Women Development and Peace-Building: Creating a Social Ethical Balace in Nigeria

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1. Introduction

The roles of women in the society in relation to development generally, cannot be under-estimated. The peripheral concept of the development is change, and change is conceptualized as dynamism. The only constant cum permanent variable is change. There is imminence of change on globalization and on Nigeria.

The primordial concept of women in relation to their activities in our society and the world over dictates or spells out non-changeability or non-development. Our ignorance certifies this and also upholds this stance. However, changeability or development is pervasive. What we taught women should not, are exactly the sermon today that we should be. In clear terms, what we mean is that women should develop.

From the controversy people have about women in terms of their existence and their contributions to society, the comprehension of women development as peace building seems illusive. In other words, peace in our society is difficult, not easily attainable due to women development which is problematic because of our society's myopia and high degree of illiteracy. Thus this paper sets out to critically examine the contents of development vis-a-vis peace and how to build a culture of peace with women in focus. The approach employed here is ethical, looking at the potentials and capacities of women and arguing why they should be given a chance in view of those who have succeeded in the past and those who could still make a difference in a male dominated society like Nigeria.

2. Conceptual Analysis

Development: From a perspective development could mean the sum total of that which makes the human person holistic by attaining his potential as credited by nature. In other words, development refers to the sum total of social factors by which the human being is the focal point of progressive undertakings.

Development as a social phenomenon emerged strongly in various ways especially after the first and second world wars and during colonialism. It is notable by its western model of social transformation. Sometimes, development is being understood in the developing world as "modernization" a theory that has its point of departure in classical sociology. Hence, personalities such as Ferdinand Tonnies, Max Weber, and Henry Maine are known for their contribution towards the various ways to move man from his tradition status of authority to the rational bureaucratic and organic solidarity. Thus Krieger (1993:239) maintains: "As Westerners looked around for a way of making sense of the evolution of the third World countries and relating them to their own experience and vision of the world, they fell back on the evolutionary theories of the past, using the terms of modernization to describe the movement of societies. They took for granted a theory of progress by which all societies are on a continuum moving from a state of backwardness to one of modernity". This means that social development, contrary to other opinions has been part of human existence irrespective of the epoch in question. At least, every society has its primitive period out of which it develops and progresses into whatever is termed modernity today.

By development, we imply various techniques for improving the people's levels of living. This means, creating condition of social and economic progress that is capable of improving the standard of life of the people. This ideal of development tallies with UN notion particularly in respect to community: Development has to do with getting backward people in the right frame of mind for doing things . . . Social climate or mental atmosphere favorable to of free institutions and mature personalities. This implies that, development has to do with the people, and that development is meant to improve their standard of life. Therefore, every social development in order to be authentic must evolve out of people's need and initiative. Its orientation must be rooted in the people, and the people must be allowed to execute themselves irrespective of directives and coordination. According to McNamara (1980:34), "one of the primary objectives of development is to make people aware of their potential, a potential which if properly developed would make them masters of their own destiny in a relatively short time" . This is where social development can be regarded as comprising the development of both the human person and his social needs.

Consequently, development is meant to promote the well being and dignity of people. In other words, development is the sum total of all those conditions of social life which enable individual, families, and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment. Political and social philosophers hold this opinion as the basis for every successful social and political development. Furger (1991:10) views this from both ethical and moral perspectives as treading the route towards establishing a base for formidable social existence.

According to Jacobs (1999:144), development consists of two interrelated aspects. These are: learning and application. Society discovers better ways to fulfill its aspirations and it develops organizational mechanisms to express that knowledge to achieve its social and economic goals. The process of discovery expands human consciousness. The process of application enhances social organization. In other words, society develops in response to the contact and interaction between human beings and their material, social and intellectual environment. The incursion of external threats, the pressure of physical and social conditions, the mysteries of physical nature and complexities of human behavior prompt humanity to experiment, create and innovate.

While the learning process of development takes place simultaneously on all these planes, there is a natural progression from physical experience to mental understanding. Historically, society has developed by a trial and error process of physical experimentation, not unlike the way children learn through a constant process of physical exploration, testing and even tasting. Physically, this process leads to acquisition of new physical skills that enable individuals to utilize their energies more efficiently and effectively. Socially, it leads to the learning and mastery of organizational skills, vital attitudes, systems and institutions that enable people to manage their interactions with other people and other societies more effectively. Mentally, it leads to organization of facts as information and interpretation of information as thought.

