

VIOLENT TRADITIONAL GENDER PRACTICES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NATION BUILDING PROCESS IN NIGERIA

*Ani, Kelechi Johnmary

* Department of History and Strategic Studies, Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, P. M. B. 1010, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. (johnezekaycee@yahoo.com, +2348061552284)

Abstract

The traditional Nigerian society has been characterized by multiple forms of gender-based violence. These violence ranges from the desperate quest for a male child, sending of the male child to beg for arms on the street, placing married women in *pudrah*, educational placement based on gender, denial of widowhood rights, sexual assault, denial of entrepreneurial rights on gender basis etc. This paper is conceptualized on sex-role theory as a factor that conditions and reinforces masculine violence against the feminine gender as well as feminine violence against their masculine counterparts. The work showed that the contemporary Nigerian society has continually struggled to conquer the consistent re-appearance of these violent gender-based behaviours in many aspects of the Nigerian national life. It therefore called for gender re-orientation for national development through private-public partnership in promoting gender-based laws, seminars, rallies, meetings, teachings, symposia, debates etc

Introduction

The length and breadth of the Nigerian State records one form of traditional gender practice or another which manifests in the day to day craft of societal building. This traditional gender practices have been sustained over the years as men and women in the different ethno-linguistic groups of Nigeria, manipulate their culture to promote or downplay a given gender practice. However, these violent gender practices promote either positive or negative peace (Galtung, 1996). Historically, many of these traditional practices have created both violent mind-sets, structural violence as well as have unleashed unimaginable mayhem on individuals of different ages, class, ideology and gender. The implication is that, the nation building process of the Nigerian State has been affected directly and indirectly.

Consequently, this paper centres on violent traditional gender practices and their implications for sustainable nation building process in Nigeria. It shows that the *Purdah* (locking women up in the home) culture, *Alamajiri* (Wandering Street Boys in Northern Nigeria), poor girl-child education, early/ forced marriages, as well as increasing push of the male-child into business, and other gender-based violence like rape, female genital mutilation, dehumanizing widowhood practices etc are amongst the violent traditional gender practices that have pronounced negative implications for the nation building process in Nigeria. The paper therefore calls for increased sound education of both genders as well as recommends geometric government policies towards community driven gender-based re-orientation of the masses for sustainable national development.

Conceptual Framework

This work is conceptualized on sex-role theory. The theory suggests that childhood socialization is a major influence of human behaviour in the later years in life. Risman (2002:330) wrote that “sex-role theory suggests that early childhood socialization is an influential determinant of later behaviour and research has focused on how societies create feminine women and masculine men”. Such sex-based role on a particular gender was influenced in traditional Nigerian setting by many years of sex-based reinforcement. Weitzman (1979), Michel (1966) as well as Bandura and Walters (1963) have shown that reinforcement is a vital process of introducing, strengthening and sustaining sex-role over the years. It is this reinforcement that promotes the rise of self-character and self identity (Cerulo, 1997). This is the major explanation of why men and women behave traditionally in Nigeria according to societal oriented roles based on gender differences. It should be noted here that this theory that have sustained gender gap and gender differences as well as violent gender behaviour in traditional Nigerian setting is weak in contemporary reality as women socialized for nurturance are capable of competitive and aggressive behaviour, and men raised without any expectation of taking on primary responsibility can “mother” when they need to (Bielby and Bielby, 1984; Gerson, 1985 & 1993; Risman, 1987 & 2002).

