

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Challenges to Women's Empowerment and Participation in Community Development: State Regulation and Local Praxis in Moghamo, North West Region, Cameroon

Dr. Afu Isaiah Kunock

Senior Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, University of Yaoundé, Cameroon

Abstract:

The major world conferences on women in the past four to five decades have been laden with so much talk about women's empowerment and their role in development as equal partners resulted in most nations committing themselves through the signing of various conventions to henceforth involve them as active partners in the development process and not just passive recipients of its benefits. As a signatory, the government of Cameroon embarked on the project to empower women and promote their influence in the community in recognition of the pivotal role they play in improving living standards and alleviating poverty, particularly in rural communities. With this plan in mind, the government set up structures, coupled with the activities of national and international stakeholders to train and develop skills of the rural women to participate in improving the living standard in the community. Despite attempts made to improve on the socio-economic status of the women as stipulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the inputs from various stakeholders like the government, development agents and other partners, much is yet to be realised in Moghamo. The situation is disquieting in that in spite of the presence of the women's empowerment centre constructed by Moghamo women and equipped with assistance of development partners to empower themselves, the living conditions and social status of these rural women still needs much improvement. The question therefore arises: what are these constraints and how do they specifically limit women's empowerment and their full contribution as community development partners in this cultural setting? This article seeks to explore the reasons why local praxis continues to pose a strong resistance and further identify the factors that have hindered the Moghamo women from being fully empowered in order to contribute their fair share to the development of their community.

Keywords: Women's empowerment, participation, community development, State regulation, local praxis

1. Introduction

The major world conferences on women in the past four to five decades have been laden with so much talk about women's empowerment and their role in development as equal partners resulted in most nations committing themselves through the signing of various conventions to henceforth involve them as active partners in the development process and not just passive recipients of its benefits through the trickle-down effect. Proponents of women, gender and development theories have consistently purported that women are equal partners in development. It is in this light that the government of Cameroon embarked on the project to empower women and promote their influence in the community in recognition of the pivotal role they play in improving living standards and alleviating poverty, particularly in rural communities which also falls within the overall development plan for the nation. With this plan in mind, the government has set up structures, coupled with the activities of international and national stakeholders to train and develop skills of the rural women to participate in improving the living standard in the community. Some of these good will programmes can be seen in the policy framework directed toward women (MINADER 2006).

Despite attempts made to improve on the socio-economic status of the women as stipulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the inputs from various stakeholders like the government, development agents and other partners, much is yet to be realised after the midterm evaluation of 2015. Given that women form half or the greater part of the population, Mustapha (2014) asserts that no any nation can prosper if half of its resources (women) are neglected. Cameroon's constitution upholds the principle of gender equality. However, a complex legal system comprising a mix of Napoleonic code and common law as well as customary and written law do exist. These sometimes act as obstacles to women's empowerment and participation in community development. Regarding the position of women vis-a-vis customs and traditions, there are numerous views within various brands of feminism, including radical feminism, liberal feminism, Marxist or socialist feminism, black feminism, and post-modern or post structuralist feminism. All views agree that gender inequality and oppression of women are real problems which need to be remedied. One key concept developed by feminists is patriarchy, which they identify as an obstacle to women's empowerment and participation in community development. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2010 opines that while there has been significant progress towards achieving gender equality, across the world, many women continue to face

discrimination with regard to norms and social institutions. Adegoye & Adegoye (2008) note among the rural women in Ibadan land that harmful cultural practices militate against women's economic empowerment. In like manner, Bisika (2008) on gender-based violence in Malawi, remarks that cultural practices that promote gender-based violence exist and that men direct them toward women. Briere (2004) asserts that socio-cultural conditions like poverty, social inequality and inadequate social support determine the degree of the impact of violence against women. On the subject of the education, Akomolafe (2006) notes that low education and cultural prejudice against women is a constraint to women's empowerment. Olekulein and Ojo (2006), state that illiteracy is the main reason why women cannot contribute fully in the development of their communities. Adegoye & Adegoye (2008) pointed out that the low literacy level of the rural women denied them access to vital information that can improve their community economically. Ebele (2003) opines that equal access to education for girls is still a challenge Africa. In relation to finances, Adegoye & Adegoye (2008) demonstrate that inadequate finances and access to loans militate against women's economic empowerment. Amongst the Bauchi in Nigeria, Magaji and Aliyu (2007) remark that credit influences physical autonomy and affects most women's empowerment significantly. In like manner, Dunford (2001) cited in Magaji and Aliyu (2007) states that loans and training are critical components that are very effective to address many socioeconomic problems of women. Furthermore, Malami (2008), notes in the contribution of Sokoto women to the Nigerian economy that lack of funding is one of the fundamental problems blocking the women from economic empowerment

Many women's associations have equally been set up with the aim of bringing women from particular communities together, empower them for their benefit and also channel tangible contributions towards the development of their respective communities. This is the case of the Moghamo Women's Cultural and Development Association (MOWOCUDA), one of the largest women's groups in the North West Region of Cameroon and also the first women's association in the Region to have set up an empowerment centre for its members (Akogutuh 2008).

In spite of the presence of the women's empowerment centre constructed by Moghamo women and equipped with assistance of development partners to empower themselves, the living conditions and social status of these rural women still needs much improvement. Although the Moghamo women have been very engaged in community development activities alongside other organisations, their contribution to development is quite perceptible but remains highly constrained in this cultural milieu by local praxis. The question therefore arises: what are these constraints and how do they specifically limit women's empowerment and their full contribution as community development partners in this cultural setting? This article seeks to explore the reasons why local praxis continues to pose a strong resistance and further identify the factors that have hindered the Moghamo women from being fully empowered in order to contribute their fair share to the development of their community.

In attempting to give answers to the questions, research was conducted in various libraries and on the field through qualitative research methods that guided and facilitated data collection and analysis. Research in scholarly literature was done in libraries in Yaoundé, and Stellenbosch. Field research was conducted in 5 out of the 22 villages that make up the Moghamo community and also in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon with some Moghamo elite women. These villages have high and low frequency of women's activities. The interviews were conducted in Moghamo language (which is the mother tongue of the researcher), Pidgin English, and English. In order to ensure validity, spontaneous questions were asked during informal interviews. Data was collected from men and women, both young and old within an age range 20-85. Purposeful sampling was used for the selection of interviewees. More attention was given to key informants such as women involved in women's activities, men who are knowledgeable of women's activities and notables who are regarded as custodians of culture in the community. Three focus group discussions of eight participants each were conducted, two in Moghamo and the other in Yaoundé the capital of Cameroon with some Moghamo elite women. A total of 35 in depth interviews were conducted with 25 women and 10 men. Two Moghamo women's groups and their activities were examined in a case study. Interviews were both tape-recorded and documented in field diaries. All respondents preferred anonymity in the citation of their opinions in the text.

This study contributes to the field of community development by identifying specific cultural norms and practices that hinder women's empowerment. Once identified, their modification can boost women's contribution to the development of this would-be emerging nation, thus ameliorating living conditions not only for the women for the community at large.

