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Political Socialization and Today's Women

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Abstract:

Political socialization is a political awareness among the vast majority of a people which enhances their capacity in decision making. Being in a position to articulate their interest effectively and fill them politically. Political education on women, active participation in politics is expedient. Obviously, the political awareness and participation of women has profound positive and democratic impacts on communities, ensuring basic services are delivered. Women have specific abilities needed in the uttermost development of the Nation. They are highly responsive to constituency concerns. Every rudiment of Politization is needed to encourage women to move from being influencers or activist to delegates.

Keywords: Influencers, awareness, profound, politization, expedient

1. Introduction

Socialization is very needful at critical stages in National development, as issues are explained and their creative energies called into action. Political socialization is a political awareness among the vast majority of a people which enhances their capacity in decision making. Being in a position to articulate their interest effectively and fill them politically.

The political culture of a nation is the precedent of the political strides as political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of that system. This has to do with longstanding ideologies and National Ethos (Character and Beliefs) the fundamental values of a people.

Determinants of a political culture are:

- Socio-Economic structure
- Historical development
- Impact of colonialism
- Different ethnicity
- Political instability.

Ethnicity: The belief of each tribe has a major impact on the Nation's Political Culture as most African countries prefer women to be seen not heard hence the very low participation percentage of women in politics. Despite this cultural barrier, some women exhibited exemplary feats early enough. The likes of Margaret Ekpo, a member of the Eastern House of Assembly (1961 – 1965). A woman right activist who organized market women association in Aba (1945) with the aim to promote solidarity for women, fighting both political, economic and civic rights. She was one of the delegates of the NCNC to the Nigerian Constitutional Conference in Lancaster, London (1958), appointed into the House of Chiefs in 1954 stayed till 1958.

The first woman to be elected in Aba after having contested with 7 men in the Eastern House of Assembly. A pioneer Nigerian Female Political Icon, the likes of Fumilayo Ransome Kuti, secretary of the Western women NCNC who had more than 20,000 women followers. She led the protest against taxation in 1949 subsequently the adjudication of Oba Abemola.

Two of them held the World sway over the killings of leaders protesting colonial practices at Enugu coal mine as they organized a one-day mourning for the victims. This attracted international attention. Both of them in the same year toured round the Eastern region encouraging women to be integrated into politics.

By 1955, women in Aba outnumbered men voters in a citywide election hence Her winning a seat in House of Assembly in 1961 (Power of Sensitization and Unity).

A non participant populace is alienated and an alienated populace feels powerless to tackle the demands of building a progressive and developed society.

Politization indeed is a tool as it is value oriented so through Politization, National core values are impacted into the populace.

The socio-economic structure of the country today in conjunction with our being members of International Organizations e.g. United Nations, has left an indelible impact on our political culture as women are being integrated in governance against the general notion. Listening to President Muhammadu Buhari at a press conference in Germany on the 14th October, 2016. He said

"My wife belongs to the kitchen, the living room and the other room"

Today's women are enlightened, educated, enterprising, etc; obviously highly revered as the likes of Dr Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Ms Aruma Oteh, Dizeani Allison – Madueke (The first female President of OPEC) elected on the 27th of November, 2014 (166th Assembly), etc are holding sway in the International circles having played out their roles and scenes in Nigeria.

Sarah Jibril, the indefatigable first female presidential candidate having contested for the position in four different political seasons.

- SDP (Social Democratic Party – 1992)
- PDP (Peoples Democratic Party – 1998)
- In 2003, she was the presidential flag bearer of Progressive Action Congress, hence the first woman to be the presidential candidate of a registered party.
- In 2011, she had only one vote in the PDP primaries.

Sarah Jibril is still in politics as deputy chairman of Progressive Liberation Party. Her doggedness has carved a niche for her in the Nigerian History.

Prof. Remi Sonaiya has stepped out boldly also as he was the presidential candidate of the KOWA party in 2015.

Dr Oby Ezekwesili, the presidential flag bearer of Allied Congress Party of Nigeria – ACPN.

No democratically elected female governor yet, but female deputy governors evident in Lagos, Ondo, Osun, Rivers, Ebonyi, Enugu states. In Anambra state, during Gov. Peter Obi's regime (2006 - 2014). Lady Virginia Etiaba was his deputy who later became a governor for some weeks (November 2006 – February 2007) – the first female governor in Nigeria.

However four Women were among the 28 candidates that contested for the gubernatorial seat of Adamawa state.

Lami Musa	People's Party of Nigeria (PPN)
Na'ama Bulama	Progressive People's Alliance (PPA)
Rukayya Audu	Action People's Party (APP)
Elizabeth Isa	Change Advocacy Party (CAP)

Table 1

An indication of the increase in the interest of women in active politics.

"Female Candidate can emerge a governor" a statement credited to Senator Akwashiki of Nasarawa state (PDP).

She was Optimistic that a female governor will emerge in Nigeria in 2019. Akwashiki, a jinx breaker having been the first female House of Representative, first Senator and first female Minister in Nasarawa state (Appointed by President Goodluck Jonathan) believed she could clinch the gubernatorial seat. She quipped

"I agree that it's been a religious and cultural thing in the north. In 2015, Hajia Alhassan tried it in Taraba state and she almost made it".

The United Nations declared Gender Equality as a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable development. The United Nations landmark declaration adopted by the general Assembly in 1948.