Gender and Gender Difference

“Gender is a broad analytical concept. It is linked to social behaviours, which is deemed to be appropriate to masculine and feminine roles in the society. It draws out women’s roles and responsibilities in relation to those of men. It is not synonymous with sex, which is a biologically determined characteristic of men and women. Generally, gender is defined as socially constructed roles, relationships and learned behaviours of male or female” (Mu’Azu & Uzoechi, 2010:122). Gender refers to the social dynamics that characterize the way men and women relate to each other on a given historical timeframe and through socially engineered identities, power and production relations (Fall, 1990). These socially or culturally constructed characteristics, roles and qualities which different societies ascribe to males and females, varying from one society to another and at different times in history (Madunagu, 2005; Ajaero, 2003; Oakley,1996; Nwagbara, 1998; Okeke, 2000; & World Bank Report 1994). It is unfortunate that many scholars perceive gender to be primarily a female issue but the reality is that gender studies is centred on the pull and push effect created by gender relations between the masculine and feminine being in a given society at a given time. Gender is a multilevel system of relations that is influenced by interactional level, cultural believe and distribution of resources (Ridgeway, 1997; Holmquist and Sundin, 2002).

Gender difference in traditional Nigerian setting, especially in entrepreneurial field seems to exist and research has shown that women entrepreneurs are less in number compared to thier male counterparts and women own less than 10% of the business firms in Kenya (Cutura, 2006) as well as Nigeria (Onuigbo, 2011:2. See also Mooris, Nola, Craig & Coombes, 2006). Okafor and Amalu (2010) noted that the female gender suffer from economic manipulation, sexual exploitation, political marginalization and economic inequality, especially in Nigeria, due mainly “to inhibitions posed by traditions, customs, values and laws” (Onuigbo, 2011). Roomi and Parrott (2008) added that deep rooted socio-cultural prejudices and values affect the female gender. Agu (2010) as well as Bardasi, Blackden & Guzman (2008) have shown that girls and women are placed at disadvantaged position educationally and in entrepreneurship. Unfortunately many researches, policies and programmes in Nigeria tends to be ‘men streamed’ without considering the specific needs of women (Correll, 2001). The gender demand side in entrepreneurship could be explained by the conditions of gender inequality, political and institutional framework, family policy and the market forces determinants (Van-der-Lippe and Van-Dijk, 2002); while the

gender supply dimension is influenced by human capital (Becker, 1964), norms (Dimaggio, 1997) and family-related factors (Lin, 1999; Loscocco & Leicht, 1993). Occupational segregation equally affects gender gap (Cotter, DeFiore, Hermsen & Marsteller, 1997). The worst case scenario is that women are much less probable to be promoted than their male counterparts (Smith, 2002).

Images of Gender Studies in Nigerian History

“Until the 1980s African historiography did not adopt women or gender as categories of historical analysis... A perusal of African historiography depicts the lack of a gendered perspective to historical study. Hence, African history is still written as if women were not a part of it” (Ikpe, 2007:356-357). It was the declaration of the Decade for Women by the United Nations between 1975 and 1985 that gave fillip and consciousness to the studies on women and gender issues. New facts might document the existence of women in the past, but they do not necessarily change the importance attributed to women’s activities. Indeed, the separate treatment of women could serve to confirm their marginal and particularized relationships to those subjects (male-folk), already established as dominant and universal (Jaja, 1996:65).

Again, until recently, gendered studies in Nigerian and African history have faced the historic challenge of methodology and perspective (Uya, 1974:21). The rise of methodological-based studies of gender issues in Nigeria is a product of the increasing wave of gender consciousness and feminism in Nigeria. Mba (1982) has revealed that from 1900-1965; Southern Nigerian women were mobilized for political activities. This is antithetical to the position of the northern women. The contemporary intellectual gender consciousness in Nigeria has its root in the outstanding historic nation building activities of Queen Amina of Zaria, Omu Okwei of Osommari, Inikpi of Igbaland, Emotan of Benin, Moremi of Ife, Morontodun, Madam Tinubu of Lagos etc. Bolanle Awe described these women in societal building as the “saviours of their societies” (Awe, 1992). Ogbomo (2005:52) showed that some of the ‘saviours of their societies’ like the Queen mothers in Benin possess almost kingly powers. It was exceptional in the history of Benin Empire that Iyoba Idia, the mother of Oba Esigie went down in Benin history and in the folklore of the people as a woman who went to war against the tradition of the society, which did not permit a woman to go to war (Ikpe, 1997:252). In the Mgbowo people’s historiography of Awgu, Enugu State, it was equally a popular knowledge that Udema Mgbogo went to war and brought home male heads. In Nigeria, apart from a few privileged women whose political and social activities have come to limelight, the lives and contributions of many women to nationalism and the march to independence at the national levels have been forgotten (Ikpe, 1997:366). The most disheartening is that in many communities, where many contemporary women champion societal development, their societal building crafts are easily forgotten by the larger society and they are neither largely celebrated nor immortalized.