I will begin with, the concepts of women's empowerment, community development and, theoretical framework, followed by women's socio-economic status in Cameroon, then proceed to the case study and women's narratives, limitations to women empowerment in Moghamo and finally conclusion.

2. Concept of Women's Empowerment

Empowerment is a contested concept used in different ways by individuals and organisations of different world views. According to Ferguson (2009), the concept of empowerment presupposes therefore that a state of social oppression exist which has dis-empowered those in the group, by denying social power, opportunities and or resources and by subjecting them to a set of social practices which has defined them as inferior humans, thus lowering their self-reliance strength. Empowerment is the process and result of the process whereby the less powerful members of the society gain access and control over resources, knowledge, challenges and ideologies of discrimination and subordination, and transform the structures and institutions through which unequal access and control over resources is sustained and perpetuated (Batliwa, 1995 cited in Olakulein and Ojo, 2006).

In the same light, empowerment was understood by DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) in 2012 to mean the transformation of unequal power relations which includes the processes by which people who

have been unable to exercise agency or autonomy gain such abilities - such a transformation requires both external resources (such as land, credit, access to technology and markets, supportive political institutions and cultural norms) and internal capacities (such as knowledge and self-confidence) Yuval noted:

Empowerment is taken to mean a process by which oppressed persons gain some control over their lives by taking part with others in development of activities and structure that allow people increased involvement in matters which affect them directly. In this course people become able to govern themselves effectively. This process involves the use of power, but not power over others or power as dominance as is traditionally the case; rather power is seen as "power to" or power as competence which is generated and shared by the disenfranchised as they begin to shape the content and structure of daily existence and so participate in a movement for social change (Yuval 1997:78).

I align to this view and consider it worth noting in the role of empowerment in Moghamo where the women ask for some economic power to help alleviate poverty and improve standards of living in the community without necessarily challenging the position of the men. How women empower themselves varies in different contexts and cultures, but certain elements are common and central. While there has been healthy debate on such aspects of agency and empowerment, it is evident that empowerment is not only about addressing immediate inequalities faced by women but also changes in consciousness and agency that challenge patriarchal structures (Batliwala: 1994, 2007; Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1994).

3. Concept of Community Development and Its Trends in Moghamo Community

The concept of community or rural development will be used interchangeably to mean the same thing. Taking an integrated approach, United Nations (1976), pointed out that it is a composite or comprehensive programme for rural development in which all relevant sectors such as agriculture, education, housing, health and employment are conceived as interlinking elements in a system having horizontal as well as vertical linkage in operational and spatial terms. According to Aziz, (1999), the concept of rural development should be viewed as a holistic concept, which recognizes the complexity and inter-relatedness of the many variables which influence the quality of life in rural areas. Maimunah (1999) provided a more comprehensive definition of community development as a process of community activities that are planned and organized in such a way so as to raise the quality of life in the community in terms of economy, social, culture, spiritual and the environment through initiatives and active participation of the community members and with minimum outside help. The main idea of community development is that people should realise that they can help themselves and they act together for the satisfaction of their desired needs.

Community development is not a new concept in the North West Region of Cameroon in general and among the Moghamo people in particular including their women. This can be reflected in their motto, inscribed in their language as "iforti ya kah" meaning 'unity is power'. Before the arrival of the colonial masters, what existed were ethnic groups and chiefdoms linked by cultural and linguistic affinities. The spirit of togetherness and working for the common good of the people existed. Community members set aside a particular day of the week known locally as 'Tad' on which they all came out very early in the morning usually informed the day before through the chief's messenger to overcome their common problems and difficulties for the betterment of their community and this became known as "community work". Community work projects included creation of roads linking villages, bridges, palaces, fetching wood, building houses and construction of water catchment areas to provide clean water. This was a tradition of good neighbourliness, caring and solidarity. This may suggest why Nuza (2005) stated that before the European colonialism, mutual help based on kinship and neighbourhood was a feature in Cameroon as people collectively participated in hunting expeditions, farm work, construction of houses, palaces, roads, fetching fire wood, and bridges. In other words, community development in a sense has the same meaning as "community work" and had started long before now.

During the period of colonialism in Cameroon (1884 - 1916), a new system was introduced by the Germans which could be called Coercive methods where people were forced to work in plantations and in the construction of roads networks (Amungwa & Lantum, 2005). During the British period of colonial rule in West Cameroon from 1922-1961, they did the same as the Germans but rather for the economic benefits of the colonialists rather than the local people. However, the official introduction of community development into Cameroon was in response to article 76 of the United Nations Charter (1945) which requested protecting powers to encourage the progressive evolution of trustee territories towards the ability to administer themselves independently. The British introduced mass education which became known as community development in the part of the then West Cameroon, which they administered from Nigeria.

The 1990 laws of freedom of association in Cameroon coupled with the women in development approach ushered in a new era for community development allowing the population to take charge of its own development through the self-reliant effort. This saw the creation or strengthening of existing village associations like Moghamo cultural and development association (MOCUDA) and Moghamo women's cultural and development association (MOWOCUDA) with branches over the national territory which serve as the main engines of development in this community. Although MOWOCUDA works in collaboration with MOCUDA, it is an autonomous women's group run by women and comprises other women's subgroups. The women's input into the execution development projects consists of meeting up with the stipulated levy, preparing food for workers, supply of unskilled labour, transportation of local materials like sand and in some cases stones, fetching water, and cleaning around the project site. Women who cannot contribute financially are expected to group themselves and put in extra hours of the manual work or offer foodstuffs commensurate to their contribution.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study employs Gender and Development (GAD) theory as the analytical framework. Gender and development are an approach to development that emerged in the 1980s, as an alternative to women in development (WID). WID emerged in the 1970's and viewed the problem of development as the exclusion of women. A major change from this occurred in the 1980's when it was thought that the exclusion of women in development alone was not the only problem but rather the social relations between men and women in different settings. This gave birth to the concept of gender and development (GAD) which uses gender relations rather than women as a category.

GAD does not treat women as an isolated category but rather argues that women are affected by the nature of patriarchal power in their societies and that unequal gender power relations prevent women from accessing resources. In gender and development studies, Whitehead, quoted in Oslergaard (1992) asserts no study of women and development can begin from the standpoint that the problem is women, but rather men and women, and more specifically the relations between them. Cultural and social constructions of gender are considered as the basis of the marginalization of women. According to Beneria & Sen (1981), patriarchal attitudes are the major barriers to women's equal participation in the development process. Unequal gender relations deny women from accessing or obtaining credit, education and technology. According to this development approach, women's inequality exists not because they are bypassed or marginalized by development planners but because women are not part of the power structuring. It emphasizes that gender relations influence how development programs are planned and implemented and unavoidably leads to favouring a single gender (male).

