents condemned the first ladies programmes because they were self serving. The result of the interviews shows that the majority of the people were not that impressed with the activities of the first ladies. They were not open to opinions from others sources. Instead of seeking advice and working with existing NGOs and institutions, the first ladies were criticised of using their positions, because they were wives to powerful military heads of state to dominate and assumed the leadership of what were government structures.

The outcome of this, was that Mrs. Banbangida and Mrs. Abacha took up position which were not constitutionally assigned to them. 80% of respondents were opposed to BLP and FSP as the two programmes were

superimposed on the ministries and government parastatals. At the establishment of Commission Women's Affairs and Military of Women's Affairs, Mrs. Babangida and Mrs. Abacha became the uncontroversial heads, without whose permission no project could be executed. The approved projects and programmes were dominated by the First Ladies, wives of military governors and the like. 87.7% of respondents held the view that the programmes were to elitist. As a result, the programmes which were conceived to help the rural and poor women were not properly implemented, as adequate room was not given to contributions from those who were targetted. The top to bottom approach impacted negatively on the programmes.

In 1997, it was reported by the Central Bank of Nigeria, that the Better Life expended four hundred million naira for Rural Women Programme (BLP). This did not include funds provided by federal and state governments and later by the Commission of Women Affairs and Ministry of Women Affairs. 89.2%, of respondents complained the programmes did not benefit the targeted groups. In the interview conducted, interviewees remarked the projects were not properly conceived, and as a result of poor implementation and lack of maintenance of most facilities, many of the equipment installed became dysfunction soon after installation. For examples machines boreholes and other facilities such as machines became dysfunctional.

The movements were credited with sensitising both men and women to gender issues in line with international developments. 75% of the respondents out of which 47% were female and 28% male agreed the movements sensitized the society to the plight of women and drew the attention of the

nationa to the condition of women. As a result of their positions, their activities were widely covered both by the electronic and print media and they were also able to bring women issues to the fore at national and state levels. This eventually led to the establishment of the Commission of Women Affairs by President Babangida and the Ministry of Women Affairs by President Abacha. However, in the area of capacity building, only 5.5% (Table 7.3) shared the view that they assisted women. The general opinion was the First Ladies could have done better with the huge investment on them if they had been better focused and worked more closely with the women at the grassroots. Some of the achievements in this respect was the assistance given to women farmers to purchase fertilisers. Through the rural life programmes in some of the states, women were introduced to new farming methods. Workshops and seminars were also held to educate the women on the various aspects of farming. In addition, the wives of governors, who were state coordinators of BLP, initiated programmes according to the needs of their constituencies. For example, in Ondo State, Mrs. Bode George, wife of the military governor, initiated small loan schemes, for women to purchase grinding machines, garbage thrashing machines and sewing machines. In katsina State, Mrs. Onoja, wife of Military governor and later Mrs. Madaki also wife of the military governor, assisted women with insecticides as well as introduced them to improved seeds and seedlings on farms. Some wives of military government in northern states also encouraged women to plant trees in response to national and international call for reaforestation of desert encroachment that is prevalent in that region.

A major contribution of the BLP was the ability to create awareness among the rural women and teach women the importance of team work, by encouraging the formation of more cooperative groups. However, critics were of the opinion that the idea was not new as women's economic activities have always been carried out through cooperative activities.

The major fault of the BLP was although it was aimed at the rural women, it became a programme by the First Lady for the wives of the military governors and influential women in the cities. Only 12.5% (Table 7.3) of the respondents shared the view that the rural women benefited from the First Ladies' initiatives. Two respondents were of the view that the facilities made available to the rural areas, such as the pore holes were not the handiwork of Mrs. Babangida's BLP, but were put in place by the Directorate for Food, Roads and Infrastructure (DFFRI), a federal government agency. Part of the criticism leveled against both programmes was that they should have worked through existing agencies, rather than pretending to have in place NGOs working for women. Both First Ladies were criticised for using the organisations to amass wealth, and too elitist and self-serving to impact positively on the lives of the people at the grassroots.

In addition, 3.0% of the respondents commended Mrs. Babangida for building the Women Centre in Abuja. Only 3.0%, a minority of respondents agreed that these BLP and FSP established by the First Ladies were necessary. It is also interesting that Professor Awe, who suffered in the hands of Mrs. Babangida shared this view. She said, that as a result of the amount of media coverage attracted by these women, they were able to sentitise the

people and they could have been vehicles of empowerment if they were properly conceived and managed.

6.4   Comparison between the DWM in Ghana and BLP and FSP in Nigeria.

The First Ladies' movements were the products of an international environment favourable to implementation of women's projects. DWM, in Ghana and the BLP and FSP in Nigeria benefited from the UN initiatives and other international agencies. The UN Women's Decade, various international conferences including the 1995 Beijing Conference, were advantageous to the First Ladies' Movements. The three organisations became very powerful political instruments and forces to be reckoned with as they gained support from the Heads of States. Mrs. Rawlings, Mrs. Babangida and Mrs. Abacha became powerful and even dominated government structures. Government departments could no longer organise or implement programmes affecting women without authorisation from these First Ladies. The interviews conducted in Ghana and Nigeria affirmed this.

Just as the Women's Commission and the Ministry of Women Affairs came under the First Ladies in Nigeria, Mrs. Rawlings dictated the tunes in the NCWD and the Department of Women Affairs in Ghana. In both countries, no programme could be approved in these government establishments without approval from the First Ladies. The presidents were bitterly criticised for the way the First Ladies were given roles which statutorily did not belong to them. In Ghana, for instance, even the president once directed that all other women groups must register with the DWM. In the interview conducted in

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Ghana, we were informed that some women, who were members of the DWM under the guise of 'concerned citizens' stopped an event by NCWD. In similar manner, Mrs. Babangida got Professor Awe the chairperson of the NWCs detained while trying to address a seminar. The chairperson and her associates were not released until the President Babangida himself intervened in the matter. As the Nigerian First Ladies worked to ensure the establishment of the Military of Women's Affairs; in Ghana Mrs. Rawlings achieved some legislative changes that affected women's rights in marriage and inheritance laws, in addition to the establishment of the commission of Women Affairs located in the presidency. The 31st December Women's Movement was accused of turning a government sponsored project into a partisan NGO, which catered for only members of the NDC, President Rawling's Party. BLP and FSP did not go this far as the political developments in Nigeria and the nature of the transfer of power differed from that of Ghana.

Although Mrs. Rawlings went about her pet projects the wrong way, BLP and FSP were no match for the DWM. As critical as the people were, she was credited for helping women in the rural areas. As at the time of the study, there were many on-going programmes and projects. Even female politicians from other political parties admired her for being engaged personally on the farms and projects in the rural areas. This was one of the reasons why the international agencies were ready to sponsor DWM projects. A UNDP Field Officer in Ghana, said the agency relied mainly on government institutions and DWM in the implementation of their various programmes. She further commented that DWM was effective especially in the rural areas and it activities impacted positively on women, especially in the rural areas. Unlike

Mrs. Rawlings, Mrs. Babangida and Mrs. Abacha, failed to reach their targets at the grassroots. Many observers opined that their desire for power and wealth clouded their views. Thus, while Mrs. Rawlings had most of her projects in the rural areas, in Nigeria, Mrs. Babangida and Mrs. Abacha were criticised for allowing the rural projects to decay, as many of them were not serviced or re-visited after their commissioning. Even respondents that supported the idea of the Movements were very critical of the way they were run. They were anti-democratic political structures imposed by military dictatorship.

Another major difference between DWM in Ghana and that of BLP and FSP in Nigeria was that DWM, apart from working on the economic and social emancipation of women, DWM attempted to integrate women unto the political processes, right from the district to the state level. As shown on Table 7.2, 67.0% Mrs. Rawlings succeeded at ensuring that more women participated in the political processes. As at the time of this study, she was on campaign tours with women candidates. One of the criticisms levied against her, was that she was partisan and assisted women in her husband's party. DWM was actually referred to as the women's wing of the NDC.

6.5   Conclusion

The study revealed that First Ladies Movements in Ghana and Nigeria had many similarities. The three of them were put in place to assist women at the grassroots. The first ladies had no constitutional power, but they ruled over government establishments in their respective countries. They became

powerful political structures to be reckoned with in Ghana and Nigeria and attracted a lot of media and international attention.

Respondents in Nigeria were however more critical of the BLP and the FSP than Ghanaians were of the DWM. Although the life span of FSP was short, people were not less critical of it. While 75% of the respondents credited Mrs. Rawlings with a measure of achievement, in Nigeria the story was different as only about 37.5% credited BLP and the FSP with a measure of achievement at least, in the area of sensitisation. From the data, it could be concluded that the DWM in Ghana, was credited with realising more in trying to help women than its counterparts in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING

IN GHANA AND NIGERIA

7.1 International Agencies and Gender Mainstreaming in Ghana and Nigeria

The disparity between the sexes is a prominent feature in the leadership and political terrains of Ghana and Nigeria. Today, there is international consensus that development is sustainable only if women and men are integrated into social, political and economic development processes. Since the 1970s, women issues have taken a global dimension with the United Nations taking the lead.

Prior to the Women's Year of 1975 and the 1976-1985 Women's Decade, women's issues were at the periphery of government decisions and policies both at the national and the international levels. Since then, women issues have continued to attract and generate global concern and debates. As a result of the enabling global environment, international agencies are taking active interest in gender related issues and are working with local organisations in Nigeria and Ghana to ensure changes and produce societies where women are part of the development process. They are no longer prepared to treat women issues as welfare issues, or peripheral to development.

In the interviews conducted in Ghana and Nigeria, chairpersons of NGOs maintained that international agencies contributed a disproportionately large percentage of their funding. Apart from 9.5% of the NGOs in Ghana, and 7.9% in Nigeria most of the funding was from international agencies.

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Within the last two decades, various international donors have targeted women's groups of different types as agents of growth and vehicles for reaching out to women and children who were considered vulnerable groups. The World Bank in particular, stressed the importance of women's groups as agents of effective delivery of extension messages. The globalisation of women's issues, including their participation in the governance and democratic processes, has taken the centre state of the new wave of political liberalisation in Africa. The argument is that true democracy can be achieved only if women, who constitute a good percentage of the civil society or a good proportion of it, are involved in the democratic processes.

The position of the UN and other international agencies on women issues have gone a long way to encourage women in Ghana and Nigeria to organise. Some of the international agencies visited in Ghana and Nigeria are shown on tables 7.4 and 7.5.

Table 7.1: International Agencies chosen for the study in Ghana and Nigeria

Agencies in Ghana	Activities
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	• Poverty alleviation programme • Capacity building • Formal and informal education
United Nation's Development Programme	• Gender mainstreaming • Health education • Political empowerment
United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF)	• Protection of the rights and wellbeing of the girl-child and women • Enlightment • Access to welfare such as education • Advocacy for women's empowerment
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	• Promote mainstreaming of gender equality • Women's empowerment • Capacity building
United Nation's Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)	• Economic and political empowerment of women • Poverty eradication • Eradication of violence against women
Friedrich Ebert Foundation	• Sponsorship of workshops, publication and project
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	• Promote mainstreaming of gender equality • Women's empowerment • Capacity building
UNFPA	• Public health awareness • Workshops

Source: Field Work, 2000.

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7.2   United Nations and Women's Empowerment in Ghana and Nigeria

Since the 1970s, the UN has continued to work through her agencies to assist women in member countries. Some of these agencies are UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. Apart from these organs, the UN has been credited for establishing UNIFEM in 1976 with the following mandate: -

- strengthening women's economic capacity;

- engendering governance and leadership, and

- promoting women's rights to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

The   UN is focusing attention on women's inequality in development. To achieve its aim and objectives, it is working with Women's groups, NGOs, CBOs, governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies to redress the situation on ground in both countries.

In Ghana and Nigeria, all chairmen and field officers interviewed agreed that the UN is in the forefront of the demand for women empowerment and greater involvement and participation in governance and democratic processes. The scholars also corroborated this view. UN Women's year of 1975 and Decade of 1976-1985 gave hope to women as even the military governments became interested in women issues. By 1996, UNIFEM had moved from a broad-based funding organisation for women to becoming a learning and advocacy organisation, working strategically for women's economic and political empowerment and gender equality. Two of the officers were interviewed, Balogun and Acheapong of the Lagos Office were interviewed. UNIFEM activities include the following:

- Capacity building;

- Advocacy;

- Information sharing;

- Capacity building for women;

- Engendering governance and leadership, and

- Promoting women's rights to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

Fig. 16: Some Chosen UN Agencies

UNIFEM

UNICEF

UNDP

United Nations

UNESCO

UNFPA
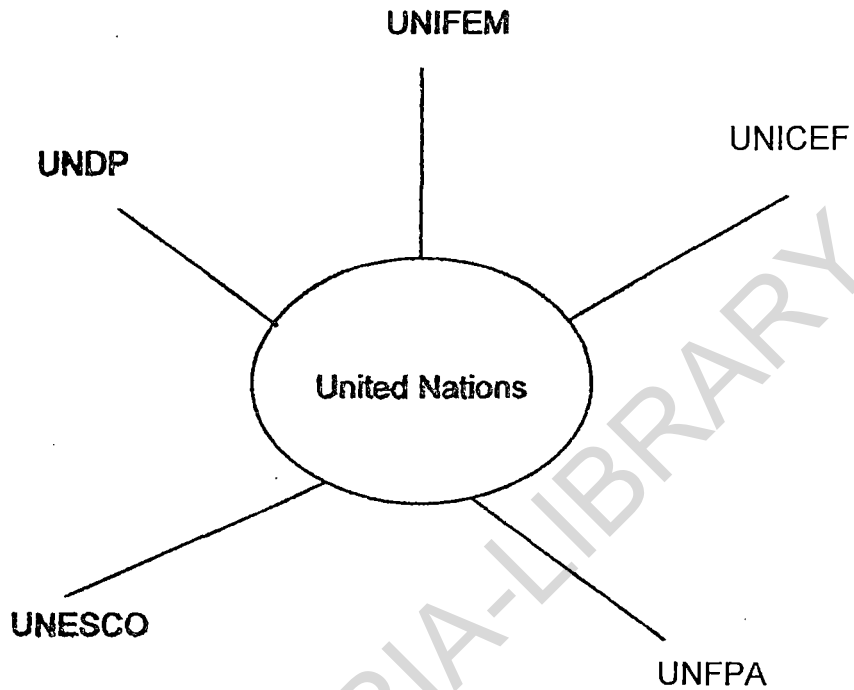
In both countries, UNIFEM works with both government and civil society (Table 8.4). The Beijing PFA had been translated into the major languages in Ghana and Nigeria. UNIFEM, in collaboration with NCWD in Ghana organised a successful sixteen day campaign against violence against women during which prayers, seminars and workshops were held. UNIFEM had since been collaborating with women's wings of the political parties in both countries to form lobby groups. It has also been given women politicians training in the act of politics. The UNIFEM officers maintained that the women's wings of political parties were chosen to ensure women participate effectively in political activities of the parties and subsequently in governance. The UN, through her various agencies is working with national government to ensure that they honor their commitments regarding women advancement and their status in the society

Apart from UNIFEM which is the specialised agency set-up to cater primarily to women's interests, other agencies performed various other functions that pertained to women's affairs. However, with the realisation that there can be no sustainable growth without empowering women, these agencies are bringing women's issues and problem to the fore. UNICEF's field officer in Lagos revealed its new policy aimed at favouring women's advancement and to complement activities that would accelerate the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the rights of the child. The approach was based on the concept that today's girl-child is tomorrow's woman. The policy focused on the girl-child from birth to 18 years of age and the many gender inequalities she would face throughout her life. The UNICEF's concern had been described by the UN Secretary General, "as

basic for development". There is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls. The state of the world's Children 2004, places girls education at the centre of global efforts to meet Millennium Development goals. UNICEF, in collaboration with the governments is trying to establish children friendly schools in the countries to encourage children, especially girls to stay in school, thereby help to achieve the world's major development goals. UNICEF collaborates with government and civil society groups to execute her projects. In both countries UNICEF has continued to support NGOs, through finance, playlets, seminars and workshops.

In the interview conducted with UNICEF, UNDP, UNPFA in both countries, various reasons were advanced for their involvement in gender issues. In an interviews with a UNICEF officer in Lagos, Nigeria, she said UNICEF was interested in women, since it was important to work with mothers to reach the children. No meaningful assistance can be given to children without going through mothers. Yeye, a UNICEF field officer in Nigeria, said that even some UNIFEM Officers had challenged their activities in respect of women. UNICEF had invested huge financial and human resources to ensure the political, socio-economic and health advancement of women, to ensure that children were adequately taken care of.

Early childhood education was another major focus of UNICEF. Education was considered a fundamental right of all children, as education has tremendous power to transform individuals and societies. The areas of attention were to:

-       ensure access to basic education

-       reduce the drop out rate

- educate women, who are more likely to have smaller and healthier families and better educated children
- generate data.

UNICEF has continued to work in various areas with government in Ghana and Nigeria specifically in health related and educational sectors the agency actively supported the fight against polio eradication in both countries by providing funds to acquire vaccines and to supplements in children's diet with vitamin A.

The officers of the UN agencies' offices visited were of the same view that the various conventions, agreement and declarations were to address the prevailing gender imbalances. Ghana and Nigeria were even two of the early signatories of CEDAW, which makes it obligatory for them to implement the guidelines as set out by it. CEDAW and the Beijing PFA have become focal points for NGOs and CBOs in both countries.

UNFPA, is an agency responsible for the enlightenment in population education programmes as well as reproductive health and human rights. UNFPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs and information in Osun State, organised a mixed grill workshop for lobbying and advocacy in 2001. In the interview with the officers of the international agencies, it became clear that NGOs and CBOs were essential for carrying out their activities. NGOs and CBOs were relied on to ensure that decisions on gender are taken to the grassroots.

The activities embarked upon were aimed at sensitising the people (men and women) all over the world, and give direction as to what must be done to ensure that women's subordinate status change. The emergence of

the women-focused NGOs, and CBOs and their vocal and aggressiveness cannot be dissociated from the UN global initiative for gender in its PFA, to address the dismal invisibility of women in development.

UNDP, has genderised her projects. Women are now taken into focus in planning programmes. Like UNICEF, UNDP networks with government and existing civil society organisations (Table 8.4). However, in Ghana, UNDP came under sharp criticism. Leaders of the NGOs complained that the organisation was too pro DWM of Mrs. Rawlings, (the First Lady). The UNDP Officer in Ghana did not deny this. She said they worked more with DWM because it delivered, unlike many of the other organisations. She, like Yeye of UNICEF in Nigeria said, their organisations had had to blacklist some NGOs for non-performance and accountanbility.