Paradoxically, some feministic scholars promotes gender studies in the Nigerian State, opponents reads such works with reservations, while others quickly declares all feminist activities as a potential failure before its birth. Others do not see the need for what they perceive as an ‘intellectual noise’ on feminism and/ or gender issues. That was why Oyewumi (1977) stated that the “Yoruba do not do gender”, an opposite to the writings of Alaba (2004:40-55) as well as Oyekanmi (2004 & 2005), which shows the powers of patriarchy in Yoruba land as well as the prevalence of gender roles and discrimination in that society, which is equally obtainable in all Nigerian societies. Furthermore, Ajikobi (1999) in his work has asked *what does an African ‘new woman’ want?* Ajikobi’s rhetorical question is answered by the realities of everyday life, which do not only expose increased number of female needs for existential survival but also shows the importance of the female gender in the process of mainstreaming societal craft and societal sustenance.

It is the high-level importance of the female gender to societal building that have been mythologized and shown to be powerful in the historic representations of some female deities. To intensify this argument, a series of goddesses that were worshiped in traditional African societies were feminine goddess and were shown to be very powerful (Diop, 1990). Ironically, raising women to the status of goddess does not in any way transform the reality of their perceived second class position in Nigeria and many parts of the world. This is because the attempt to use the mythological fallacies to promote the position of women in a male dominated society with widespread patriarchy ends up contributing to the oppression of women than their liberation (Bamberger 1974). Patriarchy as the root cause of oppression was strengthened by dependency theories in which African women were/ are presented as groups and individuals perpetually dependent for their existence on men as a group and as individuals (Badru, 2004). It is better to note that it is of great virtue and to the interest of societal peace and development for Nigerian women to promote sound dependence with their husbands, which naturally, traps the husband into the dependence circle for progressive family and societal growth.

Violent Traditional Gender Practices in Nigeria

Gender relations should be placed in the best form to allow for the emergence of the best brains in Nigeria to man the entrepreneurial sector of the economy. Ironically, in many societies of the world, men have occupied stronger positions in different areas of life. However, gender is often misconstrued to mean women due to the fact that the gender relations in many sovereign states have left women, girls and children heavily disadvantaged. It has equally being traditionally construed that men are the 'divinely-ordained' drivers of societal and national developments across nations. Such historic prejudice and negligence of the role played by women in societal craft has reinforced the sustenance of negative traditional practices against women in the Nigerian State (Ani, 2011:8).

Traditionally, women were generally regarded as home makers and children-rearers in Nigeria. They were practically restrained from active participation in many fields of societal life through taboos, religious belief, fear of excessive emancipation and domination by their male counterparts. The typical male attitude towards women's participation in non-domestic roles asserted that there is a vague assumption that, only men know how to manage most of the problems existing in the country and that women should be let alone to solve their home social problems with their husbands and parents as well as men to solve the public problems with the government.

The Nigerian societies have witnessed all forms of gender-based violence. In the course of the multiple forms of conflicts that have swallowed up the country in the past, men constitute the largest percentage of deaths. Similarly, many of the direct mayhem are unleashed mainly by men upon their fellow male counterparts. From the Nigerian civil war to the inter-communal conflicts as well as recurrent ethno-religious conflicts in different parts of Nigeria, the male gender remains the main architects and direct recipients of the greater proportion of the mayhem and death that follows their violent action. The implication is the increment in the millions of widows found across the country. Ironically, Ikpe (2003:131-132) has shown that Nigerian women are linked to the image of illiteracy, sexual abuse, powerlessness, exploitation in all spheres, poverty-stricken and marginalized, especially from the political sphere. The general pattern shows that many of this gender-based violence have been carried out specifically by the male folk against their female counter-parts and children.