The GAD approach falls in line with the situation of Moghamo under study where codes of life are patriarchal and local norms govern community life. Such male-driven institutions and male interpreted norms tend to make women inferior and do not offer equal participation in development. The male folk are the only ones that inherit land and property and make decisions that involve women who are not part of the decision-making body. This is seen through the exclusion of women from traditional council, the decision-making body where decisions concerning the community including community development programs are taken. This hinders women from participating in community development that aims at ameliorating standards of living and alleviating rural poverty. In Moghamo, education of the boy child is preferred over that of the female child especially when resources are scarce. With low levels of education among women it will be impossible to build the knowledge necessary to eradicate poverty and hunger, combat disease and ensure environmental sustainability. At times, local norms expect women to surrender their earnings to their husbands. Women are not allowed become a chief, or notable. In the GAD approach, gender inequality is primarily cultural in character and origins as it is in Moghamo.

5. Women's Socio-Economic Status in Moghamo

It is also very important to know the kind of women I refer to in this work. With the advancement in technology, medical surgery and human right issues, the concept of womanhood has been evolving, rather than fixed. It obscures the biological distinctiveness that characterizes a woman thus pushing the concept of woman into a state of flux. Furthermore, on the internet a man can adopt the identity of a woman. Such a person can interact, and make decisions concerning woman in the cyber space. In situations like this, it would be difficult to ascertain males or females because biological identities are concealable. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the biological nature of a woman is no more the same everywhere. In some communities, gender identities are very flexible. Given that this research focuses on rural women in Moghamo, I take a more conservative view of a woman's identity with social roles and cultural perspectives of womanhood determined by their biology. Within this context, women are at the heart of the social construction of the family, wherein their reproductive capacity and marital status is important in community development (Okejiri, 2012).

The demographic structure of the population of Moghamo is dominated by the female sex in all age groups. The population pyramid of Moghamo shows that the female population is 61.4%, while the male is 38.6%. It is believed that the rural woman contributes about 90% of necessities for subsistence of the population. Women produce crops such as cocoyams, sweet yams, yellow yams, cassavas, plantains, bananas maize, and beans. Most of this food is consumed locally and the surplus is taken to the market. Some of the women are involved in petty trading. It is a custom that men are involved in cash crop production such as coffee and palm wine production. Moghamo has few farm-to-market-roads and most of which are seasonal. This hinders especially the women who need to transport their farm produce to the market. The quantity of the crops to be transported is affected since it is done most often by head or motor bikes. Some large families can be noticed in this society as a result of polygamous marriages, and a man with such a family is said to be of high status. No matter how intelligent, wise or tactful a woman is, they can never become a chief in any of the villages in Moghamo. This may be one of the reasons why Ajaga Nji (2000) noted that although national policy does ensure equality between men and women the rules of inheritance, birth, death, work, child care, sex and reproduction and a host of traditional rites, continue to subject women to men at the family, community and national level. Even during the annual dance called *neré*, an occasion to show the cultural richness of Moghamo including their traditional regalia, a woman no matter how gorgeously dressed is always expected to dance behind a man and constantly fanning him as a sign to portray his greatness. Today, the trends are changing; there are few families now who are beginning to rethink some of these practices. In some homes, men share out their property to both sons and daughters. Some women are able buy land and build their houses.

6. Case Study and Narrations of Some Women

Most studies on women have ignored women's view of themselves in relation to the obstacles they face in their participation in community development. This section presents ethnographic data from the case study of two Moghamo women's groups and some women's narratives of themselves.

6.1. Case Study

The case under consideration is the Moghamo women's cultural and development association (MOWOCUDA) which is a mother association with branches over the national territory and one of its core affiliates, the Moghamo Ladies Development Arm (MOLDA), a Moghamo women's group based in Yaoundé, the political capital of Cameroon. The main aim of MOWOCUDA is to support the empowerment of Moghamo women, enhance their socio-economic status as well as assist in the realisation of community development projects back home in the North-West Region. The group is composed of women of Moghamo origin as well as women married to Moghamo men. Working closely with MOWOCUDA is MOLDA whose aim is to promote the education and development of the girl child in Moghamo. MOLDA was born some twenty years ago when Moghamo elites from the Batibo sub-division based in Yaoundé decided to come together and form the Batibo Sub-divisional Elites Group (BATSDEG). On that fateful day, the men turned out accompanied by their wives to officially launch the commencement of their activities as a group. As the agenda of the day unfolded, a salient point concerning finances was reached. This had to do with a monthly contribution of a stipulated amount of money per person for the running of the group's activities. Incidentally, all the men who were present one after another even without concerting took their wives aside to convince them that instead of both of their names to be written for the financial contribution, only theirs (husband's names) should be written. At the end of the day, the women realised that their husbands had all refused them from participating in the financial aspect of the group. Then, a brilliant idea came from some of the elite women that since the men have refused to let them be part of the financial aspect of BATSDEG, they can at least form their own separate women's group where they would make their own financial contributions and raise their own money as women. The idea was quickly adopted by the women and within a few days, they met at a chosen location that saw the birth of the group MOLDA. As part of their activities, they have donated hospital equipment to many health facilities, books to schools, award scholarships to meritorious students while especially encouraging the girls in science subjects within the Moghamo area. They also conceived the idea of building an empowerment centre for the Moghamo women where rural women could acquire livelihood skills that will help them engage in income generating activities in order to improve the wellbeing of their families and community at large.

Concerning the membership of MOLDA, majority of these women have civil service jobs or businesses that generate their own income. In other words, these are empowered women that are seeking to empower their rural counterpart. Because these women are the cream of Moghamo ladies intellectually and financially, they serve as a think tank of the Moghamo women's community. They work very closely with the rural Moghamo women who are mostly farmers. Development and women's empowerment ideas that are bred within the group are carried to the individual village women's meetings that are part of MOWOCUDA, the umbrella association.

One of their most important achievements has been the mobilisation of funds and of Moghamo women nationwide for the construction of the women's empowerment centre in Batibo. When the men of the Moghamo villages heard about the plan to build this structure, some of them were very sceptical of the women's motives in addition to fears that women would now outmatch them economically and thus no longer be subservient to them. The first president of MOLDA and her colleagues paid a courtesy visit to all 22 chiefs of the villages within the Moghamo community to assuage their fears. When the Empowerment Centre was finally built and inaugurated in 2005, by the minister of women's affairs, the women organized a march and celebration, embellished in the special group fabric with the inscription 'Iforti Ya Ka' meaning 'Unity is Power.' It was the first occasion organized completely by women in the community.

Through this initiative, some women have become empowered as the centre provides facilities for adult literacy classes, a meeting hall, a domestic science laboratory, a computer literacy centre, a counselling service for women and a palm oil processing mill and others. However, they still suffer serious drawbacks from cultural norms and financial limitation that hinder speedy progress of their activities since women are generally poor.

6.1.1. Narrative 1

This is the story of a rural woman interviewed on the 24th February 2017 in Batibo, the head quarter of the Moghamo community and she had this to say.