In Ghana, UNDP gender programme was organised to support government's efforts in implementing the Beijing platform for action which was to promote gender mainstreaming. For example in collobaration with government, UNDP was assisting with Ghana's Vision 2020 of which gender issues were paramount. Besides sponsoring activities of governments institution such as NCWD and DWM, UNDP had financed rural agricultural projects and reaforestation and seminars. It also assisted other NGOs and the media by providing found to promote gender equity and awareness.

In addition, UNESCO in collaboration with governments in Ghana and Nigeria had established child-friendly schools to assist in Ghana's Compulsory Basic Primary Education (CBPE). Similarly, in Nigeria the agency has contributed immensely to the establishment of 10 child-friendly schools in

northern Nigeria. This is to assists the government with here Universal Basic Education (UBE).

7.3   Promoting Women's Rights in Ghana and Nigeria

The study, observed that the institutional machinery for promoting women's rights in both countries may be classified into two: governmental and non-governmental of which international agencies are central. The last two decades, have witnessed unprecedented growth in civil society movements poised to assist women to penetrate power structures in Ghana and Nigeria. Although there is a great deal of variations, they nonetheless share many things in common. The major differences are in their locations and the importance attached to some issues over others.

The civil society in Africa is becoming more dynamic with women playing a major role. Globalisation is central to the contemporary women social movements globally, and for this study in Nigeria and Ghana. With improved communications and networking, civil society movements are more universal, better focused and are no longer ad-hoc in nature. This has led to the creation of national and transnational organisations, which have become institutional vehicles for promoting women's rights and democratic principles. In a world at the grip of globalisation, which has affected women issues, more opportunities are opening up for women. Dynamic women's groups working on various issues affecting women and their participation in governance and democratic processes. They are concerned with equality or equity in gender relations, that are skewed against women and their participation in leadership institutions and positions. For over twenty years, the United Nations agencies

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such as United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations itself have continued to form partnerships with the ever growing women's groups in their desire to ensure that women are mainstreamed into developmental activities, and thereby fulfilling the international instrument that purports:

> ...the full and complete development of a country, require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields (CEDAW, 1979).

The convention was adopted by the United Nations in 1979, and in entered into force in 1981. The convention focuses on discrimination against women specifically. Ghana and Nigeria are signatories to this convention. In addition, the Beijing Platform For Action (PFA) of 1995 has assisted women groups all over the world whose major goals are to evolve a culture in which women's rights are recognised and treated as human rights, and to take measures to raise consciousness to the plight of women. Women's groups in Nigeria and Ghana have benefited from world conferences, such as those organised during the women's decade of 1976-1985. The post-Beijing activities in the two countries have shown that such experiences have been beneficial. The study revealed that the last two decades, have also seen the growth of movements that address specific and non-specific issues affecting women's with the hope of ensuring women's political leadership, instead of playing second fiddle in the political arena and in other areas of development.

Gender equality issues have continued to be an important discourse in an era of political liberalisation, good governance and human rights. With the end of the Cold War and the demise of the iron curtain, the twin issues of

human rights and the rights of women have taken centre stage in international relations. Globally, pressure is being mounted on countries hitherto under military or dictatorial regimes to democratise and carry along women for sustainable development. With the end of the Cold War also, and the reduction of tension in the world, there have emerged full force, the concepts of human rights and democratic governance, championed by global initiatives of which the UN is at the centre. There have emerged spontaneously in Nigeria and Ghana a host of NGOs as in other parts of the world, demanding for women's visibility in the political processes and in decision-making. These groups are also demanding that the imbalances and injustices against women must be redressed. At the time of the study, the representation of women in governance in Ghana and Nigeria was still at a dismal level as already pointed out.

Women's Groups and Gender Sensitivity

Nigeria and Ghana, more than ever before, are witnessing active participation of the civil society. There has been an emergence of dynamic civil society groups determined to mainstream women in developmental processes and challenge male dominated of leadership institutions. These groups are also working for the entrenchment of justice, peace and respect for the right of women, and are focusing on gender relations in Ghana and Nigeria. They are putting pressure on government and political parties to empower women, ensure their adequate participation as well as making institutional reforms. The new organisations have benefited from a global environment that favours women's integration into development. However, such civil society organisations are not new in Nigeria and Ghana. It was

observed that these new organisations, in addition to international backing are better focused and not ad-hoc as was the case in the colonial era. They have continued to grow as in other parts of the world and were poised to eradicate the gender bias against women, build women's capacity and ensure women's adequate participation in the development of their societies along with men. NGOs were established for various reasons with the overall goal of empowering women in such a way that they could change women's dependent status and be economically, socially and politically empowered. These organisations focus on the nature of gender relations, and how women in both societies could be empowered to face the challenges of the 21st century. Most of the NGOs are middle class in nature, and are mainly based in the urban centres. The following NGOs were selected for the study.

Table 7.2: Some NGOs in Ghana and Nigeria

Name	Activities
International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)	• Provide law services to women • Lobby for law reforms • Advocacy • Legal education
Ghana Union of Journalists (GUJ)	• Enlightenment
TEMA and Makola Women Market Associations	• Micro credit schemes • Marketing cooperatives
Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation centre, Ghana.	• Seminars and workshops on women's empowerment • Research studies in the area of women empowerment
Young Women Christian Association of Ghana.	• Enlightenment programmes
Ghana committee on human and peoples' rights	• Advocacy
Action AID Ghana	• Seminar and workshops legal reforms
WILDAF (Ghana)	• Advocacy • Legal reform
Human development initiatives (HDI) (Nigeria)	• Develop awareness within the society • Promote human development • Advocacy • Workshop and seminars • Publications
Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN)	• Education women • Political training • Skill acquisition
Christian Association of Nigeria	• Skill acquisition schemes • Credit facilities • Health seminars
Country Women's Associations of Nigeria, Ondo State and Osun State	• Developing cooperatives • Micro credit facilities • Skill acquisition
Women In Nigeria	• Micro credit • Health awareness • Literacy classes
Fish Sellers Association Igbokoda, Nigeria.	• Cooperatives • Micro credit
Women Centre for Peace and Development in Nigeria	• Micro credit
Development Exchange Centre (DEC) (Nigeria)	• Skill acquisition • Workshop
Nigerian Association of Women Journalist (NAWOJ)	• Political Enlightment • Health
Women's Rights and Development Centre (WORDEC) (Nigeria)	• Micro credit schemes • Skill acquisition
Centre for Women and Adolescent Empowerment (CWAE)	• Enlightment of the right of the girl-child • Literacy classes
National Association of Women in Academics	• Seminars • Skill acquisition

Source: Field Work 2000.

The diversity in the activities embarked upon for women's political empowerment was in consonant with the Feminist Political Economy concept employed in this study. The plural nature of women's subordination and disempowerment, made it imperative that various approaches are employed by NGOs to mainstream women. In the interview with the various groups in Ghana and Nigeria, it was revealed that for women to be empowered, many areas of development needed attention and no single NGO could handle all the activities.

The result of the field work showed that as a result of support and funding from international organisations, there has been an increase in the number of NGOs, including women focused ones. Dr. Ogunsola, the field officer of USAID in the Southwest region of Nigeria was of the view that the emergence of NGOs cannot be dissociated from the global demands and the nature of the exposure of their founders. Apart from the market women associations, the founders who were between 45 – 65 years old in both countries had tertiary education, and had at one time or the other worked in public establishment. These groups recognised political culture, the law, culture, religion, illiteracy, poverty, lack of government support as the major causes of the marginalisation of women in governance and development in both countries. These causes more or less determined the focus of the organisations whose major objective was to strengthen the capacity of women as participants and decision-makers in the development of their respective countries.

Table 7.3: Objectives of the NGOs: Frequency in Ghana and Nigeria in percentages of respondents

Objectives	Ghana	Nigeria
Capacity building	100	100
Sensitisation of men/women to gender issues	100	100
Ensure women's visibility in development	100	100
Mainstream women in politics	90.2	95.8
To ensure women's' education	90	92.5
Put pressure on government to implement international agreements on women.	85.0	79.9
Legal reforms	72.6	89

Source: Field Work 2000.

Table 7.5 shows the activities of the NGOs in both countries. It was observed that the activities were similar in the two countries. In the areas of capacity building, sensitisation and women's visibility in development, all respondents in the two countries shared similar views. The study revealed that 95.8% of the NGOs in Nigeria as against 90.2% in Ghana were concerned with the political mainstreaming of women. Similarly, 92.5% of the NGOs in Nigeria and 90% in Ghana were working to ensure that women were educated. In conclusion the activities of the various NGOs were directed at empowering women. For women to participate successfully in governance and democratic processes, they required economic power, legal reforms and awareness to developments and opportunities that exist around them. FOMWAN, a Muslim organisation is at the centre of the campaign for Muslim women emancipation in Nigeria.

In Ghana and Nigera, all the NGOs acknowledged the role of international agencies. For sustenance, they relied mainly on funding and logistics from these external agencies. UNICEF Field Officer based in Lagos, UNIFEM Officer, and the USAID Field Officer and Manager (South-West), agreed that the major changes taking place in the international scene and the aspirations of all the peoples of the world for an international order based on the principles enshrined in the Human Rights Charter of the United Nations have been a source of encouragement for the establishment of NGOs. In addition, the importance of women acting in groups for major transformations in gender relations have been stressed at major international fora, particularly the Beijing Conference of 1995 and the parallel NGO forum. As a result of

international concern, gender issues and issues that affect women are becoming foreign policy issue.

The views of female lawyers was that from their legal practices, they realised that there must be legal changes if women were to assume appreciable leadership positions in society. The President and the Secretary of FIDA in Ghana (2000), the Oyo State President of the Oyo State Branch of FIDA reinstated this view. Professor Jadesola Akande a lawyer and chairperson of Women, Law and Development Centre, Lagos, Nigeria held the constitution responsible for the status of women. According to her, Nigerian women were not allowed by the patriarchal society to have input in the drafting of the constitutions. She maintained that "...unti this is done, women in the country would remain marginalised". A high proportion of the NGOs in nigeria, (89%) said they were working directly or indirectly to effect legal changes. The trend is similar in Ghana where 72.5% of the NGOs were doing the same.

One thing was common to the NGOs in the two countries, there was an over -reliance on external funding for projects. Although many of the well-established NGOs did not have problems with sponsorship, their projects have become donor driven and externally controlled. The complaint has been that in Nigeria and Ghana there are not many philanthropists who are prepared to sponsor non-profitable projects. NGOs visited in both countries were heavily dependent on foreign donors, who dictated the type and how projects were executed. Except the proposals were approved the funding will not come. This has resulted in the dependent nature of many of these NGOs. As for the adequacy of funding, 80% of the NGOs in Nigeria answered in the

negative while 75% in Ghana held a similar view. However, it was noted that all the NGOs said they could do better with more funding. The secretary to the NCWs and the Presidents of WLDC in Nigeria and AWAG in Ghana said there would always be a need for better fundings, but noted that NGOs must make optimum use of whatever fund available.

Activities for Women's political awareness and empowerment

- Radio programmes
- Training of the people
- Publications
- Training the trainers
- Lectures
- Seminars
- Attract Health care facilities
- Capacity building programmes
- Micro-credit for women
- Prepare National Human Development Reports

The following were the common obstacles to the NGOs activities in Nigeria and Ghana:

- Government not responding enough
- Women at the grassroots kept too busy
- Donor driven projects
- NGOs not cooperative enough
- Lack of adequate funding
- The husbands

As to the achievements, it was evident that all the NGOs visited believed they were achieving a measure of success despite the constraints. However, they all agreed that there was still room for improvement especially if the funding could improve.

In Ghana and Nigeria, the military was criticised for the way they tried to superimpose the First Ladies' Movements on other NGOs. It was a shared view that with the return to democratic governance in the two societies, the NGOs should be able to do more for women, as the first ladies are not likely to dominate civil society groups. The major concern of 62.7% of the NGOs in Ghana was that the civilian administration of President Rawlings was an extension of his military rule, with the wife's DWM movement still taking up most of the available funding.

In Nigeria, the NCWs maintained that in 1999, it gave financial support to some women political aspirants for the 1999 election. However, evidence of sponsorship for aspiring women politicians by an NGO was more evident in Ghana. The DWM had candidates that were sponsored by the Movement. The researcher meet these women, who were busy campaigning at the time of the study. Many of the respondents within and outside the NDC party confirmed this. Apart from financial support, members also went out campaigning for the candidates. In Nigeria, 25% of the NGOs said they actually put up candidates, trained candidates and helped them to solicit for funds. A good example here is FOMWIP, based in Benin City. The candidate, in the company of the chairperson of the NGO attended the international conference on "politics, society, and rights in traditional societies", at the University of Benin during which a series of gender issues were discussed*.

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The chairman of Women, Law and Development Centre in Lagos, Nigeria, said that until women have constituencies and candidates, they could not expect any meaningful political change.

In the interviews with some NGOs, AWAG and WILDAF in Ghana and WILD and the NCWs in Nigeria, they asserted that female empowerment projects must not be narrow in scope, as women need economic empowerment and improved social status, if they are to be mainstreamed in governance and democratic processes. According to them, the invisibility of women in Ghana and Nigeria is a reflection of the growing impoverishment, inferior status, unequal access to legal rights, inadequate health facilities and property and poor literacy level. The NGOs in collaboration with international agencies were working to ensure that women's status are improved, so that they would eventually attain political emancipation and leadership roles.

7.4   Other International Agencies

Apart from the UN agencies, there were a host of other international agencies (see table 7.4 and 7.5), that worked in Nigeria and Ghana. In Ghana, USAID, CIDA were targeted while in Nigeria, discussions were held with USAID and British Council AND Friedrich Ebert foundation Officials on gender. The reaction to the activities of these agencies was similar in both countries. In both Ghana and Nigeria, USAID in collaboration with other NGOs have mounted training programmes for women parliamentarians as well as organised and sponsored campaign programmes. In other to sensitise the government and the people to women's issues, USAID also sponsored playlets on the electronic media to create awareness and encourage political

empowerment as well as encourage women to go into politics. In 1993, FIDA in collaboration with USAID organized a 5-day workshop for women parliamentarians in Ghana. Similarly CIDA had a 25 years financial commitment to a water project in Northern Ghana, and contributed 25 million (US Dollars) to poverty alleviation in the country. Many of the politicians commended these agencies for assisting women through the NGOs and CBOs. They also praised these agencies for raising the consciousness of both men and women, although they all agreed that it is yet to yield the required dividend, that is, women representation and involvement in decision-making. However, the marginal increase in the number of women aspirants in the 2000 election in Ghana and the 2003 in Nigeria were not unconnected with the activities of the agencies.

The British council sponsored women empowerment programmes. Since 1996 British council had been sponsoring Workshops on Women in Public Life. For example in 1998, a workshop was held in Abuja in addition the organisation had sponsored gender studies and capacity building among NGOs. The organisation also have been involved in the campaign against Violence Against Women (VAW). It had also organised enlightenment workshops in both countries. Apart from sponsoring seminars they had sponsored book projects and other gender related programmes in Nigeria.

7.5   Conclusion

The study posited that unequal gender relations in favour of men, produced women focused interest groups, questioning the gendered institutions that have produced such relationship. There is an international

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consensus that development can be sustainable only if women as well as men, are integrated in social, political and economic development processes. The international initiatives are reflected in the growth and the nature of the NGOs that operated in both countries. In various ways, they have put in place programmes and actions aimed at integrating women in development. The government agencies, NGOs and international agencies are networking to empower women socially, economically and politically to ensure women's adequate participation and representation in decision-making processes. Also, as a result of the nature of the interaction between the two countries the civil society groups operated similar patterns. This could also be explained by the nature of the current international system where the nature of state interaction and behaviour were influenced not only by domestic views, but also by internationally conceived ideals of which globalisation is central. The major international institutions have similar goals and models of operation in the respective countries. This is not to rule out specific peculiarities of each in each county.

In Ghana and Nigeria, the non-partisan and non-governmental organisations in collaboration with government and international agencies are concerned with making life more meaningful for the women in the two countries. Although women are yet to make major inroads into gladiatorial politics, some progress had been made and there is continuous pressure being mounted on government, political parties and the civil society to implement positive gender policies as well as to create the needed awareness and skill acquisition for women.

This study revealed that the international agencies have been influential in the direction of the feminist movements in both countries. Government policies and the activities were shaped through the constant influence of the international agencies especially UN is paramount. The conferences held, and the regular financial assistance of these agencies were of considerable boost to the activities of both governments, NGOs and female politicians. The demand by donor agencies such as CIDA, UNDP, British Council, USAID and others genderise assistance to these countries was a deliberate attempt to mainstream women in development, including mainstreaming Ghanaian and Nigerian women in governance and democratic processes. This corroborates the view of Mrs. Aijei in Ghana, that "...the international agencies must be credited for assiting the NGOs, without these agencies most of the NGOs would not have been able to perform". In addition, it is the international instruments such as CEDAW and BPFA that are being used by the various NGOs to make the government account to their demands

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1   Summary

The study has shown some general patterns and trends in Ghana and Nigeria that suggest their common colonial heritage and the nature of interaction in contemporary international system. The two countries were colonised by Britain, which introduced the single-sex system of administration to these countries through indirect rule. During the years of colonisation, women, including the Akan Queen mothers, were not directly relevant to the administration. This is despite the fact that before the advent of colonialism women in both countries had a measure of political power. There were the Queen mothers and the female paramount chiefs and market leaders in Ghana, and the Omu and her council in Igbo land and the Iyalodes of Yorubaland in Nigeria. In addition, there were powerful Queens, like Queen Idia of Benin who even led her people to war. Apart from them, women from both Ghana and Nigeria held important positions in shrines and cults, which made them an important part of the political administration of their societies.

Among the Akans of Ghana, the Queen mothers were held in high esteem. However, apart from nominating the king, they were left to manage their council and women affairs like the Omu of the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria. On the other hand, the Akan Kings, like the Obi among the Igbo of Nigeria, took charge of the affairs of the whole society including the affairs of women. In both countries, women were not equal to men. This situation was further entrenched by religious, social and cultural practices. Within the family and the community, women were considered inferior to men. Even among the

matrilineal Akan, the position of the wife was almost like that of a stranger in her husband's family. In both countries, although women have always had a measure of power, their power never matched that of the men. Their informal and indirect access to power did not translate into formal political participation compared to the formal power of men. Christianity and Islam discriminated against women, but this study confirms that Islam is more repressive than the Christian religion. Early child-hood marriages and purdah which are more common among Muslims deny women access to the much needed education, active economic and political lives. However, in Ghana Muslims constitute only a minority while Islam is more widely spread in Nigeria.