The common form of everyday violence against the female gender is sexual assault. Sexual assault here could be in form of individual-rape, gang-rape, unwanted fondling of feminine body, verbal assault, gender-based discrimination etc. It

is worthy of note that these forms of violence against women takes place both in peace and conflict times and is often witnessed more during the era of conflict as irresponsible members of the male folk, hides under the canopy of lawlessness, which is promoted during conflict to commit these gender-based violence. It is a widely known fact that the weakening or total destruction of societal structures and institutions that enhances peace, at the outbreak of crisis promotes the geometric rise in gender-based violence. Again, the fact that the violent act committed within the period of conflict-climax, is often seen more as an irate mob action, which goes unpunished and thus enhances the future practice of these crimes as a societal norm.

The different sides in a conflict are known to use violence against women from the other side as a tool to communicate hostility to the other side, as in cases where women are raped in front of their husbands. Rape requires the dehumanisation of the victim and is such time aimed at humiliating and subjugating not only the woman but the society. It is often argued that because women are the centre of culture and family reproduction, women are made a target to eradicate a people (Mutunga, 2007:371).

When rape is committed on a massive scale, the social fabric of family and community unravels exponentially, weakening a people's capacity to resist. It is this ability to destroy a community that makes rape such a powerful weapon of war (Yifat, 1997). Rape is punishable by life imprisonment in Nigeria, but there are no sanctions in the Penal Code against spousal rape (SIGI, 2011). Similarly, during conflict, many male young ladies and women, voluntarily turns themselves into 'sex objects' in order to attain the basic necessities of food, shelter and protection, which are heavily sorted for by many people ravaged by crisis. Many young girls, ladies and in worst case scenarios, married women have given-in to the dehumanizing sexual bids of combatants, terrorists and foot soldiers (during inter-communal conflicts) who in turn assures them of absolute protection from the brutality of their enemies. Some ladies during the Nigerian civil war were persuaded by both the males and their female counterparts to exchange their bodies for such favours, which they believe would benefit larger number of the populace. It would be stated here that rape, which leaves a permanent scare on the female gender is the tool manipulated more often than other traditional violence during war.

Ironically, in many parts of Northern Nigeria, the *Alamajiri* (Wandering Street Boys that have being subjected to perpetual life of begging by their parents) is the cultural order of the day. These teenage boys are gathered together in their hundreds at unholy honours by their parent and transported to geographical locations that are completely strange to them, where they would be deported and abandoned. Sequel to their inability to trace their nativity, they would start begging in order to survive. Unfortunately, the massive lack of food, shelter and other social security turns them into 'living wandering urchins', who eats all forms of debris as well as soured food. They find themselves as easy recruits by the sponsors of violence in Northern Nigeria and at any given violent situation, they would ensure that the society, which they believe had rejected them at childhood would receive massive violence, an experience that they have being perpetually committed to. There is equally the growing trend in which some of the male child in Igbo land is forced into trading as against his wish simply because of the widespread perception that male children who go into business, begins to deliver huge financial returns to the family and could speedily assume the status of a financial giant, especially in Anambra State. This sometimes leads to massive forcing of many Igbo male child into inhuman treatments in the hands of their business masters, whom they serve in their years of apprenticeship. The situation is worsened by the fact that many graduates in the country remained largely unemployed, hence giving fillip to the belief by the illiterate villagers that those who go to school are just

wasting their existential time. Today, we need to be thinking and emphasizing on male-child education too in some parts of Igbo land as against the tradition promotion of girl-child education. This has recently received government attention when the Minister of Education launched the ‘bring back the book’ campaign with special target on the male child in Igbo land. The scenario is worrisome as the society through their massive monetization of the Igbo worldview has sold most of the population to a money-oriented slavery where life begins and ends with the amount of money you have and what money can buy.