I am a primary school teacher by profession, teaching in one of the lay private schools. My husband and I have been married for 25 years now and had both signed for polygamy so that he could be free under the law to take another wife if he wished. My husband is a civil servant working here in the village as well. Over the years, we have worked together to raise our five children. Because of our meagre salaries, I did a lot of farming and petty trading just to be able to meet up with the demands. This enabled us to save some money with which we were able to build our house and also buy some plots of land together. I have been farming on these plots of land but all the supporting documents of these properties are in my husband's name and he alone has the powers to decide what and when to do anything he likes with them. Although he did not take another wife but he got some children out of wedlock. With time, my mother decided to share some assets that she had managed to acquire in her lifetime amongst her children. I happened to have been offered a piece of land bought by my mother which was not too big but located at a strategic location. When it was time to process the documents of this land, my husband stepped in and put his name as the owner. When I discovered what he was doing, I disagreed with him and asked how he could seize the land my mother gave to me as my inheritance given that I will not

inherit anything from my father as women do not normally inherit anything from their fathers? It told him that it cannot work this time around as this is my singular opportunity to own something valuable. I stood firm on my decision that the land papers will have to bear my name and that I will be the one to decide what to do with it. He contested and resisted my decision for quite some time but I stood my ground. After failing to get me change my mind on several occasions, he finally succumbed to my decision. Community work is not a new thing in this place. I used to join the other women to work on community development projects, for example the community water project. The women of various quarters had specific days to go to the site and work manually while also making financial contributions. In addition to that, we the women of this quarter moulded blocks. This helps our community to have potable water which greatly reduces water borne diseases especially in children. As far as community projects are concerned, women usually play a big role for them to succeed. Unfortunately, the women are expected to do the manual work and are not often involved at the level of decision making. The men take the decision of what is to be done and only inform us of the part that we have to play. None of us is represented in the palace during such meetings. You can even notice that community water project took a long time before completion because the women were not involved from the beginning. And others in some other parts ended up prematurely as the women were not enough. In some cases, there was shortage of finances and mismanagement.

6.1.2. Narrative 2

This is the story of a rural woman interviewed on the 25th February 2017 in one of the villages of Moghamo called Bessi.

'I have been married for 15 years now and have four children, two boys and two girls. I do farming for a living. When I harvest my crops, I sell some of it to have some small money while I feed my family with the rest. We have oil palm trees in our farms and raffia palm bushes. My duty is to do the farm work often with the assistance of my daughters while my husband concentrates on tapping palm wine. I farm various types of food stuffs like maize, beans, cocoyam, yellow yams, cassava, and groundnuts and I'm equally involved in petty trading. When I sell some of my farm produce, I save most of the money for the children's education and health. When the children were much younger, I used to carry the palm wine my husband tapped to the market, sell and hand him the money, but now the boys are strong enough to help their father carry the palm wine. So, my daughters and I concentrate on food production. Most of the time, my husband ends up spending all the money he makes by drinking beer from the very bars he supplies with palm wine. This means he sells palm wine to buy beer. In the long run, he has little or nothing to invest in the education of the children. This attitude of drinking beer is common amongst most of his friends. Sometimes, my husband and his boys hunt animals both for sale and household consumption. So, in the end, I have to always work harder because he does not really support me. My friends and I are usually involved in performing tasks that help our community grow like we moulded blocks for the building of the hospital, prepared food for the people that were constructing the community water tank, and even the community work that is usually organised by the chief to keep the market and its surroundings clean.

6.1.3. Narrative 3

This is the story of a woman from Ashong village in Moghamo interviewed on the 25th February 2017. 'I have been married for 10 years with four children. I am a farmer based in Ashong. Actually, life has not been easy but we are managing despite the poverty. I dropped out of high school because my mother did not have the means to continue paying our fees. The following year, I got married to my husband who promised to send me to school but did not. So, my education ended at that level. I have to work on the farm to sustain my family. I farm mostly food stuffs like yams, maize, beans, vegetables and others. I get money from the sale of vegetables like cabbages, carrots and tomatoes and I save the money mostly for the children's education. Also, from time to time we make financial contributions when someone dies, for social events or even for community development projects. I thank God because my husband cooperates with me to send the children to school unlike most of my friends who send children to school single-handedly. My husband's main activity is to rear cattle. I use the cow dung as manure on my farms and it really boosts the harvest. When he sells cattle, he sometimes buys land for me to farm. The money I make is too small to buy land and besides women are not usually allowed own land. In this village, the men usually own land either through inheritance or purchase. Sometimes they say it is even difficult for a woman to buy land without a man because land agreements have to be made between men who could either be the husband, father, brother or any other family member. As far as number of children is concerned, my husband will decide how many we should have all together although I would have loved to end at this level and take care of the ones we already have. With respect to inheritance, I received nothing from my father simply because I am a woman unlike my brothers who were fortunate to have something. Since the women's empowerment centre was constructed and furnished, I have attended a number of times. I really loved it but my husband does not really know what it is about and how it can empower women. So, at times when he is happy, he can allow me to attend the programmes at the empowerment centre. These programmes helped me. There, I learnt how to make soap which I now make and sell to increase my income besides selling farm produce. I make a lot of money from the sales. The money is used also to send our children to school, buy medications and save some in my meeting. For community development projects, I always give financial contributions though little as well as supply of manual labour like in the village water project, the construction of the health centre'.

6.1.4. Narrative 4

This is the narrative of a rural woman from Mbengok village in Moghamo interviewed on the 27th March 2017. I am 44 years old and had been married for 21 years. Unfortunately, my husband died one year ago leaving me with five children. I am a farmer and I work crops like maize, groundnut, cocoyams, and yams for household consumption and if

there is any surplus I take to the market. When my late husband was still alive, I used to transport the palm wine he tapped from the bush to the sales point every morning before going to the farm. The only day I don't transport palm wine is on Sunday not because he wants me to rest or to go church but because it is day money is paid for all the palm wine supplied in the course of the week. Even when the MOWOCUDA came with the women's empowerment centre in Batibo to train women in home economics, adult literacy, farming techniques and other income generating activities, I thought that this was my own opportunity to go to school I ended at the primary level. Due to poverty, my father preferred to send only my younger brother to secondary school. He categorically refused and told me that he does not want to hear that I go there. Each time that he knew that there was going to be a programme there he will give me work. He told me that he does not want me to learn ideas that will cause me to be stubborn. He thought empowerment was about women taking the place of men and taking up male roles and vice versa. Other women who attended usually shared some lessons with me.

One day he travelled out of the village and so I decided to but attend but unfortunately for me that day he came back earlier than I anticipated. He was indeed very angry with me that day because I tried to go against his order. In my community, I always contribute to community work or project financially if I have the means or manually by putting extra hours of manual labour like during the construction the water tank.

6.2. *Limitations to Women Empowerment in Moghamo*

In this section, I will discuss the major issues that militate against women's empowerment and participation in community development in Moghamo.