In summary, according to Adams (1995), development is the gradual growth of something, so that it becomes bigger or more advanced. In other words, development could be seen as total transformation of the society and the quality of life. It requires the participation of everybody, including women. The General Assembly of the United Nations, resolved in 1970 that "as the ultimate purpose of development is to provide increasing opportunities to all people for a better life; it is essential to expand and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, housing and social welfare and to safeguard the environment". This approach to development, according to the report, is aimed at improving the welfare of human beings, primarily in terms of providing goods and services needed to eliminate manifestation of poverty, such as malnutrition, disease, illiteracy and squalor.

Peace (building): The term peace may simply be interpreted to mean the absence of warfare. In this sense, war as either organized violence, between groups as countries, nations, ethnic entities, races, religions, classes or even ideologies. Therefore, peace-building in a simple term means consolidating on any effort aimed at promoting stable, calm and tranquil society devoid of rancor, violence and disorder of any type.

In many cultures, people exchange pleasantries by the use of various expressions that represent peace. In this way, the Hebrew word *'shalom'* comes to mind as expression of peace, good wishes, happy meetings, good luck, good health, satisfaction and tranquility of existence. The Greeks would use expression such as, *'Irene'* in similar ways to refer to peace, calmness, friendliness, freedom from terrible situation and indeed, good life situation. So peace is a universal phenomenon for which every human society and relationship long for. Peace as social and religious phenomenon is popularly known as *pax* in Latin, and like Justice, it connotes pact as a compromise for tranquility. Peace viewed as a legacy of Roman institution is paradoxical in its adjoining relationship with issues of war. For example, it is said that *'si vis pacem, Para belum'*- 'if you want peace, prepare for war'. From this perspective, emerged a broader definition of peace which extends to the question of violence as inability to have peace.

If peace is at all a pact or an agreement, then it is in its structural and institutional forms. This is because, what we have come to know today in our society as a search for peace is nothing other than institutions that advocate and seek means by which causes of violence are known and respectively attended to. To institute peace means to find ways of neutralizing structural or institutionalized marginalization that is perpetrated to vindicate honor and revenge as linked to particular social institutions. This concretely means: structural injustice takes the form of economic exploitation and political repression in intra-country, inter-class or inter-ethnic relations. In every unjust structure, these aspects promote violence. Peace, as a social and religious value is based on the belief that to promote life is to promote positive relations with others and with the environmental in which one lives. No wonder then, when environmentalists take price of peace for ensuring the unity of nature. This means, peace-building implies the need to foster, maintain and develop hope, spirituality, optimism, and a sense of belonging in local, national and global communities.

When we talk of peace as a social and religious value, it has to do with creating a deliberate human relationship and relationship with nature. That is why every issue of peace is closely connected to justice and all it entails. Peace-building has to do with co-operation and interaction in order to resolve conflict situation by the practice of consensus decision making. It implies negotiations, mediation and reconciliation in order to enhance the right and original state of nature by which man is in harmony with himself, his neighbor and indeed the environment in which he lives.

In ensuring the value of peace, the value of social justice must be strictly adhered to. This means, for peace to exist among people and in every society, the promotion of a just society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity cannot be waived away. Religiously viewed, all people share a common humanity and therefore have a right to equitable treatment, support for their human rights and a fair allocation of community resources. That is

why one important aspect of peace-building is the acknowledgement of dialogue as a means towards achieving peace. Peace comes into being in a violent situation only when the parties involved talk with one another. This is because, as a matter of emotion, feelings must be communicated and shared. If not, its continuous repression in order to ensure harmony may be temporal, and thus can lead to a more fragile and destabilizing relationship. Feelings that are not expressed in dialogue have latent characters and resilient potentials that are devastating. That is why peace was never viewed by the Romans as a permanent condition of life. Hence it must always be searched and negotiated for.

Peace-building is an activity when people listen to one another and are prepared to talk about their differences in order to attain compromise which would be fair to all concerned. This is one way by which peace incorporates justice as fairness in every society. In a strict sense, peace does not exist idealistically; peace is relative and a concrete value among persons and in the society. Peace-building has external and internal results: externally it is felt and experienced among two more people. But peace is also a matter that is internal in that an individual also experiences peace within himself. And in most cases peace flows from within into the open; from oneself into relationship with the wider world.

3. Women Development as Peace-building

Women have suffered a lot of discrimination and inequality in world history. For example, in Europe, women were just considered as pleasure bags, only to be used and later discarded (Mabdallah, 1993:17). In Nigeria and most African countries, women are regarded to be nothing but breeders of children, cooks who are seen as created to be subordinate and dependent on man for livelihood. In some traditional societies, women are not given any patrilineal or genealogical consideration. They are only seen and not heard. According to Mowe (1986:33) the Nigerian constitution does not discriminate against women, but aspects of the traditions and unwritten norms of our society tend to put women in the disadvantaged position. In almost all the cultures and sub-cultures in Nigeria, there is a perpetual denomination of men over women. Families put greater emphasis on education of male rather than female children.