“Muslim women in Nigeria have long been among victims of the general ignorance of Islam among the population and of the refusal of all but a few Islamic scholars and leaders to speak out about the true role and status of the Muslim woman” (Yusuf, 1993: 282). She went on to re-iterate that in northern Nigeria, it was “considered unnecessary and wrong” to educate girls in any system, Islamic or Western, since “they were destined for domestic duties which, it was considered, did not require education. Thus, the mothers of the younger generations could play no role in supervising their children’s education; on the contrary, they remained repositories of ignorance and superstition” (Yusuf, 1993:282). The practice of *purdah*, whereby women are secluded from public observation, prevails within the Muslim community in some northern areas. Women in *purdah* cannot leave their homes without permission from their husbands and must be accompanied by a man at all times when in public. *Purdah* also restricts women’s freedom of dress; in that Muslim women must be veiled in public. Widows in these regions face the greatest degree of discrimination: they are confined to the home and must keep their heads shaven and wear mourning dress (SIGI, 2011).

In some regions, customary law allows girls to marry from the age of only nine years; such marriages are banned in some states, but remain common in Northern Nigeria. The incidence of early marriage is high in Nigeria. A 2004 United Nations Report estimated that 28 per cent of girls between 15 and 19 years of age were married, divorced or widowed (SIGI, 2011). Abdullahi and Buba (2009:60) documented that girls aged 12-14 years are given out in marriage while boys have to attain the age of 18-20 before marriage. In these early marriages of girls, it is often without consent and they experience motherhood at 11 or 12 years. Usman (1997) explained that such girls usually come under both physical and psychological trauma and most cases they become victims of Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF).

Only few Nigerian States have laws in place to address violence against women, and the country’s Penal Code grants husbands permission to beat their wives, provided the violence does not result in serious injury. Domestic violence is common, particularly in polygamous families, and affects one-fifth of couples. According to a 2003 Demographic and Health Survey, 64.5 per cent of Nigerian women consider it normal to be beaten by their husbands – even for infractions as minor as burning a meal or failing to have dinner ready on time (SIGI, 2011).

Ikpe (2007:369) has argued that the projection of African women as victims has grown in recent times. The presentation of these women as victimized images has been portrayed more in the issue of female genital circumcision (Ajikobi, 2000). The contemporary baptism of female genital circumcision as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is aimed at capturing the imagined victimhood of the girl-child and women to the practice (Lightfoot-Klein, 1989). Female genital mutilation (FGM) is prohibited in several Nigerian states, but such laws are difficult to enforce. On a national scale, FGM is widely practised: one-fifth of women aged between 15 and 49 years have been subjected to it. The incidence of FGM differs considerably by region and is twice as common in rural communities as in urban areas. The older a women is, the more

likely she is to have been subjected to FGM; this suggests that the practice has less support among the younger generation (SIGI, 2011).

Again, the combined link between the older women and the younger ladies has sustained the culture of women trafficking to Italy, France, Belgium, Netherland, Germany and Britain to engage in prostitution (Loconto, 2002). This is because women in entrepreneurship have been largely neglected in the society (Hisrich, 1999), while Duchenaut (1997) argued that they choose to engage in other fields. The voluntary and non-voluntary sustenance of this dysfunctional international trafficking and action of prostitution by an insignificant number of ladies that are tarnishing Nigerian image abroad has given fillip to the unconfirmed notion of Ikpe that Nigerian woman is a sexual superwoman with whom any sexual fantasy can be realized (see Ikpe, 2007:374 & Ikpe, 2004:30-31). Abdullahi and Buba (2009:61-62) agreed with Ikpe when they wrote that “most communities argue that FGM is important because some women are naturally sexy (sexpotists) and a man alone cannot satisfy her sexually, but if she is circumcised through excision of the clitoris, her sexual promiscuity will be curbed”. But Lightfoot (1983) have earlier pointed out that such practice is motivated by men’s desire to gain control over women’s sexual life.