The degree of political and constitutional power of women was taken away from them by the colonial administration that paid little attention to women chieftains. The study showed that after independence, both countries adopted western-style constitutions that made no provision for women's rights. Their leaders at independence, like their colonisers, abandoned the traditional institutions that gave women a measure of power.

However, Kwame Nkrumah, the founding president of Ghana, was more committed to women issues. Among other things, he ensured that ten additional seats were reserved for women in parliament. Unlike Ghana, the founding fathers of Nigeria did not pay much attention to women issues. Even women politicians in the predominantly Islamic north were looked at with disdain. Northern leaders such as the Late Sadauna of Sokoto, ensured that northern women were not given the franchise until 1979.

In both societies, culture placed different behavioural expectations on women and men. Culture and tradition determine the distribution of work

within and outside the family, and it contributed to women's negative attitude towards participation in politics and leadership positions. Moreover, the private/public dichotomy placed restrictions on women's lives and it is a major determinant in career choices for men and women.

Apart from socio-cultural factors that have continued to limit women's participation in governance and democratic processes in Nigeria and Ghana, the productive and reproductive roles of women put them at a disadvantage in the labour market, politics and leadership positions. These limitations coupled with socio-cultural factors make women more prone to poverty than men. The domination of the public sphere by men gave men a lead in politics, governance and democratic processes. Besides, matriarchy compounded the burden of the Akan Women of Ghana, as many of them were actually heads of households as permitted by the culture. Thus, women's roles in the private sphere severely constrained their participation in activities that could empower them, and make them compete favourably with men.

Although some women are assuming positions of power in government and business, there is still a wide disparity between men and women. This disparity, in terms of access to education, social and economic opportunities continue to constrain women's ability to take part in major developmental processes, while poverty and illiteracy have continued to hinder women's overall progress. Although education does not guarantee women's active participation in governance, the study revealed that a level of education is essential if women are not to remain in the periphery of politics and governance.

There is growing awareness in the two countries, that for women to adequately and active participate in developmental processes, including governance and democratic processes, they must be educated. Unfortunately, as a result of the socio-cultural factors more girls drop out of school than boys. Islamic fundamentalism especially in Nigeria results in many girls staying out of school, as they are forced into early marriages,in many cases against their wish.

Until recently, women in Ghana and Nigeria shied away from politics. Only a few ventured into politics as it was perceived as a man's game, a terrain too turbulent and dangerous for women to venture into. Despite the culturally ascribed position of women, women in the two countries have continued to be active participants in the struggle for social justice, human rights and the rights of women since the colonial era. Through the nationalist struggle, women have achieved a measure of recognition. The concessions granted women at independence in Ghana was not unconnected with their activities in the CPP which Nkrumah headed. The women in Nigeria were not that lucky. However, since the 1980s, there has been a steady growth of a variety of women's organisations that have become vital actors in the demand for the creation of new political and economic order in which women and men participate equally. The assumption that a woman solely finds fulfillment in the home and their children is loosing ground, as most women are going into the professions while some are venturing into high-level entrepreneurial ventures and politics. Women are moving away from culturally and biologically determined roles prescribed for them by the society.

The study revealed that in Ghana and Nigeria, as a result of world-wide attention to human and women's rights led by the UN, there is a re-awakening of the civil-society and governments to women's inadequate participation in governance and democratic processes. With the support of international agencies, there is a steady growth of well-focused groups working to address women's invisibility in all developmental processes in both countries. Their activities include:

- Capacity building;

- Ensuring Formal Education for the girl-child;

- Advocacy

- Political education;

- Sponsoring Candidates for positions; to

- Political training and campaigns.

Basically, in both countries the structures, may it be governmental or non-governmental, are similar in orientation and activities. This may not be surprising as globalisation ensures that women from the two countries as well as other SSA countries belong to the same international system and organisations where values and decisions affecting women are decided. Even within the West African sub-region, and Africa, the regional bodies such as African-Union which is now interested in gender relationship have continued to bind these countries together. The result is the similar associational and organisational lives of the people as revealed by the field work.

Despite the similarities outlined above, there were some differences. Ghana operates a Unitary System of Government that makes it easier for a committed president and party to appoint Regional Ministers of their choice.

On the contrary, Nigeria operates a Federal System which is more restrictive. From 1992, Ghana has been under a civilian administration, while Nigeria only came under civilian rule in May, 1999. This does not make for a good camparison of the First Ladie's Movements. In addition, affirmative action or the quota is not a new concept in power sharing formula in Ghana, as this was first introduced by Kwame Nkrumah shortly after Ghana independence. This is not the same in Nigeria, where no previous government demonstrated such commitment to fairness regarding women. Nigeria has been engulfed in ethnic crises since it independence in 1960. Although ethnicity is a major concern in power sharing in sub-Saharan African countries including Ghana and Nigeria, ethnic nationality crises in Nigeria have been on the rise, making ethnic concern more central to power sharing than it is in Ghana. The study revealed that although religion was identified as a major obstacle to women's empowerment in both countries, the problem is more pronounced in Nigeria because of the restiveness of the large population of unemployed youths. Nigeria Muslim population is also higher compared to Ghana and since Islam restricts the women's activities and more women in Nigeria are denied access to education and means of production. Education is very important in women's empowerment projects in the two countries. However, school drop out rate is also higher in Nigeria than Ghana. The study revealed that as a result of globalisation, which draws different regions of the world closer, through diverse network of exchanges of people, ideas, cultures as well as goods and services, the feminist struggle has followed the same pattern in Ghana and Nigeria. The driving force of this struggle has been the

international agencies of which the United Nations and her agencies are central.

8.2   Conclusion

This similarities and differences informed the subsequent recommendations.

The result of the study justified the major research, assumptions, that the gender base socio-cultural arrangements in Ghana and Nigeria are central to the marginalisation of women in governance and democratic processes in both countries. This has not excluded the matriarchal people of Ghana. The gender stereotype in both societies, which were culturally and biologically ascribed in the family and other institutions, the familiar ideology were apparent. Similarly, this study has confirmed the assumptions that religion, lack of adequate education[32] and the British colonial rule in both countries are sources of women's political powerlessness. There is no religion, may it be traditional, Christian, or Islam, in which where women are considered equal to men. However, the intensity of Islam is highly felt in Nigeria, where a high percentage of the population is muslim.

The feminist struggle in Ghana and Nigeria have targeted these major hindrances to women's ensure involvement of women in governance of their respective countries. The emergence of democratic governance, assisted women's groups. Since the 1980s, there has been tremendous growth of women's civil society groups. Since the demise of military dictatorship in both countries, this civil society groups are freer and dynamic, in addressing various aspects of women's life.

A major development of the late 20th century was the emergence of First Ladies movements which operated as powerful forces to be reckoned with in women's empowerment programmes in Ghana and Nigeria. Although, the movements DWM in Ghana and BLP and FSP in Nigeria were strongly criticised, they were powerful political tools that advanced women's interests. The study, revealed that women benefited more from the DWM than their counterparts in Nigeria. Similarly, international agencies led by the United Nations Organisation, have contributed in advancing women issues through the various programmes and sponsorship of NGOs and government programmes in Ghana and Nigeria.

8.3   Recommendations

As a result of the findings of this study, the recommendations are classified into two categories namely; General and specific.

General Recommendations:

For women in Nigeria and Ghana to participate equally with men in governance and democratic processes, the study recommends review of the constitutions, laws and even the electoral laws in Ghana and Nigeria to take care of the special needs of women as gender-neutral laws are not to their advantage. The civil society groups must continue to put pressure on their governments for law reforms that will be gender sensitive.

Since the governments of Ghana and Nigeria are signatories to several women's rights conventions, international institutions and agencies must hold both countries accoutable for implementing programmes that will impact

positively on women. For example, there should be conditionalities attached to the signing of the various conventions.

In most of the countries where women are making progress, affirmative actions are in place. For example, in Uganda, every Senatorial District must at least have a female; such is been recommended for both countries. It is therefore recommended that Nigeria and Ghana must put in place affirmative actions. NGOs must not loose sight of their goals and objectives. They should not be satisfied with whatever successes they think they have achieved. They must network more with national, regional and international agencies to put pressure on the governments at every level to ensure that women are fully integrated into governance at all levels. Even when this is achieved, it is there is need to monitor political and government activities in order to ensure women's capacity building in their respective societies. NGOs should not be satisfied with token representation or marginal growth. It is only when the issue of the feminisation of poverty and women's illiteracy are adequately addressed that sustainable growth will be guaranteed. As contained in the BPFA, NGOs must build and strengthen solidarity among women through information, education and sensitisation activities. Such activities that will not only benefit women, but also the two societies in general.

Education is essential for women's emancipation and participation in governance and the on-going democratic processes in both countries. It is therefore necessary for the two countries to embark upon programmes that would enhance women's education. Through education, women can overcome many of the traditional barriers that culture and religion have imposed on them, to acquire skills that will put them in leadership positions.

Education is also essential for women's leadership roles, since it is an index for better economic roles. An educated woman is more beneficial to the society than most illiterate women are. It is recommended that the civil society organisations must continue to put pressure on government to ensure adequate funding of education. The job of mobilising and encouraging girl-child education lies with the State, it is recommended that, the State must be made to have the political will to sustain and maintain educational institutions and structures. In like manner, it is recommended that the governments in Ghana and Nigeria work with the teaming civil society groups to make formal and informal education available to their citizens female and male alike.

Civic and gender education should be included in school curriculum, to ensure that the boy-child does not see the home as the domain of girl-child. The boys must be made to know early in life, that the girl-child and the boy-child are both stakeholders in the family and the nation. This is essential, as socialisation of children is a major factor that determines gender roles and limits women politically and career-wise. There must be adjustment in the school system to absorb girls who get pregnant while still in school.

It is also recommended that NGOs operating in both countries must work harder to attract funding locally, since international assistance is usually tied to donor driven projects. If this is done, the society is more likely to benefit. In addition, the First Ladies' Movements which are powerful political organizations, must be restructured. The study revealed that First Ladies' Movements are powerful instrument of advancing the interests of women. It is however, recommended that they should be independent of government institutions, to make them more credible and acceptable to the citizenry.

There must be legislation to ensure that government's funds are not diverted to these NGOs. Gender issues are government issues which these NGOs could strenghten through various activities. However, government ministries and other institutions should not be woven around the First Ladies and their NGOs as they have no constitutional roles. The First Ladies' Movements should be encouraged as their positions make it easy to attract funds internally and externally. This practice should be followed at the state levels in Nigeria and at the regional levels in Ghana. The wives of the governors in Nigeria and those of the Regional Minsters in Ghana, should be encouraged to form NGOs that would address the specific needs of their areas, in addition to assisting the wives of the Presidents.

It is not unusual for wives of presidents to be involved in assisting the less priviledged and the oppressed in the society. For example, Rosalynn Carter supported 'Habitat for Humanity' that build houses for the poor. Habitat use volunteers along with the poor people to build hosues, who then pay for the cost of the materials only. The organsiation has become one of America's largest home builders and are expanding into other countries Similarly Hilary Clinton worked to improve the standard of public education in the South by encouraging her husband to support legislations that improved the standard of teachers in public schools. She also worked with mentally handicapped children by soliciting for funds from private organisations (Clinton, 2004:427).. It is therefore recommended that the First Ladies in Ghana and Nigeria follow these examples, where the First Ladies' activities are separate from state apparatus.

The move made by UNIFEM is a welcome development. The women's wings of political parties in Nigeria and Ghana must be strengthened. This can form a formidable lobby group in both countries. There is need for more networking amongst women politicians, irrespective of their parties. This is strongly recommended in order to exert pressure on government and political parties. This has been done successfully in Ugadan, where women in parliament in collaboration with other disadvantaged groups came together to form a lobby group within the parliament. For effectiveness, women must collaborate with men. Men must be encouraged to be active participants of ferminist struggle.

The issue of women's marginalisation and inferiorisation as a result of religion must be revisited. This area needs further study. Religion has been identified as a major impediment to women's emancipation and access to decision-making processes in both countries. This study is necessary for two reasons. First, there is a new wave of Islamic fundamentalism sweeping through Nigeria, especially in the northern parts of the country. Secondly, the issue of political violence needs to be addressed because it is a major factor militating against women's involvement in politics. The spate of political killings in Nigeria does not encourage women to participate in politics. NGOs and government should ensure that their organisations keep gender-disaggregated data.

Specific Recommendations

As a result the differences that exist between Ghana and Nigeria specific recommendations are suggested:

<u>Nigeria</u>

Education is central to women empowerment. All stakeholders must continue to put pressure on government at all levels to legislate compulsory education for up to the senior secondary school level. It is not enough for government to have a compulsory education policy. It is recommended that the Nigerian government must be prepared to monitor the proper implementation of this policy. While recognising that Nigeria is secular state, it is also recommended that machinery must be put in place to ensure that all children have equal opportunity to education. This must be entrenched in the constitution. It is recommended that government should establish more adult education centres especially in the rural areas and government's nomadic education must be vigorously pursued particularly in northern Nigerian. The rate of school drop out which is about twice that of Ghana is unacceptable, and should be checked through legal provisions. The frequency of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria is an issue that needs to be addressed urgently. The spate of political assassinations must be checked if women are to be encouraged into politics.

Government's poverty alleviation programmes must be vigorously pursued, as a high percentage of the poor are women. Women need to acquire appropriate skills to remove their dependent and inferior status.

It is recommended that NGOs operating in Nigeria should involve more women at the grassroots, particularly in the rural areas as these women are central to the feminist struggle.

Finally, the wave of Islamic fundamentalism must be checked, to reduce instability in the polity as well as ensure girl-child education and participation of women in public life.

Ghana

The study revealed that the Queen Mothers were important in the political life of their people. The governments in Ghana must ensure their continued involvement in governance process. Since they were influential and could be role models in the system, government should be made to absorb some of them in the House of Chiefs where they can make a difference. Although Islamic fundamentalism was not a major issue in Ghana, there is a need to check the infiltration of religious fanatics from neighbouring countries in order to minimise their influence in Ghana. Female politicians and those in government must cooperate more to encourage younger women to go into politics. There is need for the First Ladies to unity women from all political parties, to ensure women's growth. A partisan movement is not the answer to women's struggle. Although more girls are in school in Ghana, government should implement and monitor national and international policies on education. Already government had instituted legal reforms to assist women unfortunately, because of poor implementation at the grassroots very few women have benefited. Government must ensure that her policies are properly implemented with adequate sanctions are put in place.

Finally, the governments and the political parties in Ghana and Nigeria must be conscious that the denial of individual rights on the account of gender is a human rights violation as demonstrated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's rights. This

has further been entrenched by CEDAW, which was adopted in 1982, and the Beijing PFA of 1995. The study suggests that gender in Ghana and Nigeria reflect the nature of the international society. Although the states in the international system enjoy and exercise a measure of independence from each other, they interact and share common purposes, organisations and standards of conduct. The shared gender norms and values in Ghana and Nigeria could be explained by the nature of contemporary world politics, of which the important manifestation of the social framework is the UN charter. The result from the study revealed that the gender policies and the states' attention to gender issues had been influenced by the globalisation of policy-making. In Ghana and Nigeria, national policies are no longer under the jurisdiction of the states. A major feature of the current globalization process is the globalisation of national policies, narrowing the choices and the ability of governments.

8.4   Contributions to Knowledge

The study compared and highlighted factors that have limited the chances of women in the formal political spheres in Nigeria and Ghana. The study also found out the extent to which global events have been impacting on women's struggles for empowerment and gender mainstreaming in both countries.

To date, this is the first comparative study to show the role of women in democracy and governance in Nigeria and Ghana. In this regard, it is pertinent to add that unlike most of the available literature that reflect single country or regional study, this work compared the two most important

Anglophone Countries in West Africa, that have played prominent roles in the sub-region. In addition, the study provides the roles international agencies and organisations play in the democratisation, governance and the involvement of women. The study also provides gender- disaggregated data for use by policy makers, researchers and other interested organisations in the field.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

General Information of Respondent

i.   Sex: Female/Male

ii: Religion:..

iii.   Occupation:..

Women and the Home

1.   Do you think women have to choose between career and their homes?
        Yes ☐ , No ☐

2.   Are men sensitive to women desires to improve their capacities in the
        Yes ☐ , No ☐
        (a)   Socio-economic sphere
        (b)   Political spheres

3.   Do you think women can combine their family responsibilities
        with politics?   Yes ☐ , No ☐
        Please elaborate

4.   How can the stereo-typed pattern of bringing up the girl-child change?

        a.

        b.

        c.

        d.

5.   How about the boy child?

        a.

        b.

        c.

        d.

6.   Do you think that men are the stumbling blocks to women
        political empowerment?   Yes ☐ , No ☐
        Please explain?

Women and Politics

7. Are women as competent as men to run the affairs of the country? Yes   , No

8. Will you rather vote for a woman or a man   Yes ☐ , No ☐

9. Do you think they can combine the home and political career?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

10. Do you think the men are ready for the women to have active
    political career?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

11. Can you allow your wife to go into politics?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

    (b)   Give reasons for your answer

12. Is it that women do not care much about politics?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

13. Will you encourage your daughter to go into politics?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

    (b) Give reasons for your answer

14. How about your son?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

    (b)   Give reasons for your answer

15. In your view why are there not many women in politics in this
    country: List the reasons in order of importance.

    a.

    b.

    c.

    d.

    e.

    f.

    g.

16. Are the political parties gender sensitive?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

17. Are women up to the intra-party politics?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

18. In your view, has the government done enough to empower the
    women. Please discuss.

2

19. Do you think men are ready for women to have active
    political career.   Yes☐ , No☐

    (b)   Are men afraid of marginalisation

20. How viable are the posts offered women in the parties?

21. Do you support quota system/affirmative action in the sharing of
    political posts?   Yes ☐ , No☐

22. How relevant is education to the political empowerment of women in
    this country?   Yes ☐ , No☐

23. Do you support affirmative action in the education sector?   Yes☐ , No☐

24. What advice have you for women in their bid for visibility in formal politics?

    a.

    b.

    c.

    d.

25. What do you think the government can do to assist women?

    a.

    b.

    c.

    d.

26. How about the NGOs?

    a.

    b.

    c.

    d.

27. How about the international agencies?

    a.

    b.

28. How do you rate the performance of the Ministry of Women Affairs?

3

29. What advise do you have for women planning to go into active politics and women politicians?

30. Do you think that women are more helpful than men in women's struggle for political positions?   Yes ☐ , No ☐
Please explain?