Women, for so many decades past, had conspicuously featured gallantly in the development of the society. They had all along exhibited their characteristic idiosyncrasies that breaded comfort to men and their fellow women. They had acted in conformity with the norms and standards of societies and making sure that boredom in life of men are evaded through addition of species. Improvements and innovations on how things are done to the betterment of the entirety of the society, form the congruent part of their lives, hence their ventures in areas of development are multi-dimensional.

In technological development, for example, that plays the dominant role in feeding economic growth and development of the country, women's participation and contributions are of monstrous dimension and capacity. From prehistoric and ancient days, women's contribution to technology of this era was great, for example in agriculture. This was why Stanly (1999: 87) stated that "many of the anonymous inventions which mark human prehistory were developed by women. Since women were responsible for gathering food, they probably identified potential food crops such as grains, tubers, fruits and herbs, and transplanted or sowed them near tribal settlements. This will also necessitate the development gain by women, of agricultural implements such as digging sticks, hoes, cultivators and early plows. Then too, processing of goods also was the cardinal responsibility of women. That was why grinding of roots and grains which require technological development in form of tools and storage of perishable food items which again requires the invention of processes such as drying; jerking, smoking and picking were spear-headed by women. Another area of technological development that women were squarely involved during the ancient's days was the clothing industry. For example, preparation of hides, weaving and sowing were activities generally carried by women. No wonder Salami (2007:43) summarized the women inputs to technological development thus: "the development of preserving softening, bleaching, dyeing methods for animal slams, the invention of weaving techniques and equipment, including carding and spinning, and spindles and looms; method of dyeing or printing fabrics, and sowing implement such as hooks, needle, scissors, and sinew of fiber threads may all be credited to our unknown fore-mothers".

Some specific names could be mentioned in this area of development in line with the advent of civilization and modernization. Some American women headed by Nancy Johnson patented food-processing devices. Mary Howson was given an award for inventing a boiler, with Emeline Hart who invented a commercial oven. Amanda Thedosia Jone developed a vacuum canning process to preserve food. Ellen Englin invented the cloth wringer. All this happened over 100 years ago.

Women also went into medical areas to show their developmental acumen. Salami (2007) was very clear about this as he put it. "A variety of medical instrument and devices were invented and patented by women during 19th century which included sterilization techniques and devices, medical beds and chairs, field ambulances and stretchers, splints and improved speculum. The modern intravenous drip was developed by a team which included Justine Wanger (a woman). She also developed resuscitation techniques for victims of electric shock, cryogenic therapy to destroy cancer cells. A number of helpful devices for the disabled have also been invented

by women including the watch and a typewriter for the blind. In the mechanical area, a woman known as Helen Augusta Blanchard singlehandedly patented 26 sewing machine improvements during her life time.

In politics or in governance, women also featured conspicuously. For example, Queen Elizabeth 1 and Queen Elizabeth 11 of England, Mrs Loraz Aquino, former president of Philipine and Mrs Ellen Johnson of Liberia, to mention but a few of them.

From the foregoing, generally, we have seen that women reared their beautiful heads in the spectra of developments elsewhere. What of our country Nigeria? Of course, we have so many of them right from pre-colonial, colonial to post independence era, who had contributed immensely in their own ways to development of this country; for example, the Kotal Kantal of Kebbi Land, Emotan of Edo Land, Queen Aminat of Zaria Emirate, Inikpi of Igala Kingdom and Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti of Yoruba Land. Others who distinguished themselves in their notable contributions to the development of this country are; Mrs. Dora Akunyili, a pharmacist and director of NAFDAC, Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili, the former Minister of Education, and Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, the Minister of Finance, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Director of World Bank.

In sports, women have demonstrated to the world their high talents both in the track events and football. The Nigerian super Falcons are in the superlative degree of soccer performance in Africa; and the under 20 women team are also superb in the whole world as they won silver medal, by coming second position in a recent competition. In politics, we have so many whose contributions to political spheres are desirable and emulating. For example, many of them are senators, while many others are honourable members of the House of Representatives. At the state Assembly, we also have women as members. Some other women are Deputy Governors, Ministers, Commissioners, Ambassadors e.t.c. Upon all this that are mentioned and recorded about, it is not enough, if we juxtapose their population and the degree of their developmental involvement in the country. Ordinarily, women who excelled in their endeavors could not have made it to the degree of recognition if they had no peace. However, the degree of excellent performance of women development is not enough. Hence, one is tempted to allude that is it because there is no justice that women have not made giant strides in some strategic areas as to give them the pride and recognition by the society.