Abduction during conflict has remained a norm in Nigeria. Outside the innumerable abductions that took place in the country during the Nigerian civil war, there has been the resurgence of abduction by the *Boko Haram* sect. During their 2009 onslaught on the machinery of state security in many states in northern Nigeria, the sect abducted thousands of people and sent them to their national headquarters in Maiduguri (Ani, 2010:1-10& Nwanaju, 2010:67). The abduction and killing of hundreds of people, mainly women and children in Jos, during the March 2010 multi-dimensional conflict brings to mind the horror and terror that women, girls and children passes through during conflict as they can’t easily escape the terrorist hands of their enemies. Saliba and Ani (2010:1-12) showed that the *Boko Haram* sect kidnapped about four hundred Nigerians, mainly women and children during the reign of their threat on the state. They were extremists who “are not at all serious about discussing the nature of extremism that the Holy Prophet made so many references to and warned against (Gimba & Mele, 2007:178)”. Many of the abducted ladies were forced to sow and wash the uniform of the militant arm of the *Boko Haram* sect.

Implications for Nation Building in Nigeria

During violent conflicts, women are forced to take up roles they have otherwise not known. With the men out in active combat, and others killed during the war, the need for survival forces the women to take up the roles that traditionally belong to men. Without much notice or training or experience, they become the breadwinner and decision-maker not only in the family but also in the society. This is a somewhat difficult adjustment at the beginning because most African societies are patriarchal and in many cases, although women have been responsible for feeding their families, their authority rarely extends to decision-making in their homes and less so in society (Mutunga 2007:372).

Smith (2000) documented that many women that get children through rape during war often choose not to identify the children as product of rape but are left bearing the pain and scar internally and alone. Babies, who are product of rape, often

pay the price as they lose the needed fatherly love and sometimes lack the best of attention from their mothers, who sometimes live in self and emotional problems.

Recently, Nigeria has witnessed an outrageous wave in kidnapping for money making, in which some ladies are taken hostage for mere sexual satisfaction. The mental devastation, which rape causes on the victims, their family image and well wishers reduces the rate of their social sexual productivity within the post-rape period. In some cases it forces young girls and women to bring-up children, and live with the neurosis of not knowing the father of their child. The girls and young women, caught up in different parts of the country during inter-communal conflicts, if lucky and were not killed, are turned into sex slaves by the combatants. The implication is the massive contact of all manners of sexual transmitted infections as well as HIV/AIDS in most cases.

The massive spread of HIV/AIDS is often witnessed as a product of violent gender practice in Nigeria. It is a popular knowledge that HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, which are spreading like whirl wind, are geometrically transmitted during conflict times. The UN-inspired World Aids Day, instituted since 1988, has kept us reminded of the ravaging pandemic just as the frightening figures on its prevalence have continued to engross us both as a health and social problem with devastating consequences for humanity....An account in 1999 has it that “although President Ibrahim Babangida had committed N20 million annually, beginning in 1991 and had required each of the then 30 states and 665 local authorities to spend N1 million and N500, 000 on AIDS programmes each year respectively, not one of these commitments has been fulfilled” (www.dawodu.com, 2011).

Female genital mutilation is a traditional African culture that has remained largely practiced across Africa. Traditionally, it was used in some cultures to ‘define’ and ‘celebrate’ how the female gender perceive themselves. Ahmadu (2000) showed that it is a cultural act that shows the traditional rite and wrongs of how Africa experience womanhood. The ‘mutilation’ of the ‘real’ body of the Nigerian woman has been perceived as the height of physical violence on a girl-child, which is seen as a conspiracy of the patriarchy to deprive the African woman of the control of her body and sexual enjoyment. The immediate and pre and post-mutilation era, denies the female gender the needed emotional stability, strength and composure to contribute to nation building process. Some people in the villages are exposed to diseases and other forms of health breakdown that becomes a minor or major threat to nation building. It could lead to medical complications at the short run or even the problem of poor safe-delivery ability during child birth. To make matters worse, international consensus has shown that the practice should be done away with because of its real and imagined health implications (WHO, 2000). While the culture of female genital mutilation (FGM) has been continuously reduced because of national and international critique against the practice, there is another side of the coin that must not be left out in any scholarly research. It is the group of people who argue that they enjoy the act of FGM. There is need for more objective study of those who willingly carry-out female circumcision in order to achieve what they call pleasurable sexuality (Leonard, 2000:212-228 & El Guindu, 2006). This is because “sexual rights are a fundamental aspect of human rights. It includes the right to experience a pleasurable sexuality, which is an important means of communication and love between people” (Adebayo, 2007:46). In practice, women can obtain access to land solely through marriage or family. As a result, women represent a tiny portion of landowners in the country and little is known about how much authority they have to administer their land holdings (SIGI, 2011).