31. Are the women appointed into government by the various governments gender sensitive? (Please discuss)

32. What are your general assessment of the government response to the global call for women political empowerment?

          Impressive   ☐
          Good   ☐
          Poor   ☐

(b) How can this be improved?

33. Should there be special provisions in the law to protect women? Yes ☐ , No ☐
Give suggestions.
a.

b.

c.

d.

First Ladies' Movements

34. What are your views about the First Lady's Movements?

35. How can you justify the huge expenditure on these programme?

36. Can you link them with women political empowerment programmes in this country?   Yes ☐, No ☐

37. Considering their participation at international for a will you say their actions transformed to political empowerment for the women.   Yes ☐, No ☐

38. Can you tell us some of their achievements?

39. What is the relationship between these groups and other women organizations in this country?

40. Do you justify their cancellation?   Yes ☐, No ☐

4

(b)   Give reasons for your answer

41.   As a whole do you think the former First Ladies contributed to the political awareness and empowerment of women.

42.   What are the in flaws?
       a.
       b.
       c.
       d.
       e.
       f.

43.   How will you rate their performance?

WOMEN POLITICAL OFFICE HOLDERS

Woman and the Home

1.   How does your role as a politician affect your home?

2.   How does your been a wife, mother and hostess affect your political life?

3.   What was your husband's reaction to your decision to be in active politics?

4.   Is he a politician? If not, what does he do for a living?

5.   Do you have to choose between your home and political carrier?   Yes ☐, No ☐

6.   As a woman going into politics, what were the obstacles you encountered?

      a.

      b.

      c.

      d.

      e.

Women and Politics

7.   When and why did you become a politician?

8.   Is your party gender sensitive in terms of the following:

Time	Yes ☐, No ☐	
Finance	Yes ☐, No ☐	
Family Responsibilities	Yes ☐, No ☐	

9.   Do you have a women's wing in the party?   Yes☐, No ☐

10.   If yes, what are the functions of the wing?

      a.

      b.

      c.

      d.

6

11.   What are the problems facing the women's wing?

      a.

      b.

      c.

      d.

12.   Can you tell us why there are not many women in politics in the country?

      a.

      b.

      c.

      d.

      e.

      f.

13.   How can these obstacles be removed?

      a.

      b.

      c.

      d.

      e.

      f.

14.   What are your views about the attitude of men to women political empowerment?

      (b)   How about the women, are they supportive?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

15.   Did you enjoy/receive the encouragement and support from women and
      women groups in your political endeavours?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

      (b)   Please explain
16.   What are your views about women's attitude to women empowerment?

17.   What general obstacles did you have to overcome before you could be
      elected into office? (List them in order of importance).

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

18. How did you finance your political campaign?

19. What particular intra-party obstacles did you have to overcome?

20. Were these problems peculiar to you or to all women seeking political offices?

21. How viable are the positions offered the women in the parties?

22. How can women be encouraged to change their non-challant attitude to politics?

a.

b.

c.

d.

23. Do you support quota system/affirmative action in the sharing
of political positions between the sexes?　　　　　　　　Yes ☐ , No ☐

(a) If Yes, why? If NO, why not?

24. Have you thought of forming women mutual support group?　　Yes ☐ , No ☐

(b) Is there any on ground?　　　　　　　　　　　　　Yes ☐ , No ☐

Government and Women Empowerment

25. What is the Government's gender policy?

26. What are your general assessments of the government response to the global call
for women political empowerment.

Quite good ☐
Good　　　 ☐

8

Not so Good ☐

Poor ☐

27. Do you think the government is sensitive enough to the plight of
women in this country?   Yes ☐, No ☐

(b)   Justify your answer

28. What are your views on the establishment of the Ministry of Women Affairs?
a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

29. How do you rate its performance?

Quite good   ☐

Good   ☐

Not so Good   ☐
              ☐
Poor

30. What are your views about women appointment into the cabinet by the various
governments?

31. Give suggestions in order of importance on what you think the government should
do to assist women in their bid to take part in formal politics.
a.

b.

c.

d.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and International Agencies

32. How do you rate the activities of the NGOs and CBOs?

33. What suggestions do you have for the improvement of the performance of the
NGOs and CBOs?
a.

b

c.

d.

(b)   How about the International Agencies?

     a.

     b.

     c.

     d.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

Women empowerment and NGOs/International Agencies

1. What is the name of your organisation?

2. When was this NGO/Agency founded?

3. What are the objectives of your organisation?
    a.
    b.
    c.
    d.

4. Who are the sponsors and how are you funded?

    (b)   Is your funding adequate for the task?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

5. Do the sponsors influence performance?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

    (b)   If yes how?

6. What are the obstacles you encounter in performing your duties?

    a.

    b

    c.

    d.

    e.

    f.

7. What is your organisation doing to ensure the political awareness of women, especially women at the grassroots.

8. Does your organisation assist aspiring women political office holders?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

    (b)   If Yes, how?

9. In your view, do you think you are doing enough to empower women politically or you can do better?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

11

10. Do you think you are making any impact?   Yes ☐, No ☐
    Discuss

11. How can your organisation improve on what it is doing presently?
    a.

    b.

    c.

    d.

    e.

12. In your view, do you think women in this country are rising to the challenge
    posed by the global development on women political empowerment?
    Discuss

13. Are the country's law gender sensitive?

Women and Politics

14. What do you think are the constraints against women's active participation
    in formal politics? List in order of importance.

    a.

    b.

    c.

    d.

    e.

    f.

15. Can you tell us your view about the patriarchal culture and women
    empowerment?

16. How about the matriarchal culture?

17. Do you know any women political lobby group?   Yes ☐, No ☐
    (a)   Name them, and what do they do?

    (b)   Have you assisted in the establishment of any?   Yes ☐, No ☐

    (c)   If Yes, what has the government done?

(d)   If No, what can be done to help in this direction?

18.   What do you think women politician can do to win elections?

19.   What can be done to change the attitude of men towards women political office seekers?

20.   How about the attitudes of other women?

21.   Are the men brought into focus in your bid to empower women?   Yes ☐, No ☐
(b)   How is this done?

International Agencies/NGOs

22.   What are your comments on the International Agencies/NGOs working on women empowerment in this country?

23.   Can you give us some suggestion on how they can improve?

24.   Do you have any relationship with some of these groups?   Yes ☐, No ☐

Name them.

(b)   If Yes, discuss the relationship?

25.   What can they do to improve on their present performance?

26.   How can women office seekers be assisted by your organisation?

Government and Women Empowerment

27.   Do you think that government is alive to its international obligations on this issue?   Yes ☐, No ☐

(b)   If yes, how is this been done?

(c)   If No, why this attitude?

28.   Are you satisfied with the gender policy in this country?
Please explain?

29.   How can you rate the performance of the Ministry of Women Affairs?

30.   Do you think the issue of female empowerment gained more ground during the military?   Yes ☐, No ☐

13

(b) Give reasons for your answer.

31.   Are there some government structures that inhibit women
       from politics?   Yes ☐ , No ☐

       (b)   If Yes, name them.

32.   Give suggestions in order of importance on what the government can do to assist
       women in their demand for political power?

33.   What can the NGOs/International Agencies do?

"any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."[13]

However it may be argued that the Convention is an improvement with respect to women's rights in that it focuses on discrimination against women specifically.

Obligation on Contracting Parties

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its 2–009 forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organisation or enterprise;

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[13] The above definition reflects the terminology employed in Article 1 of the 1966 Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination although the latter excludes any reference to discrimination within the civil sphere. Article 1 has been criticised on the grounds that it is more limited in scope than, for instance, Article 2 of the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights which provides that "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as . . . sex". See also Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 and Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966. For general discussion see N. Burrows, "The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" [1985] N.I.L.R. 419.

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN, 1979

2–008 The Convention which was adopted unanimously by the United Nations on December 18, 1979 entered into force on September 3, 1981, following receipt of the 20th ratification. Currently 168 countries are Contracting Parties to the Convention.[12]

Purpose of Convention

To eliminate discriminatory behaviour which is adverse to women.

Definition of Discrimination

The term "discrimination against women" is defined in Article 1 for the purposes of the Convention as meaning:

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[11] See the section on education below, para. 2–019.
[12] As of July 2001.

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 2 articulates a twofold obligation on Contracting Parties not only involving a mere condemnation of discrimination but necessitating the taking of appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination. This obligation incumbent on Contracting Parties is reinforced by Article 24 which provides that: "States Parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving the full realisation of the rights recognised in the present Convention." Article 2 is central to the Convention's effectiveness being concerned with both *de facto* and *de jure* equality. Article 24 on the other hand is a more general statement. Nevertheless Article 2 does not provide a time framework for implementation and accordingly responsibility lies with the individual Contracting Parties.

The general obligation incumbent on Contracting Parties is further spelt out in Article 3 which is sufficiently vague to cover any deficiency in the definition contained in Article 1.

Article 3

010 States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

Article 4

011   1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

Article 4 acknowledges the possibility of positive discrimination and provides for the introduction of temporary special measures designed to accelerate *de facto* equality between men and women. Article 4(2) constitutes a legitimate exception to the principle of

non-discrimination as found in Article 1. Measures aimed at protecting maternity are however included in Article 11 within the context of employment law. At its 25th session the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women began work on a general recommendation on temporary measures designed to encourage legal and policy initiatives to accelerate *de facto* equality.

Article 5

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures: 2–012

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

Article 5 makes a limited contribution to the overall goal of improving the position of women. The obligation on Contracting Parties is undefined. Does Article 5 require the banning of women's magazines? Are media programmes promoting the rights of women obligatory? Article 5 is essentially concerned with policy rather than substantive measures benefitting individuals. For instance if maternity is regarded as a social function this may have serious and far reaching implications with respect to a woman's freedom of choice and rights as an individual. Article 5(b) may thus be in conflict with Article 16.1(e) which ensures the right of men and women equally to decide on the number and spacing of their children. Article 5 leaves interpretation of "a proper understanding of maternity" to each state's discretion. No mention is made of paternity as a social function. "Paternity leave", however, is becoming more common in European States though, see *Petrovic v. Austria*. Should states be the sole arbitrators and entrusted with exclusive responsibility in this sphere? Nor does Article 5 make any allowance for cultural diversity between contracting parties.

Article 6

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including 2–013 legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

Article 6 does not define the term "traffic" nor does it specify whether states are required to suppress exploitation of the prostitution of women or suppress prostitution itself. The distinction between the two lies in who profits financially. International law traditionally has dealt with exploitation of prostitution as opposed to prostitution itself.[14] A Belgian proposal which would have included the words "and attacks on the physical integrity of women" was rejected. Its acceptance would have ensured that states would have been required to take measures to counter sexual crimes such as rape and female circumcision. Resolution E/CN/RES/1999/40 Article 4 urges governments "to take appropriate measures—so as to eliminate trafficking in women" while Article 6 calls upon governments "to criminalise trafficking in women and girls".

Articles 7, 8, 9, 15 and 16—civil and political rights

Article 7

2–014 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organisations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Article 8

2–015 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations.

Article 9

2–016 1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of

nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

Articles 7–9 inclusive are concerned with the civil and political rights of women which have already been the focus of international attention particularly in the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1952[15] and the 1957 Convention on the Nationality of Married Women.[16] The 1979 Convention expands and elaborates the rights articulated in the earlier instruments and reinforces the guarantees contained therein. For instance, Article 9(2) was novel in that it sought to accord equality between men and women in respect of the nationality of children. However this represented a general principle which imposed no time scale on states for its realisation. Article 9 highlighted the derivative legal status of many women and Article 15 provides that women should not have their legal rights and responsibilities defined in a male context.

Article 15

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men 2–017 before the law.

2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

Although *prima facie* Article 15 would appear to raise and advance the status of women Article 15 does not provide a right to conclude contracts and administer property *per se* but rather where a State already has in place legislation concerning such, then these rights must be afforded equally between women and men. Article 15(4) was criticised on the grounds that it made no concessions for example to Islamic law.

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[14] See, *e.g.* 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others.

[15] 193 U.N.T.S. 135.
[16] 309 U.N.T.S. 65.

Article 16

2–018   1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

Article 16 returns to the issue of marriage and family relations and deals with spousal equality in all aspects of family life. Not surprisingly Article 16 has given rise to the most controversy as is reflected in the number of reservations lodged to that Article.

Articles 10,11, 12, 13 and 14—social and economic rights

Articles 10 and 12—education and health care

Article 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate 2–019 discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organisation of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

Article 10 focuses on non-discrimination in education. Article 10 requires contracting Parties to grant both sexes equal access to the

same educational processes but also requires the introduction of progressive policies designed to promote socio cultural changes. Article 10 has a negative aspect in that it denies discrimination and a positive aspect in the sense of encouraging an improvement in the status of women through forward planning and policy making in the sphere of education. Article 10 is undoubtedly one of the most important articles because without education women cannot effectively access rights in other areas of life. One hundred and thirty million children still do not receive education, some 900 million people, that is one-sixth of the world's population over the age of 15 are illiterate. Women make up two-thirds of this figure. World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000 Programme for Action sets as a goal "eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality by 2015". Education is recognised as a tool for the implementation of Article 5(a)— it is only through education that attitudes will be changed and traditional "male"/"female" stereotypes abandoned. Education is the key to the realisation of the goals expressed in Article 12.

Article 12

2–020   1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

Articles 11 and 13 employment and economic and social benefits.

Article 11

2–021   1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

(b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;

(c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training

and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the   2–022 grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

Article 13

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate   2–023 discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to family benefits;

(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;

(c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

Articles 11 and 13 deal with non-discrimination in employment and economic and social activities respectively and set out goals to which contracting parties are to ascribe but the attainment of such goals will be dependent upon a state's economic development. In other words it is impossible to prescribe a rigorous time scale applicable to all contracting parties.

Article 14—rural women

Article 14

2–024   1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetised sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of this Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;

(b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;

(c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;

(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, *inter alia*, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;

(e) To organise self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;

(f) To participate in all community activities;

(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;

(h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

Article 14 is unique in that it was the first international recognition of the special needs of women in rural communities. Two-thirds of the world's women inhabit rural areas and their position warranting special attention has been a recurring theme in a number of recent international instruments see, in particular, Rio Declaration.[17]

Enforcement of the Convention

The task of monitoring implementation of the Convention has been   2–025 entrusted to a Committee set up in 1982 and was designated the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Article 17

1. For the purpose of considering the progress made in the implementation of the present Convention, there shall be established a Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) consisting, . . ., of 23 experts of high moral standing and competence in the field covered by the Convention. The experts shall be elected by States Parties from among their nationals and shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution and to the representation of the different forms of civilization as well as the principal legal systems.

2. The members of the Committee shall be elected by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States Parties. Each State Party may nominate one person from among its own nationals.

Members who are elected for a term of four years (and may be re-elected) serve in their individual capacity and not as representatives of their government.

Article 18

1. States Parties undertake to submit to the Secretary-General of 2–026 the United Nations, for consideration by the Committee, a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which they have adopted to give effect to he provisions of the present Convention and on the progress made in this respect:

(a) Within one year after the entry into force for the State concerned; and

(b) Thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests.[18]

[17] See *supra* n. 4.
[18] As of June 2001 the Committee has considered 111 initial, 77 second, 56 third, 22 fourth and 3 fifth Reports.

2. Reports may indicate factors and difficulties affecting the degree of fulfilment of obligations under the present Convention.

2–027   A major problem confronting the Committee has been the non submission of reports. As the number of State Parties increases so does the backlog of reports pending consideration by the Committee. Furthermore, if an effort is made to encourage states with overdue reports to submit them, the backlog will be inevitable. Currently there is now on average a lapse of three years from submission of report until its consideration by the Committee.[19] This leads to demands for updates regarding developments in the interim period and thereby results in an increase in the volume of documentation presented to the Committee. The Committee has been considering on average 14–16 reports during a three week session. The delay constitutes a disincentive to report. At the conclusion of the 24th session of the CEDAW Committee it was noted that some States have submitted more than one report in order to report their reporting schedule. Such submissions had increased the Committee's workload but had reduced the backlog. The Committee in an attempt to reduce the backlog further has recommended an amendment to Article 20 which limits the meetings of the Committee to "not more than two weeks annually" and pending such amendment has recommended that the General Assembly authorise the Committee to meet "exceptionally for two sessions of three weeks duration each year."[20] The Committee has been assisted by ad hoc working groups which were initially used by the Committee in its second session. The first working group in 1983 considered the guidelines for the preparation of States Parties' reports and since then the use of working groups has become a regular tool of the Committee. When a report of a state is being considered a representative of the State concerned is present and may participate in the discussion and answer questions regarding the report.[21] The World Conference on Human Rights suggested the introduction of a right of petition by means of an Optional Protocol to the Convention and thus in 1994 a draft optional protocol was submitted by an independent expert group.[22]

Article 21

2–028   1. The Committee shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities and may make suggestions and general

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[19] In 1985 the time lapse between receipt and consideration was 18 months.

[20] No such amendment has yet been introduced although Article 20 frequently appears on the agenda and most recently at a seminar for Pacific Region State in Auckland, February 2001.

[21] Rule 49, Committee's Rules of Procedure—the Rules of Procedure were adopted in accordance with Article 19 and were originally introduced in 1981. Since then the Committee has adopted by consensus a number of new procedures that could be interpreted as inconsistent with the published rules. Draft revised rules of procedure based on the Committee's current practices are scheduled to be considered at a future session.

[22] Meeting held in Maastricht, September 29—October 1, 1994.

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recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from the States Parties. Such suggestions and general recommendations shall be included in the report of the Committee together with comments, if any, from States Parties.

2. The Secretary-General shall transmit the reports of the Committee to the Commission on the Status of Women for its information.

In accordance with Article 21 the Committee can only make observations and has no power to declare a State Party to be in violation of the Convention. The Committee contributes to the interpretation of the Convention by way of General Recommendations of which there are to date 24.[23] These can be on procedural matters such General Recommendation No. 2,[24] substantive matters such as General Recommendation No. 14,[25] General Recommendation Nos 12, 19[23] and 24. CEDA has to date adopted 24 General Recommendations. Since 1997 the Committee has adopted a three-stage process for the formulation of General Recommendation:

1. Open dialogue between the Committee, NGOs and other interested parties regarding the subject matter of the proposed General Recommendation;

2. Drafting the General Recommendation in a form to be discussed within a working group at the next session of the Committee;

3. Adoption by the Committee of the revised draft.[26]

Impact of the Convention

The Convention is *the* major international instrument dealing   2–029
exclusively with the human rights of women. It goes further than previous Conventions and Declarations in recognising the importance of culture and tradition in shaping the thinking and behaviour of men and women and the significant part they play in restricting the exercise of basic rights by women. It has been suggested that international law is an inappropriate means of effecting change in long standing and deep rooted societal institutions and practices. However, this cannot be used as a justification for apathy and inaction in such a vital area. The Convention plays a crucial role in outlining "a clear human rights agenda for women" marking "an enormous step" forward.