6.3. *Perception of the Concept of Empowerment*

The concept of empowerment is often understood through different lenses by different authors, probably also reflecting their backgrounds and cultures. While some authors like Vandan & Robert (2002), Akomfale (2006), Danjuma et al (2013) centre their discussions on the economic dimension through the creation of an economic culture, acquisition of skills and capacities that will enable women generate income and emancipate themselves from poverty, others like Batliwala (1995) and Sen & Mukherjee (2014) go beyond economic emancipation to advocate for economic, political and reproductive rights as well as equality with men through the transformation of structures and institutions through which unequal access to and control of resources is sustained and perpetrated in the first place. This is equally reflected in the different responses given by men and women on the conception of women's empowerment.

When women were asked what they understand by women's empowerment, most responses focused on enhancing their abilities to earn income or increase earnings in order to. An informant said 'to be empowered means women should be given the opportunity to work outside the home and earn some money in order to contribute more financially to the demands and wellbeing of their homes'. Also, another informant said 'empowerment means women should be allowed to learn skills or a trade that will enable her make her own by either by being employed or doing a business that can give her money so that her life would not only be limited to caring for the home and going to the farm. This will enable her take better care of her children because sometimes the men have difficulties to shoulder all the responsibility of providing for the home and educating the children. It is very common in Moghamo to see women who singlehandedly send their children to school with little or no support from their husbands. I think empowerment is very necessary for women in this community'. One other informant mentioned that 'empowerment helps women to make their own money that will not only help their families but also go a long way to contribute towards community development in terms of paying the development levy'. The above quotes are from women based in Moghamo and are limited to economic empowerment geared towards poverty alleviation in their families, while enhancing financial participation in community development projects. Here, emphasis is on economic empowerment and its benefits to the family and community. It is worth noting that rural Moghamo women continue to accept the lower position assigned to them by culture and do not seek equality with men or to challenge unequal power relations in this patriarchal structure but rather are more interested in achieving economic liberation as opposed to Batliwala (1995) who stipulates that empowerment should also bring changes in consciousness and agency that challenge patriarchal structures. A woman informant from Yaoundé, an urban setup opined that 'if women are empowered by giving them positions such as president or financial secretary on the executive bench of community development projects, they will make better managers than men. She was indirectly insinuating that women could also make meaningful contribution to leadership in the execution and management of community development projects because women are more financially reliable in concordance with Fonchingong & Fonjong (2003). Another woman still from Yaoundé said 'empowerment is equipping women with livelihood skills and opportunities in education, professional training or training in the informal sector in order to bring out the best in them measured not only in terms of their ability to generate income but also productive ideas that can be implemented for the general wellbeing of their families, the people around them and the Moghamo community at large'. She further likened 'empowered women to a candle that light that shines in the darkness to guide, coordinate and manage both her home and by extension the community, making it a better place to live in'. This supposes that empowerment could give women the opportunity to take up certain tasks that were formerly performed by men in the community for the betterment of the family and community. It can also be noted women in urban setups have a broader perception of empowerment which goes beyond economic liberation to include participation in public life, integration in leadership and decision-making that will affect them directly but the ultimate challenge of confronting patriarchy remains. Though a step ahead of rural women still fall short of the conventional full package of Gender and development theorists, which empowerment to them is not just a redirection of resources to the poorest, as the basic needs approach intended, but empowering poor women's participation in the policy-making and implementation processes of development (Sen and Crown 1987). The perception

of Moghamo men on women's empowerment was generally that it all about women taking their much-cherished power and position as leaders in the society, and thus felt threatened by the idea. When men of the Moghamo villages heard about the organizational plans of the women to build an empowerment centre, they were upset and opposed the idea, fearing that the women would now outmatch them and thus no longer be subservient to them. Some women representatives including their leader paid a courtesy visit to all the 22 chiefs of the villages that make up Moghamo as pointed out by Kathleen:

The first president of the Moghamo Women's Cultural and Development Association (MOWUCUDA) and her colleagues went to all 22 chiefs to assuage their fears. After the customary pleasantries with each chief, the women promised to maintain their respect for them and the men of the community, and reiterated that they were looking for a means to be empowered economically in order to assist the men to be their partners in the projects that would develop their community (Kathleen 2007:9).

From the above, one could remark that this is one of the many reasons why men do not support the women in this struggle. Some do not even want their wives to attend meetings or even visit the empowerment centre. As the men do not encourage and support women because of the fear of their position, the full participation of women in community development is compromised.

From the above however, empowerment in Moghamo has been redefined by the local women who both see it as a means to assist the men while being allowed to take part in the life of the community without necessarily challenging men's position or changing traditional roles. In this situation, the Moghamo women do not see themselves out of the male world and do not see themselves just a level little higher than the study of the ducks and fowls as outlined by (Ardener 2006). This supposes that the global picture of empowerment is different from what obtains at the local level. The fact about all this is that Moghamo women have always made it very clear that working with and supporting men was very important to them. In spite of this, men still hold very tightly to their positions in this community.

In a focus group discussion in Moghamo, the men remarked that they are willing to allow women to be empowered if it does not touch on their leadership, status and respect. In other words, the women can be empowered in their own domain and not that of the men. In this case power as competences to function in their roles as women and not challenging the position of men. This is because division of gender roles in this community is very glaring. This might also suggest why at the empowerment centre, the women are only trained and taught in their domain such as adult literacy class, a meeting hall, a domestic science laboratory, a computer literacy centre, a counselling service for women and palm oil processing mill, adult literacy centre, tailoring, poultry, piggery, and farming techniques.

One might say that without embedding the concept of empowerment into the different socio-cultural contexts makes it vague or better still, not understandable. The existence of different people and different ways of doing things has put the concept of empowerment into a flux. Different places and societies have different practices and beliefs and it is necessary to be cognisant of this heterogeneity within a certain global homogeneity of gender roles. This view does not take cognisance of the socio-cultural and religious diversity of many African countries as well as infrastructural and resources availability. This might be one of the reasons why the Yaoundé Declaration recommended a new declaration as gender rights in Africa which will take into consideration local tradition and socio-political realities of the African countries (2005A:2) as cited by (Akogutuh 2008). The main issue with regard to the concept of women's empowerment is that context matters and what works for one society may not necessarily work for the other.

6.4. Poverty

In Nigeria, Adegoroye and Adegoroye (2008) demonstrate that inadequate finance and access to loans militate against women economically. In Cameroon, Akogutuh (2008) pointed out that there is a catalogue of problems facing the North West region women of Cameroon but most acute of them is abject poverty in a large scale. Poverty remains a widespread issue among women in Moghamo. Women do not have enough resources to enable them participate effectively in community development. Majority of them are involved in economic activities that do not generate enough resources. Most of them are peasant farmers and petty traders with just subsistent income. They produce crops such as cassavas, beans, maize, yams, plantains, cocoyam and potatoes mostly for household consumption. Even when there is surplus, an informant remarked you must have to seek for permission from your husband before marketing them as narrated by an informant:

Women often do not own livestock and the value of their work are not appreciated. At times, to sell some of the farm product, permission has to be sought. In fact, even to sell a bag of maize, that I have planted myself, I have to do it secretly. We are really poor (Moghamo 17th February 2017).