The impact of the *Alamajiri* culture on human capital development cannot be over emphasized. It is a popular knowledge that the greater percentage of these wandering street boys lack any form of formal education. Some of them who try to join the formal system have many of them pulling-out because of the social stigmatization from other members of the

school plant (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994). The forcing of children into street hawking as well as the increasing accusation of children as witches and wizards as well as the traditional believe and maltreatment of the female gender as witches calls for urgent national attention. The recent development in the South-South of the country records regular dehumanization of children, who have been accused as child witches and wizards. Many female teenagers who hawk on the streets has being turned into teenage mothers, with multiple negative consequences on the State.

Conclusion

The traditional attitude that women are not important has led to their being variously described as “the forgotten fifty percent of the world’s population or the neglected human resources for development or the forgotten factor in economic development” (Egunyomi: 120). A scholarly counsel came from Ogundipe-Leslie (1994: 9) where he showed that we need to re-create women for societal transformation. This would happen if there is improved re-orientation of the male gender to be conscious of the rights and the plights of the female folk within their environment. The paper therefore calls for increased sound education of both genders. It equally recommends geometric government policies towards community driven gender-based re-orientation of the masses for sustainable national development. Consequently, UNICEF has called on the Federal Ministry of Information and Communication as well as Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) to call on states to engage in full implementation of the Child Right Act in the states that have already passed the law. UNICEF called for the mainstreaming of Child Right Reporting in the curriculum content of General Studies of Nigerian tertiary institutions and in other disciplines (Umah, 2007:7).

Furthermore, for Nigerian women to effectively join their male counterparts in the effective process of contributing towards nation building process, the modern socio-economic, political, cultural and developmental factors must guarantee the tendency of womenfolk to improve their social status in their different societies as well as gain sound social recognition and be fully involved in the affairs of community, local, state and national development. There is equally the need to promote massive education of the female gender, through girl-child education and other gender-based education policies. This would help to produce a pool of massively educated ladies, with minimal supporters of men in the quest to sustain the above negative traditional violent behaviour. It is a known fact that many women champion the cause of inflicting violent pains on their fellow gender, in alliance with some male folk. Mass female adult education would help to deliver many women from ignorance, illiteracy and lack of faith in oneself, while promoting self –confidence, increased creativity as well as social recognition in the different knocks and crannies of the Nigerian State. Education would help the male and female gender to know where their rights began and end in existential relations. It would help the ladies to compete more favourably with the male in the ever-competitive productive sectors of the Nigerian national economy.

There is need for private-public partnership in promoting gender-based seminars, rallies, meetings, teachings, symposia, debates etc. The location, time and content of these educational programmes should be such that would be designed to unfold male and especially female issues, in which the female should be able to express their views unhindered. The women in the villages should promote idea-sharing alliances with formidable gender-based associations, women that occupy the higher echelon of the society and has both integrity and sound intellectual capability. There is the need to train ladies to be experts in the positive manipulation of their God-given soft power to relate tactically with their male counterparts.

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Ani, Kelechi Johnmary is a lecturer in the Department of History and Strategic Studies, Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Nigeria. His areas of research interests include peace, conflict and African Political as well as social history. He is the authored Politics about Failed State in Nigeria: Dialectics on the Value of History to Nation Building Challenges, 1960-2010, Enugu: BookFirst, 2011.