The Optional Protocol has been introduced to address the historical weakness of the Convention *viz.* that reporting

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[23] 13th Session, 1994.

[24] Concerning Initial Reports as Submitted by State Parties UN Doc. A/42/38, 6th Session 1987.

[25] Female Circumcision UN Doc. A/45/38, 9th Session, 1990.

[26] Violence Against Women, UN Doc. A/43/38, 8th Session, 1989; and UN Doc. A/47/38, 11th Session, 1992.

procedures alone do not effectively encourage compliance with international requirements. While the Convention is silent with respect to a time scale for the realisation of the goals within it the Optional Protocol introduces a potentially more effective redress mechanism for ensuring compliance. However, even by laying down objectives to be aspired to the Convention serves as a catalyst for the continued progress on the issues particularly relevant to the female sex. This is especially true with respect to violence against women. The Convention failed to deal comprehensively with violence against women although certain articles made reference to certain practices—*e.g.* Article 6. Traditionally gender-related violence, such as female genital mutilation and rape have not been regarded as being within the domain of international law whereas domestic violence has been regarded as "private" rather than a public matter. However such entrenched attitudes are being undermined.[37]

BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

The Platform for Action reflects a review of progress since the 1985 International Conference on Women held in Nairobi, Kenya, which adopted the "Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies" for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000. Building on accomplishments since then, it establishes a basic group of priority action to be carried out over the next five years.

The Platform builds on the work of previous world meetings held as part of the "continuum of conferences" of the current decade. For example, the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna 1993) the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo 1994).

The Platform seeks to hasten the removal of the remaining obstacles to women's participation in all spheres of life, to protect women's human rights and to integrate women s concerns into aspects of sustainable development.

The Platform reaffirms that the "advancement of women and the achievement of equality" are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice. It identifies strategic objectives and actions in 12 (twelve) critical area of concern.

Recommendations are addressed to various elements of the international community, international financial institutions, bilateral donors, particularly governments, the private sector, academic and research institutions, non-governmental organisations and the media.

THE MISSION STATEMENT. - Chapter I

Emphasises that women and men share common concerns that can only be addressed by working together and in partnership towards the common goal of gender equality throughout the world. Quoting the Copenhagen Declaration adopted in March 1994 by the World Summit for Social Developments, it stresses that broad-based and sustainable economic growth is necessary to sustain social development and social justice

(paragraphs 1-6)

1

GLOBAL FRAMEWORK - Chapter II

States that the Platform's implementation is "the sovereign responsibility of each state, in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the significance of and full respect for various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of individuals and their communities should contribute to the full enjoyment by women of their human rights in order to achieve equality, development and peace."

Discussing problems facing women, including HIV/AIDS, lack of equality and unbalanced distribution of paid and unpaid labour, the Platform calls for special measures to ensure that young women have the life skills needed to participate in all levels of leadership.

"Only a new era of international cooperation among governments and peoples, based on spirit of partnership, an equitable international social and economic environment and a radical transformation of the relationship between women and men to one of full and equal partnership will enable the world to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century."

States that girls are often subjected to various forms of sexual and economic exploitation, forced prostitution, slavery, violence and harmful practices such as female infanticide, prenatal sex selection, genital mutilation and early marriage including child marriage.

The role of religion in fulfilling moral, ethical and spiritual needs is recognised. It also expresses the view that any form of extremism may have a negative impact on women and could lead to violence and discrimination.

Whilst acknowledging the social significance of motherhood and maternity, it states that maternity must not be a basis for discrimination nor restrict the full participation of women in society.

(paragraphs 6-41)

Critical Areas of Concern - Chapters III & IV

The Platform calls upon all governments to address 12 (twelve) thematic inter-related critical areas of concern, plus institutional and financial arrangements.

1. POVERTY
Describes the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women, "the feminisation of poverty."

States that sustainable development and economic growth are only possible through improving the economic, social, political, legal and cultural status of women. Calls on Governments with the full and equal participation of women to

- review and modify macro-economic and social policies
- ensure women's access to financial services
- pursue and implement sound and stable macro-economic and sectoral policies
- integrate women living in poverty and socially marginalised women into productive employment and economic mainstream.
- integrate gender perspective into lending programs, including the structural adjustment programmes.
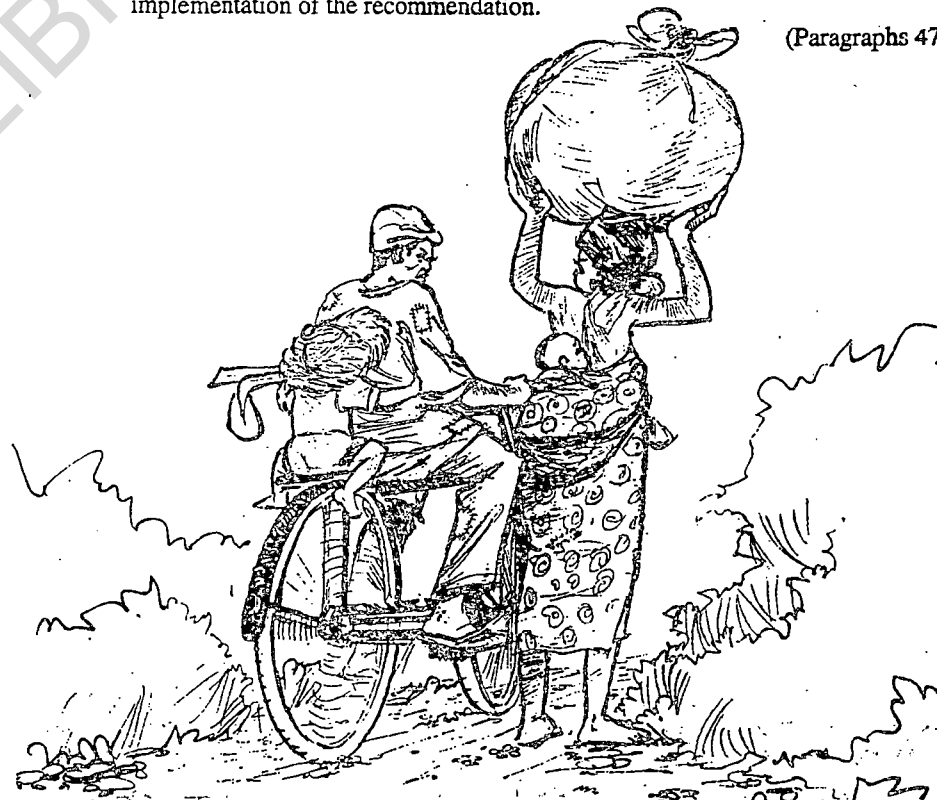
Calls on Multilateral Financial Institutions to
- seek durable solutions to problems of external debt

Calls on Non-governmental and women's organisations to:
- organise pressure groups and establish monitoring mechanisms
- integrate into their activities and programs devices to ensure the implementation of the recommendation.

(Paragraphs 47

FEMINISATION OF POVERTY

2. EDUCATION

Describes it as an essential tool for achieving the goals of full equality, development and peace. Discrimination in girls' access to education persists in many areas, owing to customary attitudes, early marriages and pregnancies, inadequate and gender-biased teaching and educational materials, sexual harassment and lack of adequate schooling facilities.

Calls on Governments to commit themselves
- by the year 2000, to universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 percent of primary school-age children
- closing the gender-gap in primary and secondary education by the year 2000
- universal primary education before the year 2015
- provide support and child care and other services to enable mothers continue their schooling

Urges Multilateral Development Organisations, bilateral donors and Foundations to:
- maintain or increase funding levels for education in structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes
- provide substantial percentage of their resources to basic education for gi ·
- work to promote literacy, life skills, scientific and technological knowledge
- ensure access to education for adult women with little education, for women with disabilities, for documented migrant, refugee and displaced women.
- respect in educational institutions, of gender equality and cultural and religious and other diversity.

(paragraphs 689-90)

SITUATION OF THE GIRL-CHILD:
ACCESS TO EDUCATION

-4

3. HEALTH

This was the most carefully negotiated of all the critical areas of concern.
It states that in the ability of women to control their own fertility forms an important basis for the enjoyment of other rights."
The trend toward early sexual experience increases the risk of early pregnancies, HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as unsafe abortion. The right o women and men to be informed and to have acces to family planning methods of thein choice "as well as other methods of their choice for regulation fertility which are not against the law." The last phrase is the concession or compromise made to pro-abortion campaigners.
Reference is made to the Cairo Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development which calls on Governments to deal with th health impact of unsafe abortion.

Calls on Governments to
- enact legislation against socio-cultural practices which contribute to women's susceptibility to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases.

- design programms for men and male adolescent aimed at providing information on safe and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour including male methods for prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- allow women access to social security systems in equality with men.
- provide more accessible and affordable quality health care services including sexua and reproductive health care.
- take measures to eliminate harmful, medically unnecessary or coercive medical interventions, as well as inappropriate medication of women.

Calls on Youth non-governmental organisations to
- receive assistance to address youth concerns in the area of health, including sexual and reproductive health.

Calls on Parents to
- take into consideration, the rights of the child to access to information, privacy and confidentiality
- take into comsideration the right of the child to respect and informed consent
- provide directive and guidance as their duty and responsibility

(paragraphs 91-112

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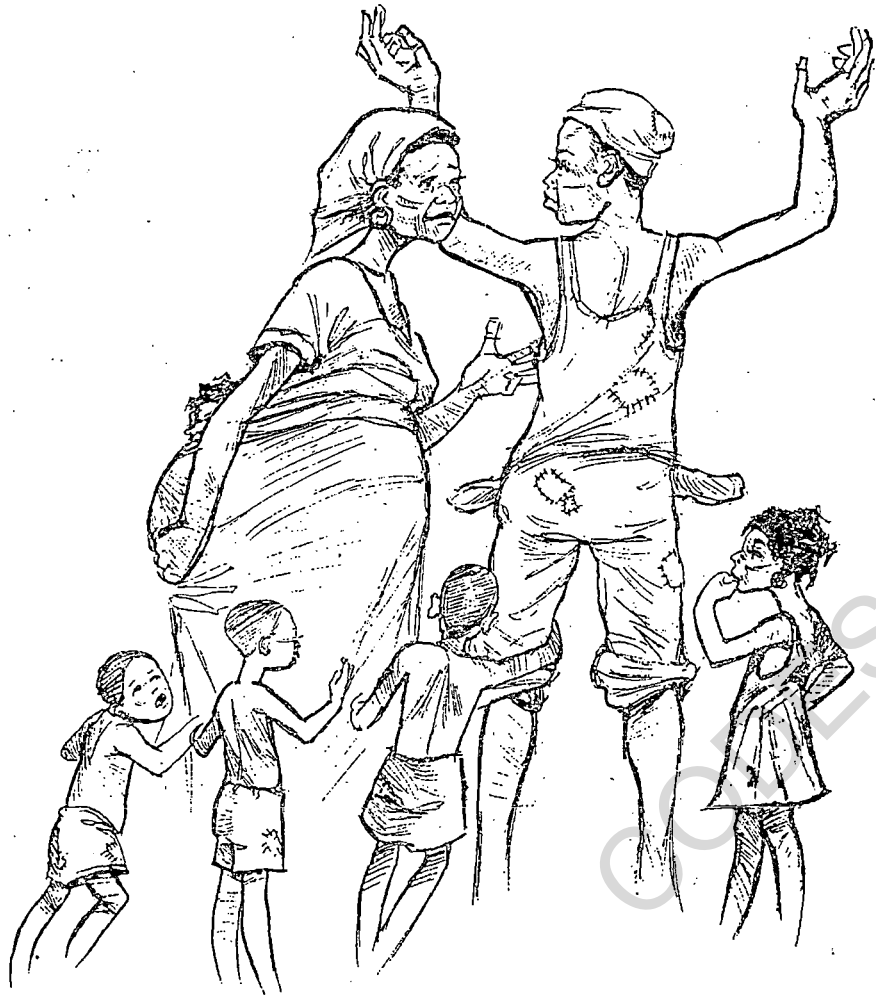
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

## 4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

This derives essentially from cultural patterns, particularly the harmful effects of certa[in] traditional practices and all acts of extremism linked to sex, race, language or religio[n] that perpetuate women's lower status, for example, female genital mutilation, rape, a[nd] female chastisement.

States that in all societies women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Images in the media of violence against women, particularly th[ose] depicting rape or sexual slavery as well as the use of women and girls as sex objects, including pornography, are factors which contribute to such violence.

Calls on Governments to
- adopt measures to modify patterns of conduct,
- eliminate cultural practices based on stereotyped roles for men and women.
- provide well-funded shelters, legal- aid and other services to girls and women subject[ed] to violence
- enact and enforce legislation against perpetrators of violence.
- provide counselling and rehabilitation to perpetrators of violence.

(paragraphs 113-13[ ])


DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

6

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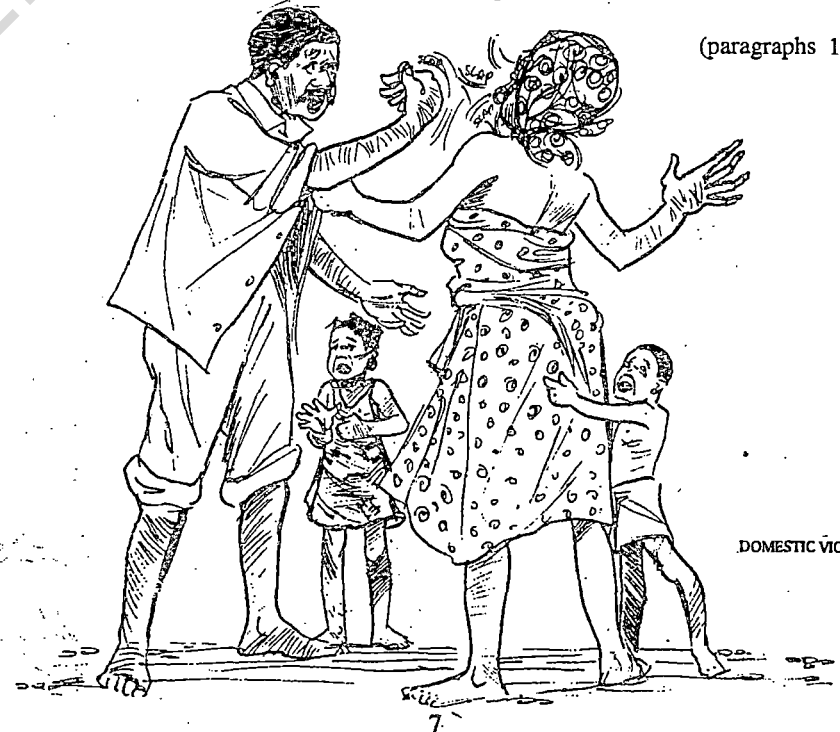
5. ARMED CONFLICT

Links peace with development and equality between men and women and notes the disproportionate effect on women of the human rights abuses, such as rape that accompany armed conflicts.

Governments are urged to
- hasten the concession of military resources to development and peaceful purposes.
- take measures to allerviate the negative impact of economic sanctions on women and children.
- give special protection to women and children who migrate as family members from abuse and denial of their human rights.
- increase women's participation in conflict resolution and leadership.

(paragraphs 132-151)
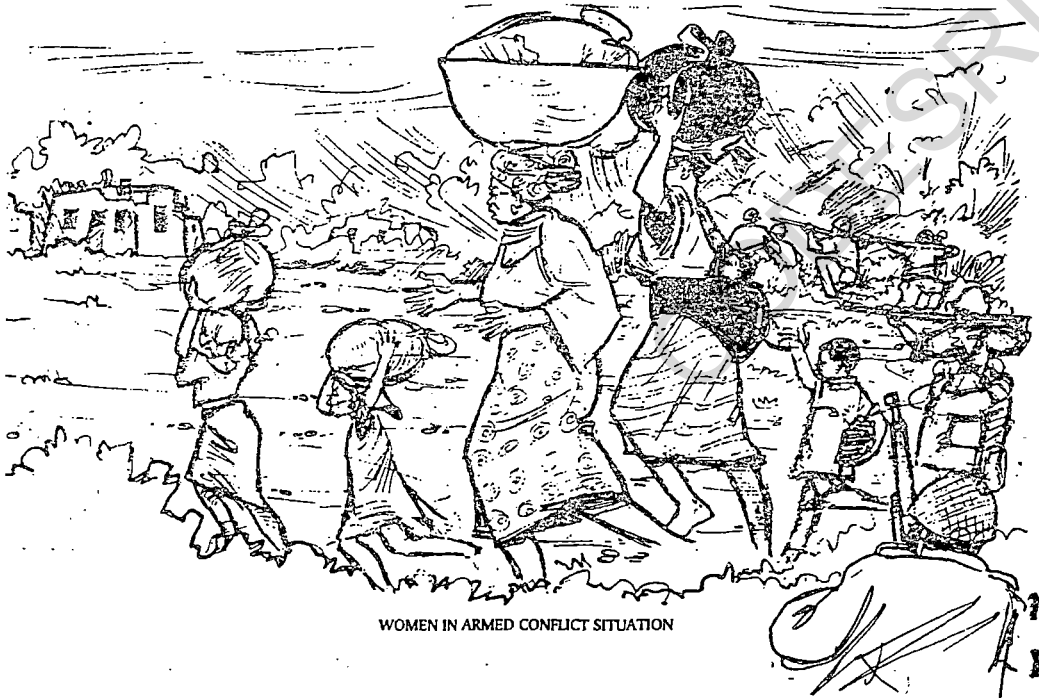
WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT SITUATION

6. INEQUALITY IN WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

Notes the differences in women's and men's opportunities to exert power over economic structures and societies. It seems that insufficient attention to gender-analysis has meant that women's contributions and concerns are often ignored in economic structures, such as financial and labour markets.

To fully realise equlity between women and men in their contribution to the economy, active efforts are required for recognising the work, experience, knowledge and value of both women and men.

Calls on Governments to
- enact legislation to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work of equal value.
- integrate gender perspective into all economic restructuring and structural adjustment programmes.
- pay special attention to women's needs when disseminating market, trade and resource information.