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, ..., birth or other status"

With the UN decade for women 1975 – 1985 in 1979, the decision making body of UN adopted the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. CEDAW also called the International Bill of Rights for women with 30 articles. This bill highlights cultures and tradition as influencing forces of gender roles.

Notwithstanding that Nigeria is a United Nation member state and so most abide by its rule, the bill on gender and equal opportunity sponsored by Senator Abiodu Olujimi representing Ekiti South Senatorial district meant to provide women with some marital rights as their male counter parts including the rights of widows to inherit their husband's property, absolutely designed to stop humiliating treatment of women detailed how women should have the right to fully participate in political activities, right to vote and be eligible for all public elected offices.

This bill didn't pass the second reading based on religious beliefs. Senator Emmanuel Bwacha on the 15th of March, 2016 spoke on the biblical and historical perspective absolutely against the bill. A senate that has only 7 female representatives as against 109 male counterparts. Obviously, disadvantaged people or groups can obtain fair representation only if they are present in the elected assembly.

However, women have specific abilities different from men which are needed in the uttermost development of the Nation. Women will not be spectators forever.

A nation that both male and female are involved in decision making develops better and faster – Taking for instance, Rwanda.

However, the Nigerian 1999 constitution section 42, 1 & 2 states:

"Any culture that disinherits a daughter from her father's estate or wife from her husband's property by reason of God's instituted gender differential should be punitively dealt with"

According to the UN country representative, Comfort Lamprey in her September 2018 assessment, said:

"Tremendous advance have been recorded since the inception of the programme. We now have a significant number of women appointed in traditional councils and as administrative heads in all the state's"

6 women indicated interest to unseat President Muhammadu Buhari come 2019 but actually one determined lady was in the keenly contested race. Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, although she dropped out of the contest on Thursday 24 January, 2019. She

participated very well in the presidential debates. The divergence of the party's values and vision was the key factor that triggered her withdrawal.

- Prof Fumilayo Adesonyo Davis
- Prof Remi Saniaya - founder of the KOWA Party
- Dr Elishama Rosemary Ideh – under the auspices of the Alliance for New Nigeria. She quipped: "Nigeria needs a leader who combines integrity with intelligence"
- Adeline Enihe
- Eunice Atuejide – National Interest Party
- Dr. Oby Ezekwesili – Allied Congress Party of Nigeria

More women were in the senatorial race. The 'NO LILY LIVERED' of Benue state, Mimi Azape Oribibi of Benue State Internal Revenue. Hajiya Fatima Binta Bello, the only female principal officer of the current House of Representatives as the minority whip. The only person in the Nigerian 7th Assembly in the North East to return in 2015 under PDP due to the APC landslide victory (Katungo/Shongom Federal Constituency of Gombe state 2011 & 2015. First female House of Representative, Dr. Salma Kolo of Biu Local Government vied for Borno South Senatorial District.

2. Benefits of Politisation

- Literacy and political education
- Tolerance of divergent views
- Economic development
- Equal opportunity for all

3. Agents of Politisation

- Mass media
- Pressure groups
- Religious groups (Churches and Mosques)
- Peer groups
- Schools
- Family
- Political parties, etc

4. Effects of Politisation

- Women in politics are not being looked down on morally again.
- More passion for politics as more women vied for political posts in the last primaries.
- Women organizations are forming a formidable force to sponsor female candidates.
- Unity in purpose overriding party affiliations
- Empowerment of women economically as a protection strategy to reduce their vulnerability.
- Active participation in party politics (Negotiating with men)

5. Summary

Despite the challenges women face in politics:

- Poverty (Economic)
- Social (Moral stigma)
- Inequality
- Cultural rules
- Religious rules

Women, can win in men dominated areas having unity in diversity for example Aisha Dahiru who won Adamawa Central Senatorial District, the only female Senator-elect in the Northern Nigerian. Binta Masi Garuba, the only female Senator of the 8th Assembly representing Adamawa North lost to the PDP Ishiaku. Aspiring for the positions exclusively reserved for men; obviously pulling men to the negotiating table. For example Senator Uche Ekwunife and Stella Oduah of Anambra state despite moves by APGA candidates, Chief Victor Umeh to file a case. Women trooped out to protest, saying "they voted for Ekwunife". Remi Tinubu of Lagos (APC) and Bethy Apiafi Cross River North Senatorial District (PDP). Cultural and religious barriers against women can only be addressed if women support women and gender friendly politicians. Sharing the common bond to strengthen unity and honour in Nigeria. Obviously, Women will not be spectators forever. There were 22 female Vice Presidential Candidates, 232 female Senatorial Aspirants and 532 female House of Representatives aspirants in the last election (2019).

There are benefits of women participating in politics which motivates the woman to strive for political emancipation. It advances gender equality.

It is obvious that with the increase of women in the elected positions, there will be a corollary increase in policy making that emphasizes quality of life reflecting on the priorities of the family, ethnic and racial minorities.

The ingenuity of women cannot be over emphasized as it was a group of astute women that brought back Gov. Alameysigha of Bayelsa State; dressed in their colourful outfit from UK to Nigeria. According to Rory Carroll (African correspondent):

"A Nigerian state governor was back in trousers and at his desk yesterday after dressing up as a woman and skipping bail in Britain on charges of laundering \$1.8m"

Resolving to integrate women into all aspects of development does it all.

"Men their rights and nothing more

Women their rights and nothing less"

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