This may suggest why OECD (2010) opined that legislation in support of women's financial autonomy is weak in Cameroon, often because of the conflicting legal systems and customs. Very few women have the economic power to finance themselves support developmental programmes.

I'm often asked what is the most serious form of women's rights violation in the world today and my reply is consistent: extreme poverty. The women are extremely poor. If I had money, I would have contributed for the community water project like any other men and some women did. But since I did not have, I could not do otherwise. I really like to participate like my friend did and some other women, but how do I do it when I don't have money even to take care for myself and the children. Poverty is really a bad thing and we the women suffer more from it than the men (Moghamo 17th February 2017).

Many authors like Mustapha (2014), Kongolo (2009) and Uchenndu (2015) agree that women are generally poor, and that rural women are likely to remain in a worse-off position. This may confirm why Mustapha (2014) remarked that

among the 70% of the population estimated to be living below poverty line, over 65% are projected to be women. Also, in Nigeria (Osita 2015) a good number of rural women lack means of livelihood and opportunity for economic independence. This is the case in Moghamo especially in the remote villages of Mbengok, Numben, Kurugwe where it difficult for some of these women to purchase basic needs for themselves, talk less of supporting community development projects. Faced with this kind of problem, it becomes very difficult for them to participate or even to support community development like fellow women are doing. This situation may suggest why Momsen (2004) remarked that the experiences of different states and regions show that economic prosperity helps gender equality. This situation does not really help them because they seek means only to survive with their families and not the community.

6.5. Women and Unpaid Work

Women are generally less able than men to participate in economic opportunities because they face a work burden that men do not. In most societies like Moghamo, women are responsible for most of the household and child caring activities as well as farm crop production. Furthermore, the nature of the task, such as caring for children and elderly household members, requires women to stay near the home, thus limiting options to work for a wage and support or participate in development. Looking at the tedious nature of women's job, Arderner calls it the 'hot stove' arguments: that women are too busy with the realities of child birth and child rearing and thus have less time for or less propensity towards the making of models of society, for each other, for men or for ethnographers (Arderner 1975).

Gender differences become clearer when looking at women's workloads. This concurs with that fact that women spend 85 to 90 percent of time on household food processing and preparation across a wide range of countries (Fontana and Natalia, 2008, Jain, 1996; Acharya and Bennett, 1982; Wrangham 2009). This continues to aggravate the poverty situation of women because the bulk of their time is spent doing unrecognised and unpaid work while she is evaluated in terms of paid work, being grossly undervalued as typically reflected in the Moghamo scenario. The undertone such outcome is the 'cultural inferiorization' of the woman's position in society through the imposition of lower gender identity on them (Meo, 2011, 852).

6.6. Low Level of Education

Literacy is a mechanism that can transform. It has the potential to boost women's involvement in development. However, this is not the case in Moghamo. Low level of education is another factor affecting women participation in community development. This is reflected in the fact that male education used to be prioritised over female education where there is lack of resources. Even when both males and females have equal educational opportunities, males are more likely to achieve high educational levels than females because early pregnancy, early marriage, scarce resources and a feeling that husbands rather than parents will mostly likely enjoy the benefits of female education as reflected by the following informant.

In our culture, parents did not use to bother as much about female education as about male education because girls will leave the family through marriage, meanwhile males will continue to propagate the family name. This can be seen from the fact that the proportion of females decreases as the level of education increases (Moghamo 24 February 2017). Lower levels of education for girls usually translate into unemployment or employment in low paid jobs than males. The issue of not sending the girl child became so widespread that on the day of inauguration of women's empowerment centre, the women manifested

'When the Empowerment Centre was being inaugurated in 2005 by the minister of women's affairs - the women amazed the entire village as they organized a march and celebration, dressed in their special group fabric inscribed with the words 'Iforti Ya Ka' meaning 'Unity is Strength', held their placards high with their demanding that 'the girl child receives equal access to education as the boy child' (Kathleen 2007:10).

Lack of access to formal education and learning has been identified as a key barrier to women's employment, advancement and empowerment in the society. Ebele (2003) opines that education increases the chances of employment for women thereby empowering them economically but unfortunately, equal access to education for girls is still a challenge in Africa. It is also necessary to affirm that girls' attainment of the tertiary education is more likely to broaden opportunities and degree of empowerment than ending at the primary or secondary school level especially with recent technological advancements. Education is the most effective strategy for promoting women empowerment (Okeke, 1995). Educating the women in Sub Saharan Africa has been noted to have a powerful developmental effect in the light of the women's cardinal role of nurturing, rearing, socialising and educating children (Kongolo, 2009). Another motive is the level of economic poverty as narrated by an informant;

Another important thing apart from culture limiting female education is poverty. In fact, it plays a key role when it comes to coping with direct costs such as tuition fees, cost of writing and text books, uniforms and other expenses. Worse still is in families with many children, these costs exceed the income of the family and girls are the first to be denied schooling. In some cases, it is common for girls to be taken out of school at any time for marriage. (Moghamo, 25th March 2017).

In a similar manner, for example in Ghana girls are denied education partly because it is perceived that while households bear the cost of their education, their benefits accrue to their husband (Abane 2004). This therefore, implies that tradition alone that side-lined the girl child from education but also economic factor that has push custom to make a choice and the choice of the boy child attend school, indeed reminds us of the patriarchy society which is under study and the interrelatedness of cultural element. To understand one needs to understand the complex system in which it operates. This explains why women's endeavour to participate in community development is hampered by illiteracy or low level of

education. At times they feel that is the affair for men who have gone to school and so lag behind. With low levels of education among women and the fact that they form the majority of the population, it will be impossible to build the knowledge necessary to eradicate poverty and hunger, combat disease and ensure environmental sustainability. Education is the bedrock of any nation building and if majority women who constitute more than half of the population lack it, it would have serious negative effects. In other words, literacy is a mechanism that can harness the potentials to boost women's involvement in development as it stimulates and enhances individual and group initiatives.

6.7. *Ownership of Land and Accessibility to Credit*

Overall, women's access to land in African societies is quite restricted (Uchendu, 2014: Kangolo, even in cases where the law protects women's right to land. Tradition and customs inhibit their access to land and control over land. This aspect of culture where land is passed down the male line still remains very stiff in the Moghamo community as depicted by the following informant. 'Within the Moghamo peoples, women do not inherit land and the simple reason is that they will automatically transfer the family wealth to another family. Only males inherit because they remain within the family circle. Although things have started changing with some very few enlightened families giving land to their daughters, the practice is not widespread. However, a woman can own land that she buys with her money. In some cases, unmarried women can gain access to land through their fathers or brothers or uncles, but upon marriage in patriarchal community like that of Moghamo, women as they are expected to have access to land through their husbands (Moghamo, 17th May). This may suggest why FOA (1996) remarked that women rarely own land and when they do, their holdings tend to be smaller and less fertile than those of men. According to Sen & Mukherjee (2014), there can be no empowerment without rights and this includes access to external resources including land and supportive political institutions cultural norms. Thus, women's inability to inherit land is a major handicap to their empowerment and consequently their ability to contribute to community development.