Calls on non - governmental organisations/research institutes to
- analyse the impact of globalisation on women's economic status -

(paragraphs 152-191)

ACCESS TO STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES

7. DECISION-MAKING

"The power relations that impeded women's attainment of fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the personal to the highly public" states the Platform.

Calls on Governments to

    integrate the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies.

    encourage political parties to integrate women in public position in the same proportion as men.

    recognise that shared work and parenting promote increased participation of women in public life.

    integrate gender balance in the composition of delegations to the United Nations and other International forums.

Calls on political parties to

    consider examining party structures and procedures to remove all barriers that discriminate against women.

Calls on The United Nations to

    develop mechanisms to nominate women candidates for appointment to senior posts.

States that "discrimination can start with unequal power relations between men and women within the family; and that "local, non-formal networks of decision-making that reflect a dominant male ethos restrict women's ability to participate equally."

(paragraphs 192-197)
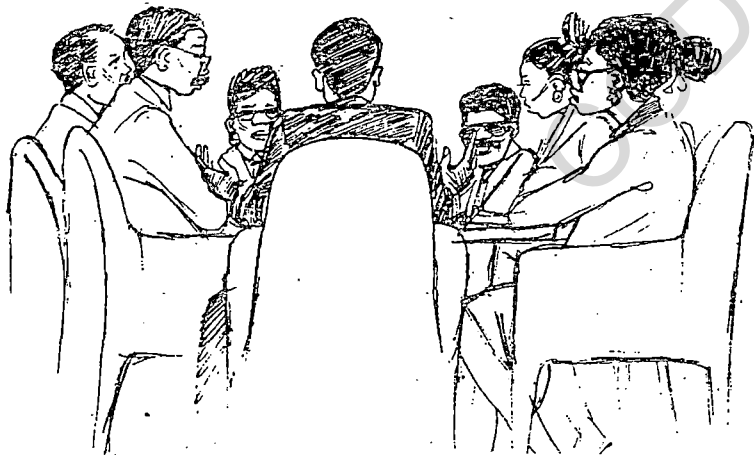
EQUAL REPRESENTATION ON DECISION-MAKING BODIES

8. MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

States that successive international conferences have underscored the need to take gender factors into account in policy and programme planning but "in many instances this has not been done."

Calls on Governments to

- ensure that responsibility for the advancement of women is invested at the highest possible level, that is, Cabinet Minister Level
- integrate gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively.
- collect, compile and analyse gender desegregated data to reflect problems, issues and questions related to women and men in society.

(paragraphs 198-212)
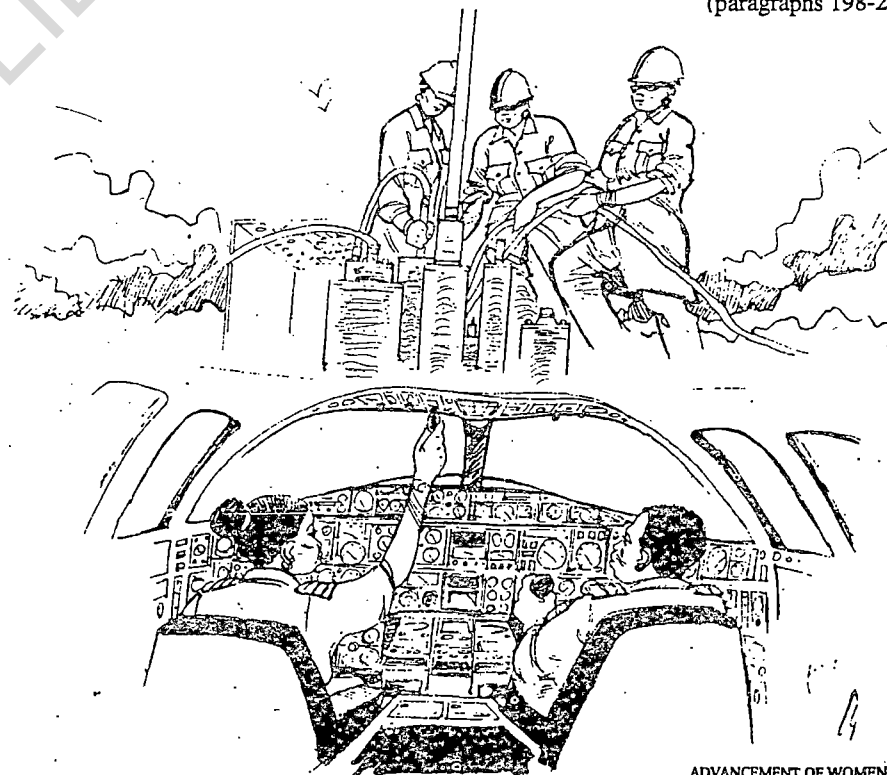
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

9. HUMAN RIGHTS

Notes that human rights are the birth right of all human beings.

Calls on <u>Governments</u> to

- ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law
- assist women and men to achieve legal literacy.
- promote education on the human and legal rights of women
- undertake public campaign on the equality of women and men in public and private life
- work actively towards ratification or accession to and implementation of human rights treaties.
- limit reservation s to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and withdraw reservations that are contrary to the purpose of the Convention.
- review all national laws, policies, practices and procedures to ensure that they meet Convention obligations.
- take into account the systemic nature of discrimination against women in implementing international human rights instruments.

(paragraphs 213-233)

WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS:
WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

12

10. MASS MEDIA

A separate section devoted to the role of the mass media states that the lack of gender sensitivity is evidenced by the gender-based stereotyping found in media organisations.

Calls <u>Governments</u> and <u>International Organisations,</u> to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, to

- encourage gender-sensitive training for media professionals.

Calls on the <u>Media</u> to

- refrain from presenting women as inferior beings and exploiting them as sex objects and commodities.
- change negative and degrading images of women in the media.
- develop - consistent with freedom of expression - forms of self regulation to promote the presentation of non-stereotyped images of women.

(paragraphs 234 - 245)

13

11. WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENT

Reaffirms the linkage between poverty and environmental degradation and identifies unsustainable patterns of consumption and production as the major cause of deterioration.

Also notes the lack of recognition and support for women's contribution to conservation.

Calls on Governments to

- integrate rural women's traditional knowledge and practice in the development of environmental management programmes.
- develop a strategy for change to eliminate all obstacles to women's full and equal participation in sustainable development and equal access to and control over resources.

Calls on International and non-governmental organisations and the private sector institutions to:

- support women's cosumer initiatives by promoting the marketing of organic food and recycling facilities.
- support product labelling which should be clear to those who are illiterate.

(paragraphs 246 -258)

WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

14

12. THE SITUATION OF THE GIRL-CHILD

Calls on Governments to

- enact and strictly enforce laws to ensure that marriage is only entered into with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- take measures aimed at abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children .
- enact laws that fixes a reasonable minimum age of marriage

International and non-governmental organisations have very important roles to play in the eradication of harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, female infanticide, pre-natal sex selection, early marriage, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and discrimination against girls in food allocation.

Also further calls on Governments to

- eliminate the injustice and obstales in relation to inheritance faced by girls by enacting and enforcing legislation that guarantee equal right to succession and ensuring equal right to inherit, regardless of the sex of the child.

  encourage girls to participate in and learn about the social political and economic functioning of society.

  encourage girls to pursue scientific and technological training.

(paragraph s259-285)

SURVIVAL OF THE GIRL-CHILD

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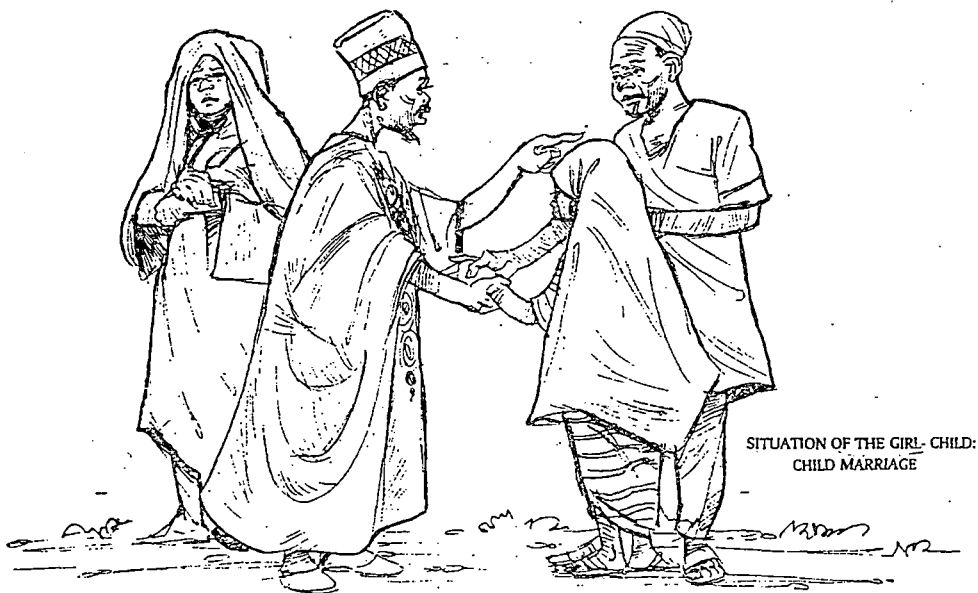
SITUATION OF THE GIRL- CHILD:
CHILD MARRIAGE

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS - CHAPTER V

This is for the follow up to the World Conference.
Calls on the Secretary - General to
- establish a high level post using existing human and financial resources, to act as advisor on gender issues and help ensure system-wide implementation of the Platform.

In this regard, emphasis is placed on the role of the Commission on the Status of Women· which should have a clear mandate and necessary financial support to play a central monitoring role.
Call on Governments to
- develop strategies to implement the Platform by the end of 1996 with time-bound targets, bench-marks for monitoring as well as proposals for allocating resources for implementation.
It notes that the Fourth World Conference on Women is "a Conference of Commitments."

(paragraphs286-345)

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS - CHAPTER VI
States that governing bodies within the United Nations system should give special consideration to effective implementation of the Platform and to review their policies, programmes budgets and activities in order to achieve the most effective and efficient use of funds to that end. It notes that financial and human resources have generally been insufficient for the advancement of women and affirms the necessity of political commitment to make resources available.

(paragraphs 346-35)

GENERAL
Many of the developing countries placed emphasis on inequalities of access to education and expressed their determination to increase primary school enrolment , improve literacy for girls and women and develop gender-sensitive school curricula. Several indicated that they would implement programmes to combat poverty and marginalisation of women and to provide them with food security. Others stressed their intention to involve women in political decision making in the local and national levels. These specific emphasis do not in any way detract from their commitments to the total Platform for Action, especially the 12 (twelve) critical areas of concern.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS STRATEGIES
Calls on non-governmental organisations/individuals to:

- Mobilise and improve the content of their programmes directed at each of the critical areas of concern.
- Lobby and establish monitoring groups.
- Cooperate with Governments by providing technical Expertise.
- Educate and create awareness - not only of government failures but also of measures which are beneficial to women in all the critical areas of concern.
- Research - train researchers and introduce systems that call for theuse of data collected
- Generate, collect and collate gender desegregated data.
- Collaborate, network and wok for the implementation of the Platform.
- Develop conceptual and practical methodologies for incorporating gender perspectives into all aspects of policy-making.
- Mobilise funds for the implementation of projects and programmes.
- Disseminate information about successful women as role models.
- Build and strengthen solidarity among women through information, education and sensitization activities

UNIFEM

UNIFEM's programme strategy, designed and guided by an empowerment framework, is based on promoting women's rights, opportunities and capacities.

UNIFEM focuses on three areas of immediate concern:

Strengthening women's economic capacity as entrepreneurs and producers, especially in the context of the new trade agenda and the emergence of new technologies;

Engendering governance and leadership that increase women's participation in the decision-making processes that shape their lives;

Promoting women's human rights to eliminate all forms of violence against women and transform development into a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable process.

These thematic areas are addressed in relation to regional realities in Asia/ Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS).*

UNIFEM implements the empowerment agenda through five core strategies that build on the Fund's comparative advantages:

❀ Building the capacity and leadership of women's organizations and networks;

❀ Leveraging political and financial support for women from a range of stakeholders in the development process;

❀ Forging new synergies and effective partnerships among women's organizations, governments, the UN system and the private sector;

❀ Undertaking pilot and demonstration projects to test innovative approaches to women's empowerment; and

❀ Building an operational knowledge base to influence gender mainstreaming.

UNIFEM is dedicated to building stronger women's organizations and networks so that women themselves have the power to negotiate new and better policies with their governments and international agencies. UNIFEM provides technical support to governments and promotes dialogue between them and women's organizations.

* In January 1997, a letter issued by the UN Legal Counsel clarified the concept of "developing" countries, making it possible for UNIFEM to work in the CEE/CIS region. UNIFEM has developed a portfolio of programmes for the CEE/CIS which are slated for approval and implementation in 1998.

1997 Highlight

UNIFEM's interventions and activities are designed to assist in the transformation of women's lives by ensuring that commitments made by the international community to achieve gender equality are fulfilled.

At the July 1997 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), UNIFEM's RPA from Senegal made a powerful presentation on gender as part of the UN country team. UNIFEM's Executive Director also addressed ECOSOC.

"UNIFEM sees gender mainstreaming not as an end in itself, but as a strategy to bring about gender equality and the improvement in the situation of women as an outcome of development...In the context of UN reform at the country level, we see six opportunities for advancing gender mainstreaming among UN agencies and between the UN system and its government and civil society partners. These are:

- Support the convening of inter-agency thematic groups on gender, while, making it clear that all inter-agency thematic or working groups should incorporate gender issues into their work.

- Establish and share gender action plans and indicators of gender equality and women's empowerment amongst UN agencies.

- Build competence in gender impact analysis and gender-responsive programming for United Nations country teams, as well as government and NGO partners.

- Establish multi-donor coordination mechanisms and standing advisory groups of gender experts from government, NGOs, women's groups and academia.

- Support efforts to gather, "package," and disseminate data disaggregated by sex, sector specific surveys, and gender-sensitive studies, guidelines and checklists.

- Consult with and provide financial support to NGOs and national machineries for women that are developing programmes and projects and building organizations to fulfill the recommendations of UN world conferences."

Appendix 5

NATIONAL POLICY ON WOMEN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. National Policy on Women

NATIONAL POLICY ON WOMEN GENERAL GENDER POLICY ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Gender issues in development received little attention in national planning in Nigeria until the Declaration of the United Nations Development Decade for Women. Consequently, women's reproductive productive and community management roles and potentials were marginalized and left out of the system of national accounting. Therefore, development planning since the colonial period has been gender insensitive, as a result of the continuous interaction of indigenous and inherited patriarchy from the colonial administration, the strong inhibiting effect of traditionalism, and capital ideologies.

1.2. Until the last decade and a half, the gains of women from development were minimal and temporal while the entire process intensified existing gender inequalities even in period of national prosperity. Although, the United Nations Development Decade for women aroused awareness about the strategic and practical needs of women, there was little commitment to incorporate these into national and sectoral policies until the mid 1980s, when there developed the yearning for a national Women In Development Policy to facilitate the full integration of women into the social economic and political life of the nation.

1.3. This National Policy on Women fulfils the yearning as well as efforts of Federal, State and Local Governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). International Development Partners, the Private sector, concerned corporate bodies and individuals to integrate women fully into national development in order to remove those gender inequalities that have evolved in our society overtime through structures and processes created by patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism. It is expected to consolidate the largely silent revolutionary changes stimulated by past and current women in development programmes.

1.4. The policy is therefore another expression of the government's commitment to the development of all sectors of the population and to the institutionalisation of processes which will pilot the Nigerian Society towards social equity, justice and a much improved quality of life.

1.5. The National Policy on Women is indeed one of the most direct activities of chapter ii. Section 17 subsection 2 of the 1999 constitution which states that:

"Every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law" and subsection 3.
"all citizen, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of lifelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment."

While the constitution guarantees equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender circumstance of birth, etc. the National Policy on Women articulates into a coherent whole all (GAD) policies and programmes and formulate new policies that will actualise the provisions of the Constitution.

2. RATIONALE

2.1 Women make up 49.6% of the nation's total population (1991 census). They are responsible for the reproduction of the labour force and for producing over 70% of the nation's food supply. The indicators of the their underdevelopment discussed below show the magnitude of the poverty of women, indicate performance levels up-to-date and justify the development of a national Policy.

2.2. About 13.3% of women were employed in the formal sector until the 1980s. This proportion declined rapidly in the process of economic reconstruction as a result of the rationalisation of public and private sector workers and calts in production capacity in industry.

2.3. The Majority of female sector workers are in lower cadre occupations. These in professional and marginal occupations institute only 18% of that grade of employment, Although there are labour laws which protect women in the formal labour market, these are poorly implemented. Enough support is not given for child care, for working mothers and the tax laws are discriminatory.

2.4. Most Nigerian women are informal sector workers who predominate in micro enterprises with little or no access to credit, technology and other supports required to build up capital. Indeed, it is estimated that a negligible proportion of women informal sector workers has access to credit, hence the high attrition rate of women's businesses.

2.5. The Philosophy for this policy based on national constitutional stipulation, the need to restructure the economy and our political and social institutions to ensure social equity and economic growth. It also derives from our traditional commitment to the stability of the family and the complementary of gender roles.

2.6. Toward this end, this policy will demand the efficient utilization of educational funding as well as the reintroduction of public health inspection at all levels of government.

3. GOALS

3.1. The National Policy on women draws heavily from national and international initiatives related to Women in Development and aims at ensuring the following.

1. Raising national awareness of the citizens' constitutional rights and on long term basis, mobilizing and educating the public on human rights in order to remove legal, cultural, religious and other constraints against the attainment of social justice and equity in the society.

2. Ensuring the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

3. Instituting an effective GAD management structure for the co-ordination of all GAD activities in the country and ensuring the efficient implementation by all sectors concerned. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development should co-ordinate.

4. Empowering women through enhanced strategic human resources development.

5. Establishing a data bank based on the implementation of a comprehensive (nationwide) baseline survey.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1. Government is committed to the full integration of women into the development process to enhance their capacities for improved economic, social and political status and as a means of developing fully the nation's human resources for national economic growth.

The objectives of this National Policy on Women are to-

1. Ensuring that the principles and provision as contained in the Nigeria constitution are effectively enforced.

2. Main stream gender perspective in all policies and programmes based on a systematic gender analysis at all levels of government.

5. POLICY THRUST

5.1. Equity, Social Order and Social Well Being

5.1.1. In joining other nations to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, Nigeria affirms its support for the alleviation of the numerous constraints to women's full integration into its development process.