4. Unequal Education with men - Threat to peace

Education has long been recognized as a central element in development. It is the radiating power. It is a hob or vortex from which development can emerge. This can be glaringly seen and comprehended from World Bank Review (1973) that when the developing countries began their drive for social and economic development nearly three decades ago, education was perceived as a means of not only of raising political and social consciousness but also increasing the member of skilled workers and raising the level of trained manpower. The General conference of UNESCO (1978) affirmed that "by the complexity of the problems which it must help to solve, education must be conceived in an inter-disciplinary context as a factor multi-dimensional development of which man is both the end and the instrument". Man here includes woman.

If we bring this to bear on our women, then, they will be enlightened as to carry out their rural development duties/roles, more so that about 2/3 of women are in the rural areas. It is on these premises too that Nigeria must review the type of education that would be ideal for women, which can encourage them towards acquisition of skills. This is in conformity with what some of our early philosophers had for rural women. For example, Comemins (1592-1670) had illustrated the need for the training of women in skills acquisition, as a tool for nation building. He argued that women in a polity should be taught to be less dependent. Pestalozzi (1827-1946) also held the opinion that "the aim of re-orienting the women population will help reform society". He believes that the improvement of society could be affected through the development of the potentialities of the women-folk. Benjamin Franklin, a one-time president of United State of America, saw this and remarked that the social reformation of women in society will go a long way to help society to grow.

The present economic and political situations have put untold hardship on so many families and this has riffled effects especially on women. Therefore, it is proper that women are given the type of education i.e. vocational education to enable them effectively manage their family resources. They can engage in money making ventures; for example, they could be mobilized through vocational education to produce home-made soap, vim, hand-woven cloths, etc from which the money realized could be used for the maintenance and up-keep of the family members.

It is important to note that education makes room for consensus peace building and it is the presence of peace that results to the involvement of women in the socio-economic and political areas discussed earlier. Education is not partial; it is in totality. It covers all facts of human endeavour, hence women should be given political education by involving them in politics. It is a truism that women are not actively and powerfully involved in main stream politics, even though they have the franchise to vote and be voted into the political cum public offices. The reason behind this could be because they do not have education and economic power required for active participation in politics; they are intimidated by majority of men who are politicians around them. This discriminating act perpetrated and perpetuated by men is felt all over the world. Karl (1995:71) echoed this unscrupulous act of the men as he pointed out that only 10% of the women are members of parliament world-

wide. Olawoye and Ali (2003:112) noted that females make up about 50% national population but their representation in formal political position falls very short of that proportion.

How many women are members of state house of assembly as legislators? How many are commissioners? How many are chairmen or deputy chairmen? How many are councilors making law for our Local Government Areas? How many are supervisors councilors? It is evident that women are not well represented in politics. It is, therefore, our responsibility for the need for peace-building to encourage, motivate and energize women so as to close the political gap created between the women and men.

Women have no access to credit facilities, therefore, leading to barrier on expansion on economic activities. This is obvious because women are not land owners or owners of the other landed properties used as a collaterals that facilitate the possibility of getting loans from the bank, hence using such money or monies for local entrepreneurial businesses through which they can develop themselves and develop the societies is hampered. For women to develop, government and individuals in the society should create opportunities for them to get these loans facilities, make use of them to the developmental benefits of the society. Banks should be encouraged to give at least 1% of their loans and advances to women entrepreneur, and the rate of interest should be minimally placed so as to encourage these women to go into these ventures.

5. Conclusion

This paper has shown that the concepts of development and peace are dynamic and embrace a lot of variables. While development refers to the sum total of social factors by which the human being is the focal point of progressive undertakings, peace suggests good relationship with self, neighbor and nature. In order words, peace is a matter of inter and intra relationship that is vital and necessary for any meaningful development of a people especially as a nation like Nigeria. The need for a balanced society anchored on peaceful coexistence that is free of gender bias cannot be overemphasized. It has also been made clear in this paper that women have embedded potentialities and inherent cum latent forces that can engender them into national development of Nigeria, but their accessibility to certain opportunities and parameters that facilitate their participation in the development are truncated. Based on this premise, this paper seriously advocates for the total attainment of women's potentialities in all spheres of life through motivation. In doing this, they should be increased accessibility to education, political position and economic facilities, as this will increase their involvement or participation in national development of Nigeria.

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