Ott et al (1995) cited in Ebele (2003) opines that where women have no direct access to land because of patriarchal and customary practices that pass property through the male line, they lack direct access to credit because of no collateral. Cameroon's current credit legislation does not discriminate against women, but several factors make it difficult for the majority of women to gain access to bank loans. For example, legislative provisions restrict women's legal capacity to offer guarantees; thus, some banks demand the husband's guarantee as a condition for granting a loan and others will ask for land titles whereas they don't own land. This situation prevents women from taking up businesses with aim of alleviating poverty and uplifting standard of living. This may be one of the reasons why Momsen remarked that there is a great deal of evidence drawn from comparisons at the national and sub-national scale that societies that discriminate on the bases of gender pay a price in more poverty, slower growth and a lower quality of life, while gender equality enhances development (Momson 2004).

This situation makes it difficult for women to fully participate in community development as Chowdhury (1995:39) in this way, Third World women become participants in, rather than recipients of the development process

6.8. *The Moghamo Women Empowerment Center*

Since the creation of the Moghamo women's empowerment centre and its inauguration by the minister of social affairs in 2005, much has been done to empower the women such as training in them in livelihood skills and income generation. However, the centre has been facing a lot of problems lately due to a lack of a running budget to finances their activities. It is worth noting that most of their practical lessons require materials that are generally lack due to lack of finances. This is due to financial and managerial problems, and lack of government support. The promises that were made by the state on the day of its inauguration have not been fulfilled. Nothing new has added to it. The building, chairs and the tables are dilapidating. There is a serious shortage support staff and teachers trained for the purpose. Programs for training and development of women's skills are gradually dying down. Even women's' turn out is very discouraging. Many have become reluctant and are going along with their private businesses. The zeal to attend meetings is also dying down. The centre which used to be involved in the mobilization activities of women, organization of workshops, seminars, and lectures to train women to acquire necessary skills for their empowerment is handicapped by lack of finance. There are no tips for the volunteers who offer training at the centre. Many women too do not attend meetings partially due to their work schedule or refusal from their husbands as an informant narrated.

At times I don't go for meetings because they don't respect time. Sometimes too is due to the discouragement of my husband. When I will prepare to go for meetings, he will send me or tell me that we are going somewhere now. Also, at times since I live very far from the centre, I don't have money for taxi or to take motor cycle. If you ask many women, they have similar problems like the ones I have just cited. (Moghamo 16th February 2017).

This centre needs external help to be revamped in order to continue to function in full capacity in empowering the women of this community. This equally shows the limitation of women when it comes to financing their own projects, reiterating the need for their empowerment. This kind of atmosphere is dangerous for women who want to be empowered and to participate in community development project. Given this situation, they may continue to be helpless unless their potentials are developed and harnessed through creative entrepreneurial skills and establishment of creative industries. Rural women in Moghamo have the potentials and capabilities to learn, acquire and develop skill in income generating activities like hair dressing, tailoring, interior and exterior decoration, embroidery, fashion designing, pedicure and manicure, cake designing, bead making, weaving with wool, crochet work, soap making, local disinfectant making, air fresher and perfume making, bakery among other only that they are incapacitated by the fact that the centre is no longer very functional

6.9. Government Policy

Although progress in gender equality legislation has been made in many countries, laws alone are not enough especially where tradition practices are deeply embedded. Excellent policies and intentions have not translated into reality or action to make the changes required if women are to participate effectively to the community development. In Nigeria studies have proven that despite national policies to encourage equal opportunities, women generally lag behind in educational attainment, earning capacity and other aspects (Ebele 2003). In Cameroon, the Cameroon's constitution upholds the principle of gender equality yet there is still inequality between men and women because of conflicting legal systems and customs (OECD 2010). The national gender policy is yet to bear fruits. Does this mean that local praxis is stronger than the state regulation? This is may be the reason why Fonjong (2001) pointed out that government, and men, seem to have a vested interest in women's subordination. Otherwise, how can one explain the fact that marriage and property laws, population and social benefit policies, minimum wage rates, are all dictated by the Cameroonian state yet continue to repress women? Rural areas are common places where socio-cultural practices, customs and beliefs are predominant and this is the case with Moghamo the area of study. Because the State cannot perform its function well in support of the gender equality, the feminist scholars have defined the State as a masculine construct from which women are seemingly excluded (Pettman 1996). The government seems not doing as Rosaldo and Lamphere report:

Everywhere we find that women are excluded from certain crucial economic or political activities, that their roles as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than the roles of men. It seems fair to say then that all contemporary societies are to some extent male dominated, and although the degree and expression of female subordination vary greatly, sexual asymmetry is presently a universal fact of human social life (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974:1).

This is a confirmation in many cultures including Moghamo. This inequality still exists despite the fact that the Cameroon constitution upholds the principle of gender equality

6.10. Lack of Collective Action

From the above discussions, it is clear that the government through policy and laws does grand equality to all its citizens including the Moghamo women. This Principle-Agent thinking approach or top-down approach failed because laws alone cannot translate situations into realities. There still exist gender inequality between men and women.

Realising that the government's effort was just on paper and seeing the need to be empowered in order to better their lives and that of their community, the women took upon themselves to construct the Moghamo women's empowerment centre way back in 2005. This is eleven years since its creation and women are saying that things have not worked out for them as anticipated. This implies that the agent approach or the bottom top approach initiated by the women succeeded only to a lesser extent and required more input or ways for its materialisation and sustainability. Thus, the collective approach by Booth and Gammack has not been applied:

Our position is that governance challenges in Africa are not fundamentally about one set of people getting another set of people to behave better in the interests of development. They are about sets of people finding ways of being able to act collectively in their own and others' best interest (Booth and Gammack 2013:15).

By this they mean that development interventions in African societies rather than being part of a good governance agenda at national state level need to address multilevel collective action challenges. That is different stakeholders when faced with a common collective concern need to find ways of acting together with their different interests in mind. This collective approach which is that of bringing together (the state, women, men, and custodians of traditions over women empowerment and development issues in Moghamo) with each of them having their interest in mind is missing and thus makes things difficult for the women to be empowered and to fully participate in community development.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this study have provided a good picture of the myriad possible reasons for rural women sliding into the obscurity of not fully participating in the development process. Cultural norms and local praxis continue to restrain women from empowerment and full participation in development. While some of these factors are directly linked the cultural norms and local praxis like women not having the right to inherit land from their fathers or husbands, exclusion of women from decision-making circles, an inferior status accompanied by the heavy burden of unpaid work in nurturing the family, educating children that has resulted in much poverty amongst their ranks, others can be attributed to failure of translating government policies and promises into action. Low levels of education of women preclude them from information that is vital from empowerment. Despite the frantic efforts by made Moghamo women's associations like MOWOCUDA and MOLDA in building the women's empowerment centre to empower especially their rural counterpart for effective participation in community development, lack of running budget and training personnel still pose serious drawbacks. A poor perception of empowerment among Moghamo men also limits their support for women's activities and projects geared towards women's empowerment. Due to the lack of collective action from community development stakeholders, including the women, men, custodians of tradition and government, the result is lack of fruitfulness and sustainability of development investments intended for the empowerment of women and their full participation in development. If the different stakeholders with their different interests in mind come together and find ways of addressing their collective concerns, achieving women's empowerment and sustainable community development would be easier and possible because all stakeholders would be beneficiaries.