5.1.2. Mechanisms for planned interventions aimed at re-awakening women's self-consciousness and re-evaluation of their self-concept shall be instituted to empower and encourage them to speak for their rights to equitable distribution of resources and social justice.

5.1.3. Programmes shall be designed to remove social malaise associated with gender inequality which is destroying social cohesiveness and cording social order at national, community and family levels. In fact, society will be reoriented to accept equity, complementarily of roles and respect for family values.

5.1.4. Clearly, improvements in the economy as well as hope for the future for all citizens remain largely a function of the level of integration of women into the total life of their communities and societies.

5.1.5. Comprehensive and coherently integrated programmes shall be designed and implemented for achieving effective and sustainable improvements in the quantity and quality of employment for women.

5.2. Resources Allocation

5.2.1. Full participation of women in the economic programmes of the country can become more meaningful when they have the resources to backup their aspirations and newly - acquired self-consciousness/image. Government shall ensure removal of all constraints posed by customary laws and practices to women's rights to land either by acquisition or/and by inheritance.

5.2.2. Government shall ensure that women are provided equal opportunities to compete effectively and fairly in the economic system.

5.3. Economic Growth and Efficiency

5.3.1. Realising that the underdevelopment of women in any society is almost always synonymous with that society's underdevelopment, the development of women shall be given priority in Government's attempts to restructure the economy. Women shall be empowered through appropriate educational and skill development Programmes to utilize

their great potentials for the economic progress of the country through their participation in the privatization of public enterprises in agricultural production for export and home consumption.

5.3.2. While maintaining the free market approach, women shall be encouraged and supported through various enterpreneurship programmes to invest in large, medium and small-scale enterprises. In addition, their capacity shall be strengthened for entry into professional and managerial occupations where their labour would be useful for increasing capacity utilisation in industry.

5.4. Patriarchy, Ideology and Legal Framework

5.4.1. Patriarchy and its related practices constitute major impediments to the full integration of women into the Nigerian economy. As practised in Nigerian, patriarchy gives men ascendancy in inheritance, authority and decision making in and outside the home.

5.4.2. Therefore the structures that prop up patriarchy (inheritance through the male, high value of male children, strict adherence to division of labour along gender lines) shall through education, enlightenment and national awareness be intensified for gradual softening and discouragement.

5.4.3. Egalitarian principles shall form the basis of early socialisation of children by all relevant agencies. Both men and women shall be made aware of the legal and constructional provisions and protection of these principles.

5.4.4. This means that existing legislation institutionalising gender equality shall be enforced and where necessary, appropriate ones enacted. Women shall be incorporated into the legislature and the judiciary to ensure the protection of rights.

5.5. Culture

5.5.1 Culture, as way of life of a people, embodies their attitudes, values, beliefs and life styles. It is dynamic and should therefore reflect current needs of people for a meaningful and sustainable development.

5.5.2. The National Policy on Women shall eliminate those aspect of our culture that inhibit the development of positive self-identify of women and their participation in society.

5.5.3. To that end, government and non-governmental agencies shall promote programmes and measures to replaced deleterious practices, images, stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices against women through appropriate changes in socialization patterns, gender equality enlightenment through the mass media, popular culture, formal and informal education.

6. Sectorial Comments

6.1. Education

6.1.2. Women's educational status in any nation-correlates with its level of development. Consequently, the higher the level of women's educational status, the more developed a nation

6.1.3. For the Nigerian women to enjoy the full benefits of contemporary living, they require basic education to contribute meaningfully to the development of the country. Government shall in this regard increase girls and women's participation in education irrespective of their location and circumstances.

6.1.4. Although women's education is very much needed for self and national development, social and religious factors constrain them from acquiring education.

6.2. Objectives

1. To provide compulsory, free primary and secondary education for all children and as a right for all citizens.

2. To make enrolment and retention of girls schools compulsory.

3. To expand facilities for "Second Chance" education for all.

4. To encourage girls to enroll in science, technology and mathematics (STM) especially at the secondary School level.

5. To reinforce current non-formal education programmes to provide selective type of learning with specific objectives for adult women and secondary school dropouts and women who desire to further their education.

6. To provide education and relevant training for girls and women with special needs, the gifted, handicapped, nomads, women in purdah, riverine and rural areas, dropouts, widows, single parents, market women and career women.

7.	To discourage or forbid withdrawal of girls under eighteen from schools for marriage through legal sanctions.

6.3. Implementation Strategies

1.	Local schools accessible to children in their respective localities at a maximum of three kilometres radius.

2.	Ensure the training and retraining of teachers

3.	To provide encouragement and incentive for education of girls/women in science, technology and mathematics.

4.	Provide educational support services for girls education through advocacy and social mobilisation.

5.	Encourage community participation to develop the interest of communities in education and involve leaders and parents in planning and implementation of education programmes.

## 7.	SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 6.4.	Preamble

6.4.2.	Nigeria has abundance of natural resources, namely; industrial minerals, fossil fuels, ferrous and non-ferrous minerals but lacks the technological sophistication to maximised their extraction and refinement for national development.

6.4.3.	Poor knowledge and application of science and technology affects the lives of citizens adversely particularly women.

6.4.4.	Given this poor background and the fact that Nigeria needs sound science and technology to attain self-reliance and self-sufficiency, and considering the role of women in society, women in this regard should be empowered.

### 7.2.	Objectives

1.	To involve women in the choice, procurement, innovation, adaptation and application of science and technology.

2.	To utilize scientific research findings and technology to improve the status of women.

### 7.3.	Implementation Strategies

1.	Science and technology education shall be enhanced at all levels of the educational system, stressing mathematics skills and the application of science and technology at the primary and secondary school levels.

2.	Ensure adequate provision of facilities as well as trained personnel.

3.	Inclusion of basic science and Technology in women education centre programmes.

4.	Government shall identify and encourage female students and women who distinguished themselves in science and technology. The private sector shall also be encouraged to do the same.

5.	Sensitize the community through workshops, seminars and the mass media in promoting the importances of science and technology for children and women.

6.	Women professional bodies should register with the appropriate agencies.

## 7.	HEALTH

8.1. Preamble

8.1.2	Women are acknowledged as primary providers of health care for their Families, their communities and societies. However, because of cultural practices, social inhibitions, illiteracy, low status and low social visibility, their health concerns and needs are often overlooked by policy makers and implementers.

8.1.3.	Women's major health problems are high material mortality rates associated with pregnancy and childbirth and unsafe abortions. Reproductive tract infections (RTIs) including sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIVAIDs, cervical and breast cancer, female genital mutilation and traditional practices that are inimical to good health, teenage pregnancy, vesico-vaginal-fistula (VVF), insufficient information on body structure and functions, poor access to health facilities, poor distribute to poor healths status.

8.1.4.	In this regard, women's health needs to go beyond mere medical attention to encompass development matters that affect the totality of human life and therefore require an integrated multi-sectoral approach for effective service delivery.

8.1.5	The Federal Government has in place, a National Health Policy with the goal of establishing a comprehensive health care system based on Primary Health Care, that is promotive, protective, preventive, restorative and rehabilitative, to every citizen of the country within available resources so that individuals and communities are assured of productivity, social well being and enjoyment of living.

8.1.6. Specific initiatives to address women's health needs within this framework include the Women in Health Development and the safe motherhood programmes. However, there is need to expand women in health projects and promote an integrated health package which takes care of the health needs throughout the life cycle.

8.2. Objectives

1. To enhance the implementation of the Primary Health Care delivery system to meet the health needs of women and other vulnerable groups.

2. To strengthen the vaccination of children and pregnant women against the identified endemic and preventable diseases.

3. To intensify the teaching of appropriate health education in schools and adult literacy classes to promote women's health.

4. To encourage the participatory approach health development to improve the involvement of women in health decision -making organs by recruiting more women into such positions.

5. To provide accessible, affordable and well equipped and staffed health facilities for the use of women and other vulnerable groups and to encourage local efforts to establish and maintain such facilities.

6. To provide information, services and technical advice on women's health issues and family life.

7. To legislate or enforce appropriate measures for women workers in both formal and informal sectors of the economy as well as provide child-minding facilities for women workers.

8. To eliminate Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) that affect health of girls and women.

9. To encourage female admissions into medical schools and training in allied fields.

8.3. Implementation Strategies:

1. All tiers of government shall play a co-ordinating role to ensure the pooling of all available resources for effective administration of health care service delivery.

2. The community especially women groups shall be integrated into the overall health delivery system by their full participation in the planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of existing health care system.
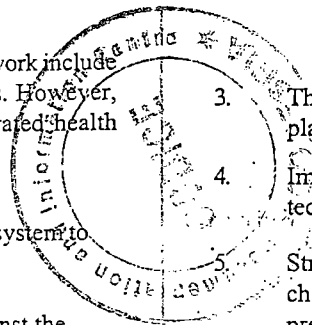
3. The community material and child healthcare service deliver including family planning shall be promoted.

4. Improve food, water supply, nutrition, education and effective use of appropriate technology for improved health care service delivery.

5. Strengthen health institutions to continue the programme of immunization of children and pregnant women to ensure the control of identified endemic and preventable diseases.

6. Expand current training programmes for Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) to include traditional women healers to enable them function in more hygienic conditions and recognise cases beyond their competency for referral..

7. Ensure Provision of accessible, affordable, well staffed and equipped health facilities at all levels at Government levels for the use of women and other vulnerable groups.

8. Health education programme and family - life education shall be intensified at all tiers of government and by NGO's as a means promoting good health for girls children and women.

9. Government to provide gender - segregated data on women's special health needs to streamline them for appropriate policy actions and programmes and to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

10. Paid maternity leave shall be given to all working mothers whether single or married. Maternity leave period shall be twelve weeks commencing from data recommended by the doctor with four additional weeks for every additional baby by multiple births.

11. Employers of labour shall be mandated to include gynaecological cases on their health care schemes for women as well as obstetric cases for a maximum of four children; and extend health care benefits to spouses and children of working women.

12. Enforce legislation and increase advocacy against all Harmful Traditional practices that affect health of girls and women.

13. Promote the award of scholarships and subsidy for female students in medical schools and training in allied fields.

14. Ensure the re-introduction of Public Health inspection and enforce it at all entries, market places, schools and public toilet at all tiers of government.

9. Employment

9.1. Preamble

9.1.2. The prosperity of a nation depends on the efficient utilisation of all factors of production, land, labour and capital, Hitherto, the labour of women had been used on a small scale in the formal sector of the economy, a result of the social discrimination in education and training as well as the gender based division of labour which is reflected in the formal sector of employment. Apart from the negative impact of this on national prosperity, it has become obvious that the marginalisation of women in that sector has reduced their access to sustantial regular income and social status in the society. The economic restructuring programme on account of its emphasis on economic growth and efficiency and social value of women's work rationalised a substantial of female workers out of the public and private sectors since they were in the lowest rungs of the occupation hierarchy.

9.2. Objectives

1. To eliminate all discriminatory practices against the employment of women in the public and private sectors of the economy.

2. To eliminate socio-.cultural constraints to female entry into the sector to improve supply of labour

3. To sustain equality of treatment between men and women in wages and salaried employment with particular reference to the private sector.

4. To encourage equal access to education and skill acquisition programmes for women to increase demand for their labour at all levels but particularly at the managerial and executive levels.

5. To ensure effectively implementation of National Labour Laws and International Labour Standards which protect women.

6. To create conditions of employment conducive to womens special roles in reproduction and community management.

7. Women should be involved actively in decision making process at the work places such as board, management and trade unions.

8. To incorporate the informal sector into the National Accounting System (NAS) in a gender desegregated format and interlink with current government policy on National Data Bank.

9.3. Implementation Strategies

1. Government sponsored and private training instructions shall be encouraged to organised gender sensitization programmes on the role of women in the development process to raise awareness of this target group.

2. The public shall be sensitized through mass mobilization campaigns about the need for women to be in formal sector employment in order to break traditional attitudes and stereotypes and women's work.

3. Ministry of Labour and productivity is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all labours laws relevant to women development adhered to.

4. The Tax code shall be revised to ensure equity in the principles of equal pay for work of equal values will be enforced.

5. Establishment of creeches as part of the benefits for women (employees) both at public and private sectors in line with Nigeria's child survival policy (the Baby-friendly Initiative) and our commitment to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the OAU Charter on the Rights of the African Child.

6. Industries shall be encouraged to produce low cost labour saving devices for women to ensure more efficient utilization of their labour.

7. Encouragement shall be given to local manufacturers who support government's efforts to integrate women into formal sector employment.

8. Women shall be encouraged to actively participate in labour relations.

9. Retaining and re-employment packages shall be introduced for retrenched worker especially female workers to cushion the effects of economic restructuring and adjustment.

10. Labour laws shall be reviewed to include more and better protective measures for women workers.

11. The informal sectors shall be recognised, supported and structured in order to create an environment that will ensure the provision of social security for its members.

9. AGRICULTURE

10.1. Preamble

10.1.2. Women provide an estimated 60-80% of labour input in agriculture especially in food production, processing and marketing. Many women are farmers in

their own right apart from working on family farms. Although several efforts have been made by several agencies, unfortunately women's contribution in this regard is not adequately acknowledged in the development of Agricultural Policy and Programmes. This situation must be corrected.

10.1.3.   Despite the fact that women are predominantly the food producers of the nation, majority of them are still food insecure, being small holders whose farm size or that of their husbands fall below the threshold level for adequate food production. Most affected are usually lactating and pregnant women whose protein and energy intake fall below recommended daily requirements. This contributes to the high incidence of anaemia, low birth weights and high maternal deaths. Girls are equally exposed to differential feeding practices which result in low protein and energy intake early in life.

10.2. Objectives

1.   To enhance the visibility and productivity of women's work in the agricultural sector.

2.   To remove the obstacles to women's access to land, water, necessary credit and other priductive inputs, extension servants training in agriculture, appropriate technologies and tools.

10.3. Implementation Strategies
1.   Federal, State and Local Governments shall give adequate financial to direct agricultural extension services. Relevant agencies will be encouraged to adopt the participatory approach to ensure full involvement of women in the planning and implementation.

2.   Research and extension network in identify, develop and disseminate appropriate and affordable technologies in all areas of agricultural activities of interest to women. Local Governments shall be encouraged to set up technical services and repair centers to back up women's need for regular technical support.

3.   Explore and encourage women farmers to make use of local sources of credit for boosting production and also other viable indigenous practices and inputs.

4.   Institutional credit sources shall be strengthened to create special revolving loan fund for women.

5.   Women shall not be discriminated against in the implementation of 1978 Land Use Act.

6.   Government and local communities shall liberalize women's access to water resources to be at the same level with men.

7.   Government and relevant agencies shall encourage development and use of environmental friendly technologies including biogas and organic fertilizer for the promotion of sustainable agriculture.

8.   Local Governments shall be encouraged to establish market and distribution network and provide adequate information on appropriate pricing for farm produce for women.

9.   Government will strengthen home economic services to vigorously promote consumer education in order to encourage qualitydevelopment of foods and other agricultural commodities.

10.   Governments, international agencies, NGO's and CBO's shall strengthen training activities for field extension works; and skill acquisition for women farmers through the provision of adequate funding.

11.   Government shall support research and development of gender disegregated information for the establishment of a databank.

12.   Government shall facilitate the development and strengthening of women cooperatives for effective participation in agricultural programmes.

13.   Communities and local governments shall be encouraged to maintain a register of women farmers with the appropriate agencies for regular product evaluation and other benefits.

11.   Industry

11.1   Preamble

11.2   The visibility of women in petty trading gives the false impression that their enterprises are successful and acknowledged. However, recent assessment of women's enterprises shows that the constraints to their ability to capitalize and to sustain themselves and their families are enormous. These will have to be removed to ensure the efficient utilisation of their labour in those enterprises for socio-e c o n o m i c development. Poor access to credit, information, appropriate technology, back of technical skills and poor organisation and accounting skills are germance problems at all levels of women's enterprises.

11.2 Objectives

1. To facilitate access to institutionalized credit.
2. To provide access to information on bureaucratic regulations
3. To facilitate access to improved technology and inputs
4. To enlighten women on different investment opportunities and expose their marketable products to domestic and international marketing channels.
5. To support and encourage the development of small, medium and large scale enterprises for women.
6. To train women for business development and management.

11.3 Implementation Strategies

1. Build a database on women's micro-enterprises by type and location.
2. Set up technical support services in all tiers of government to assist women plan and manage their enterprises. Ensure the provisions of such facilities like counseling, locals/and technical supervision services to assist women to manage their enterprises.
3. Encourage women micro-enterprises owners to obtain the services of local women's associations to enable them deal with problems of input supply, credit, and marketing to create jobs for other women particularly those from poor households
4. Extension services for women shall be provided for all registered Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) to enhance information exchange and problem identification.
5. Sponsor women to specialized trade mission, study tours etc to expose them opportunities and technologies in various types of industries.

12. ENVIRONMENT

12.1. Preamble

12.1.2 Environment encompasses physical and biological systems in which human beings interact. Women have a close affinity with the environment. They are the primary environment managers, extractors and users of environmental resources and must therefore participate in its protection and management. When the environment is despoiled by man-made or natural hazard such as flood, erosion, desertification salt-water intrusion, deforestation, toxic wastes, agrochemical products and bed land use, women suffer grace consequences. Effective integration of women therefore in management, protection, preservation, and use of the environment of sustainable development cannot be over-emphasized.

12.2 Objectives

1. To ensure women's participation in national ecosystem management and control of environmental degradation.
2. To improve sanitary conditions and safe water supplies especially in rural and urban slums.
3. To increase awareness of environmental issues and women's role and capacity for environmental improvements.
4. To provide legal framework for women's protection in the workplace and in the home.
5. To develop appropriate alternative and environmental friendly sources of energy.
6. To set up machinery for co-ordination of local efforts and collaborate with international agencies in the control of desertification, erosion and in the development of water resources.
7. To involve women in task forces to deal with natural disasters, resettlement of displaced people and victims of communal clashes.

12.3 Implementation Strategies

1. Encourage women's participation in decision-making, designing, management, and execution of environmental policies
2. Increase through capacity building and affirmative action the proportion of women decision-makers, planners, technical advisers, managers and extension workers in the environment and development fields.
3. Monitor regularly, the implementation and evaluate the impact of development and environmental policies and programmes women.
4. Ensure the inclusion of environmental issues in school curricular, at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
5. Carry out awareness campaign on the needs for environmental protection.
6. Carry out research to inform environmental planning to mitigate catastrophe.
7. Involve women in appropriate machineries for relieving and/or resettling victims of environmental and communal conflicts.
8. Provide incentives to NGO's that are involved in environmental protection and management.
9. Relevant agencies shall ensure that women are adequately represented in all activities designed to improve the environment particularly in reforestation

programmes, and to ensure alternative sources of fuel energy to replace the use of firewood so as to check deforestation.