8. References

- i. Ebele, A. (2003) 'Gender and Economic Development' A Paper Delivered to Participants of Senior Executive Course, No 25 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Jos.
- ii. Adegoroye, A. A., Adegoroye, A. A. (2008). The Roles of Selected NGOs in Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ibadan Land. *Journal of Gender and Behavior*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Ife Center for Psychological Studies, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
- iii. Ajaga, N. (2000). Socio-cultural determinants of the Cameroon woman. Implications for the family in the 21st century. University of Dschang, P. O. Box 138, Dschang, Cameroon.
- iv. Akogutuh. A. Alasah, (2008). Women's empowerment and community development in Cameroon. A case study of NGOs and women's organizations in the North West Province, University of South Hampton, School of Social Sciences, PhD Thesis.
- v. Akomolafe, C. O. (2006). Open and Distance Learning as a Mechanism for Women Empowerment in Nigeria. *Educational Foundations and Management*.
- vi. Amungwa & Lantum, (2005). The application of rural community development to strengthening civil societies structures in Cameroon. Paper presented at the IACD conference in Yaoundé, 3rd -7th April, 2005.
- vii. Batliwala, S. (1994). The meaning of women's empowerment. New concepts from action in population policies reconsidered. Empowerment and rights. G, Sen, A. Germian and L. C. Chem Cambridge University Press
- viii. Beneria, L. and Sen, G. 1982: Class and gender inequalities and women's role in economic development-theoretical and practical implications. *Feminist Studies*, 8 (I), 157-76.
- ix. Bisika, T. (2008) 'Do Social and Cultural Factors Perpetuate Gender Based Violence in Malani?' *Journal of Gender and Behavior*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Ife Center for Psychological Studies, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- x. Booth D. and Grammack D. (2013): *Governance for Development in Africa. Solving collective action problems* Zed Books London
- xi. Boserup, E. (1970) *women's role in economic development*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- xii. Briere, J. (2004) 'Violence against Women, Outcome, Complexity and Implications for Assessments and Treatment' *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 19, No. 11
- xiii. Chowdhry, G. (1995): Engendering development? Women in Development (WID) in international development regimes. In M.H Marchand and J.L. Parpart (eds). *Feminism/ post-modernism/development*. London: Routledge, 26-41
- xiv. Ferguson A. (2009): *Redoing theory and research with a feminist face* in Anna G. Jonasdottir and Kathleen B. Jones (eds) *Empowerment, Development and women liberation in the political interest of gender revisited: United Nations University Press New York*
- xv. Fonchingong, C.C, Fonjong, L.N. (2003). The Concept of Self-Reliance in Community Development Initiatives in the Cameroon Grassfields. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 12(2): 196-219 University of Buea, Cameroon.
- xvi. Fonjong L. (2001) *Fostering women's participation in development through non-governmental efforts in Cameroon* (ed) the geographical journal Vol 167, N0 3 September pp223-234
- xvii. Ibekwe, P. C. (2007). Preventing Violence Against Women: The Time to Uphold an Important Aspect of Reproductive Health Needs of Women in Nigeria. *Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care*, Vol. 33, No. 3
- xviii. Kathleen H. (2007): *Forti Ya Ka 'Unity is Power'* A Narrative of the Life and Work of Susan Tenjoh-Okwen of Cameroon. Women Peace Makers Program Fred J. Hansen Foundation-www.sandiego.edu/peacestudies/ipj
- xix. Kongolo, M. (2009) Factors Limiting Women's Involvement in Development: Lesson from Ithuseng, South Africa (Pp. 13-30) *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, Ethiopia
- xx. Kovacs, A. (2005). NGOs, Women's Collectives and Women's Empowerment in India. Available at <http://ecommons.uniwiipeg.ca>
- xxi. Malami, H. U. (2008). The Contributions of Contemporary Sokoto Women to the Nigerian Economy: A Case Study of Women and Girl Child Center, Gidan Haki Area. *Journal of Gender and Behavior*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Ife Center for Psychological Studies, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
- xxii. Magaji, S. and Aliyu U. (2007) 'Micro Credit and Women Empowerment in Bauchi State: The Role of Community Banking' *Issues in Economics*, Vol. 2, Department of Economics, UDUS
- xxiii. Meer, S. (1998). *Women speak: Reflections on our struggles 1982-1987*. Cape Town, Kwela Books and Oxfam GB in Association with Speak
- xxiv. MINADER (2008) *Department community and local development budget*, Yaoundé Cameroon
- xxv. Mohasi, M.; B. L. Morolong and H. M. Lephoto (2004) 'Empowering Women to Serve as Catalyst in Poverty Reduction in Lesotho: Using Adult Education as Strategic Approach' National University of Lesotho. Botswana Conference
- xxvi. Moser, C. O. N. (1993). *Gender planning and development: Theory, practice and training*. London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203411940
- xxvii. Nuza, T. (2005) *the civil society and community development. The rule of the State; Keynote address at the Yaoundé IACD conference*, April 3-7th
- xxviii. OECD (2010) *Atlas of Gender and Development: How social norms affect gender equality in NON-OECD countries* ISBN 978-92-64-07747-8

- xxix. Okeke, E. A. C. (1995). Women Empowerment and Rural Development. In Eboh, E. C.; C. U. Okoye and D. Aykhi (eds) *Rural Development in Nigeria: Concepts, Process and Prospects*. Enugu: Auto-Century
- xxx. Olakulein, F. K. and O. D. Ojo (2006). Distance Education as a Women Empowerment Strategy in Africa. *TOJDE* Vol. 7, No. 1, Article 13 Olakulein, F. K. and O. D. Ojo (2006) 'Distance Education as a Women Empowerment Strategy in Africa' *TOJDE* Vol. 7, No. 1, Article 13.
- xxxi. Ostergaard, L. (Ed.) (1992) *Gender and Development. A Practical Guide*, London: Routledge
- xxxii. Rogers, B. (1980) *the domestication of women: Discrimination in Developing Societies*. London: Tavistock
- xxxiii. Rosaldo M. and Lamphere L. (1974) Introduction. In M. Z Rosaldo and Lamphere (eds) *women, culture and society* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press pp 1-15
- xxxiv. Sen G. and Grown C. (1987) *Development, Crisis and Alternative visions. Third World women's perspectives*. Review Press New York
- xxxv. Uchendu E. (2015) *Repositioning culture for development: women and development in a Nigerian rural community* Routledge Taylor & Francis
- xxxvi. Yuval D. (1997): *Women Ethnicity and empowerment in Ann Oakley and Juliet Mitshell (eds.) Who's Afraid of Feminism?* Pp 77-98: New Press: New York