13. LEGAL REFORMS/LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION

13.1. Preamble

13.1.2. The legal framework of a nation is perhaps the most direct measure of its commitment to new policy initiatives. Writing a National Policy on Women will be an incomplete exercise without the necessary legal backing for the changes being proposed and without ensuring consistency between existing legal provisions and their implementation. Proposals for legal reforms or legislative protection in this context are a means of enforcing existing laws and initiating the enactment of new ones to protect new policy guidelines in consonance with the call in the convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women.

13.1.3. The Nigerian Constitution is explicit on Government's aspirations that all citizens be treated as equal under the law. These aspiration are limited in fulfillment because of the complexity of the Nigerian legal system arising from a tripartite system of laws (statutory, customary and the Sharia) which are sometimes contradictory. There is need for harmonisation and legislative protection for the vulnerable women.

13.2. Objectives
1. To achieve legal literacy
2. To enforce existing laws
3. To amend existing laws where necessary
4. To enact new laws where necessary
5. To abolish those laws which discriminate against women through a carefully worked out programme of social imobilization and awareness generation.

13.3 Implementation Strategies
1. Ensure access to free or low-cost legal services, including legal literacy, especially designed to reach women.

2. Government shall fix minimum at first marriage at eighteen years for all forms of marriages to ensure that girls enjoy their fundamental rights to educate and proper physical and mental development.

3. Government should legislate the mandatory provision of maternal health services (particularly anti-natal and post-natal) to all women to protect them from such disabilities as Visico Vaginal Fistula (VVF), Female Genital Mutilation (FOTM) and other harmful traditional practices.

4. Government shall enact family protection law that wil criminal act of domestic

violence and neglect for the safety of all members of the family.

5. Women shall be enlightened on their rights to stand as sureties as entrenched in the constitution. The practice whereby the policy denies them this right shall be eliminated.

6. The legislation on personal income tax in discriminatory against women. The law assumes that children of the marriage belong to the man, and therefore authorize him to claim tax relief on their account. Also, expenditures by women on their children need to be caked up by documents before women can claim tax a relief for such expenditures. All discriminatory legislation and practices on income tax shall be eliminated

7. Ensure application of all laws of equity in all circumstances.

8. Public awareness advocacy and effective mechanism shall be established for the enforcement of the laws against indecent advert and publication that denigrate women.

9. Government shall enact Laws to protect women.

10. Government shall enforce the sexual offence law defined in Section 357 of the Criminal Code against a woman or a girl. To make this code effective, the practice or requiring corroboration for sexual offence shall be amended.

11. Efforts shall be made to embark on the review and codification of Customary Laws as a means of eliminating the uncertainties in their content and application.

12. Offences against morality, e.g. prostitution and soliciting, shall continue to be checked by the criminal. Code and other appropriate and effective measures shall be taken to reduce the increasing rate of prostitution.

13. Labour laws shall be reviewed to include more and better protective measures for women workers, for example, more realistic maternity leave, non-discriminatory conditions of service, facilities for creches and enhanced safety standards in establishment with high female population to take care of peculiar needs for women.

14. There is need to harmonize all the laws of the land to ensure the provision for the right of women to:

(a) inheritance of their spouses, even in childless marriages, parents, children and siblings.

(b) on the custody of their children and the right to maintenance of those children.

(c) the right of women to land and landed property, where religion does not provide

15. Government shall enact laws against maltreatment of widows and any other cultural dehumanizing demands on women who have lost their spouses.

16. Nigerian women shall enjoy the same rights as provided in Section 27. Subsection 2a of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

14. Social Services

14.1. Preamble

14.1.2 In addition to the above legislative reforms, government shall enforce the rights to social services.

14.2. Objectives

1. To improve the living standard of Nigerian families.

14.3 Implemetation Strategies

1. Providing recreational units for families at all tiers of government.

2. Provision of good rural road network and transportation system

3. Ensure provision of portable water, regular supply and other utilities

4. Effective affordable communication system including telephone services and access to the internet.

5. Facilitate access to housing credits

15. POLITICS AND DECISION-MAKING

15.1 Preamble

15.1.2 Women's numeral strength in the population is not reflected in the political life and decision-making processes and structures of the nation. They are inadequately represented at the senate, national and state legislatures and the House of Representatives. At the state Houses of Assembly and the local Government Councils women are either completely absent or grossly underrepresented as well as at the highest decision-making levels (executive, legislature, judiciary) in the country. There is the need to correct the situation to ensure the full realization of democracy.

15.2 Objective

1. To redress the imbalance in women's representation in political and social life of the nation especially at the decision-making levels of the three arms of Government. Village cabinets, political party offices, social organizations, political and managerial posts. Board appointments into Federal and State parastatals, key diplomatic assignments and other national and international jobs.

2. To ensure that women are given equal opportunity to participate fully in politics and decision-making.

3. To set up structures to develop political awareness and culture.

4. To ensure the elimination of all gender based discrimination in employment and condition of service at all levels.

5. To ensure that women are given equal opportunity to participate fully in policies and decision making. Women can therefore contest for elective of their place of origin.

6. Institutional mechanisms and agencies for emancipation of women.

7. Government shall implement affirmative action in support of women's advancement

15.3. Implementation Strategies

1. The National Assembly shall provide adequate legislation to enable women to participate freely and equally in politics and decision-making. Affirmative action of proportionate ratio or 30% representation will be employed to increase the total representative seats in each of the legislative houses, executive arm, party hierarchy and structures shall be reserved for women for trial period up to the year 2000.

2. Encourage women to set up political networking organizations.

3. Enlighten women on the need to support each other to achieve equal representation in major power locations.

4. All channels of mass communication shall be used to reach all women for effective participation in politics and to compete for elective positions.

5. Sensitize traditional and religious leaders to encourage women participation in politics.

6. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development shall encourage the setting up and endowment of chairs in facilities on women issues Universities and Women Research institutions.

16. MEDIA RELATION AND PUBLICITY

16.1 Preamble

16.1.2 The role of the media as an agent of change is pivotal to the development of a nation. The media is therefore critical to efforts at women development. The Nigerian

media being male dominated is not sensitive to issues related to women and as such requires re-education and re-orientation.

16.2 Objective

1. To re-educate and re-orientates the media towards gender sensitivity in reporting women and issues that affect women.

2. To address the issue of the lopsided portrayal of women as symbols of entertainment and pleasures.

16.3 Implementation Strategies

1. Publicise all Gender and Development (GAD) activities.

2. Ensure that women activities are reflected proportionately in the media.

3. Design publicity programmes for specific projects on women.

4. Eliminate gender bias in media language.

5. The media should facilitate effective partnership among governments, intergovernmental organisations and women focused NGO'S.

6. Through a carefully worked out programme of social mobilisation and awareness generation, advocate for the abolition fo those mal-practices which encourage and institutionalize discrimination against women.

7. Government information structure should facilitate the partnership of government with the individual press and alternative media practitioners at community level to promote women development.

8. Government and media organisations shall as a deliberate policy encourage the entry and participation of women in the media and ensure their progression to the top.

9. The media should endeavour to use gender desegregated data to report.

17. GENERAL POLICY GUIDELINES

17.1 Preamble

17.1.2 The National Policy on Women is opening up new challenges nationally and internationally to governments, donor agencies, NGOs and all those concerned about the poverty of women to start to work together within a short period of time to effect the policies outlined. The amelioration of poverty and the institutionalization of equity and social justice require acceptance and commitment of the policy guidelines and plans of action presented below.

17.2 Gender Analysis and National Development

17.2.1 The national Policy on women is designed to be an integral part of the national development plans for the latter is incomplete without it. Formulating a Gender and Development (GAD) policy therefore demands a revision of the philosophy and guiding principles for the National Rolling Plans, and is envisaged to bring about a better outcome, that is a more comprehensive policy designed to serve the interest of all citizens.

17.2.2 Gender analysis in this context bring into focus the three major parameters (economic growth, social equity and social well-being) which should guide Nigerian development options in the next few decades. Thus policy makers need to understand the indispensability and interrelatedness of these parameters in formulating actions that will generate real development. The development for women cannot therefore occur within the context of injustice, inequity and socio-economic underdevelopment. On account of this, the sectoral policies are all geared towards building up women not only as important human resources for economic growth but also as beneficiaries of socio-economic development.

17.2.3 Women as underdeveloped resources were more adversely affected by development and its crisis than men, hence the feminization of poverty. The alleviation of poverty, however, depends as much on the social upliftment of women by, among other things, the redistribution of resources as it does not affect national economic prosperity. Based on this development, the National GAD policy shall be incorporated into the next National Rolling Plan to show government's commitment to social equity and its preparedness to develop suitable action programmes for integrating it with actions focused on economic growth.

17.3 The Need for Gender Dis-aggregated Data

17.3.1 The absence of reliable data for planning is one of the major constrains to the development of GAD policy. Although planning in the country has been inhibited by this problem, it is a much more fundamental problem for gender analysis. The absence of a feminist framework of analysis clouded the interpretation of reality to the extent that women's needs remained largely unknown and therefore unplanned for. Now that a more balanced view of society will be reflected in national planning, mechanisms should be put in place for government institutions responsible for data collection to desegregate all data on gender basis.

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development shall establish a data bank and regularly develop monitoring indicators for women in development programmes.

17.4 Methodology for Research and Development

17.4.1 The participatory methodology is being widely popularized as an effective methodology for research and for creating change in developing countries. The strength of the case for this approach varies from one programme of development to another. Applying it to Women in Development Programmes is likely to yield fruitful results in view of the strong emphasis of the sectoral policies on changing values, norms, perceptions, attitudes and orientations at all levels of society. The participatory approach as applied to GAD will require the collaboration of policy makers, implementators, the people and their leaders in problem analysis, project design implementation monitoring and evaluation. Efforts should be made to organise training sessions on participatory methodologies for GAD officials, NGOs and change agents at the different levels to acquire relevant skills for meaningful GAD policy implementation.

17.5 National Rolling Plans

17.5.1 The National Rolling Plans shows some degree of commitments to GAD programmes. The intentions are clearly stated but there has been too little actions to back them up. The National policy on Women requires a lot of action and a lot of collaboration between different organs of government, between donor agencies, between NGO's etc. and among them all, it would also require a lot of co-operation and coordinatioin of efforts for various organisations and institutions for the achievement of its goals. A forum should be created for regular meetings of these collaborating agencies, including an interministerial vocal point meeting and with other representatives.

17.6 Definition and Evaluation of Women's Work

17.6.1 The poverty of women hinges on their underdevelopment as a human resource. The sectoral policies therefore reinforce each other in the quest to develop women through the educational system and the labour market in particular. However, it is important to note that the success of these policies depends on changes in the definition and evaluation of women's work. These shape society and are shaped by society to determine for example how willingly parents will send their daughters to school, husbands allow their wives to work. It would be necessary therefore for government to take the initiative in re evaluating women's work by codifying it into the system of national accounting. This informs some policy guidelines, which mandate the registration of all categories of workers, and requires regular estimates of the quantity and value of what is produced.

17. Social Mobilization and Advocacy

17.7.1 The National Policy on Women is a challenge to established power structures. It requires wide ranging in the structure of society itself and also in social values. The policy therefore, emphasis the need for gender awareness by women themselves as the major socialising agents in society and as creators and guidians of culture and tradition. Women themselves must be willing to change status quo hence the different sectors of the policy emphasis awareness creation. Social mobilisation and advocacy at the government level in the private sector, among community leaders, among men and among women themselves.

17.8 The International Environment

17.8.1 International politics and trade are important dimenssions of economic development which have had direct and indirect effects on the status of women in society. The restructure economy is the most recent "baby" and how to cushion its adverse affects is addressed in this National Policy to succeed in attaining its goals. It is desirable therefore for Nigeria's creditors to seriously consider debt rescheduling cancellation and other financial arrangements which will reduce the nations debt burden. Concerned international financial Agencies need to establish GAD departments in order that these may influence negotiations with government.

17.9 Restructuring structural Adjustment programme

17.9.1 SAP's short term emphasis on economic growth has negated the benefits derivable from its emphasis on the free market, efficiency, etc. the social costs of adjustment on women are too obvious to be neglected in the development of a national policy on women. After reviewing its impact on women in several commonwealth countries, the consensus of the Expert Working Group in recommending action by governments, international agencies and non governmental organisations is that the approach to SAP should be broadened by ensuring that:

1. A higher proportion of international aid is channelled towards women's programmes.

2. IMF and the World Bank to be committed to debt reduction and to substantially increase assistance to expand development needs.

3. Multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations pay greater attention to the needs of women.

4. Government should review currents strategies for restructing the economy and chart new courses of action in view of its commitment to the development of women

17.10 Resource Reallocation

17.10.1 Government will need to reallocate resources between sectors to ensure funds are available for women's programme. It would be necessary for government to commit adequate funds to women issues including poverty eradication in accordance with world bank stipulation.

17. 11 Institutionalisation of GAD Programmes

17.11.1 Government has already put some structures in place for GAD programmes. The various women programmes under the Ministry Affairs and Youth Development have been decentralised to reach communities, while the Women's Ministries and Women in Development Units now form part of the Administrative structures of the Federal, State and Local Government Area levels. These structures need to be strengthened for effective response to the policies must be retained to acquire that gender awareness needed to perform efficiently within the GAD framework. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development which has been charged with co-ordination of women's programmes must be provided with adequate human, financial and material resources to enable it perform its functions. Its relationship with line ministries, NGOs and international partners must be designed to avoid duplication and to promote co-operation and development.

17.11.2 As Nigeria is in democractic rule, it should set up appropriate committees to review laws and policies in order to protect the interest of vulnerable groups particularly women. The media shall be sensitized to generate awareness through their various organs, while informal channels of communications should be especially at the community level.

18. GENERAL PROPOSAL FOR ACTION

18.1 The policies proposed and the guidelines required two major categories of action - domestic action and international action.

18.2 DOMESTIC ACTION

18.2.1 Preamble

18.2.2 Domestic action involves government (Federal, State and Local Government), NGOs communities, community leaders, women's organisations, religious leaders, youths and youth club and women themselves. The following actions are required.

18.3 Institutionalisation of GAD Policy

18.3.1 The Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development should be further capacitated as an administrative arm of government for it to be able to perform its defined functions. In addition, GAD units should be strengthened in all line ministries and provided the needed human and material resources to function effectively.

All functionaries involved in GAD programme shall undergo GAD training programmes. States and Local Government Areas shall be encouraged to use the National Policy on women to pepare more comprehensive programmes of action in order to take care of specific needs of their localities.

18.4 Data for Planning Purposes

18.4.1 The Federal Officer of Statistic, the National Data Bank and all line ministries shall collect data that are relevant to gender planning. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development shall also co-ordinate the collection and collation of primary data at the State, Local Government Areas and NGOs. Monitoring indicators will need to be developed to assist each of the line ministries.

18.5 Restructuring Economic Policies/alternative Development Strategies

18.5.1 Government shall restructure economic policies as a long term programme of development or provide a growth and development oriented alternative that will ensure the total integration of women into the development process as suggested in the policy guidelines and strategies.

18.6 Human Resources Development

18.6.1 Literacy is the key to the ultimate development of women. Priority must be accorded programmes in this sector because progress in other sectors depends on education. More funds shall be invested to improve the quality of education for women and they can only be fully integrated into society if provided with resources necessary for self-actualization and independence. Women Agriculture Programmes need a tremendous boost in view of the limited scope and geographical coverage of current programmes. Land, credit and agricultural inputs are fundamental to improve farmers. The participation of women in mirco-enterprises, SMEs and in large scale enterprises is an important dimension of national human resources development. Priority shall, however, be given to micro-enterprises and SMEs because of their wider coverage, and their potentials for assisting women build up capital, credit, technical and entrepreneurial skills.

More extension workers shall be trained to support women industrialists. Investments in health are also part of human resources development. Action in this sector require more investments in health, access to health facilities and drugs, health education and support to PHC.

18.7 Environmental Protection

18.7.1 Environmental problems require urgent action because of the socio-economic costs particularly to women.

The most effective actions will be at the community level where households, women's organisations and youth clubs shall be mobilised for environmental education and preservation degradation through awareness programmes, legislation and proper monitoring, planning and management.

18.8 Production of Labour Saving Devices

8.1 SMEs and relevant Government Agencies, e.g. PRODA, have a major role to play in the production of basic appliance and goods which can ease household chores that compete for women's time. Women shall be encouraged to set up such enterprises as a way of orientating and supporting them in solving their own problems.

18.9 Legal Reforms

18.9.1 The importance of legal reforms cannot be overemphasised. It is envisaged that the National Policy on Women will stimulate government to reinforce existing relevant laws so that women will be adequately protected. The Ministry of Justice should rise up to this challenge and ensure the codification of the customary laws, which because they poorly standardized, are difficult to enforce. For the effective implementation of the policy, the suggested codification will remove the contradictions between the three legal systems and discourage the easy application of informal control through practices justified by customary law.

19 International Action

19.1 A supportive international environment is very fundamental to the implementation of the National Policy on Women. Without it, more of the underlying causes of the feminization of poverty would remain. Although, it is desirable to solve the problem of poverty through external aid, this is temporary and ineffective solution. The most more desirable and fundamental solution is for lending institutions to rescheduled the nation debts, revise the term of lending and lend only to the productive sectors which can pay back the loans. Therefore, it is important that these institutions anticipate the potention inability of the debtor nations to pay back collection of reliable data on the sectors likely

to be affected would assist in making correct judgements.

19.1.2 In views of the problems of women in this country contemporaneously and the backlash effect on their children and families, it will be advisable that lending institutions invest a proportion of the interests collected in the economically productive areas of women's activities.

19.1.3 To facilitate international action, the following domestic supportive action shall be taken:

1. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development shall compile a directory of women professionals in the country, which would be used for purposes of nomination for international assignments as well as for appointments as the need arises. The directory shall be made available to Nigerian governments, the United Nations and other international agencies.

2. The government shall adopt a deliberate policy to encourage more women to participate at international fora. This is in keeping with the affirmative action programme of the Government for women. More women will be nominated to fill international positions as well.

3. Government shall ensure that on matters arising on women issues before the relevant committees of the United Nations and other international organisations, women should be nominated to speak on behalf of Nigeria.

4. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development should be strengthened to facilitate its liaison with relevant ministries and agencies in Nigeria, which have the responsibility for social services. In addition Government should further through budgeting and capacity building empower the women programmes of these Ministries and agencies.