

## **“Entrenched Patriarchy, Women Social Movement and Women Participation in Politics”**

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The social, economic and political status of women in most societies all over the world, in spite of many decades of concern and advocacy by world organizations, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) as well as the feminist groups has not been fundamentally transformed. They have continued to remain largely inconsequential in decision making arena both in their private and public lives. For close to about four decades, the women in many continents as well as in many countries have intensified the struggles not only to mobilize themselves, understand and appreciate the magnitude of their socio-economic predicaments, but to seek an alternative strategy that will improve their participation in politics. However, with each step, and strategy, there are always the patriarchal brick walls. This paper attempts to investigate and interrogate patriarchy in relations to the exclusion of women from the decision making processes. It argued that the deep seated entrenchment and institutionalization of patriarchy in the mind-set of the generality of the populace is largely responsible. The emergence of women social movement and their efforts to open the political space to widen women participation and the constraints they encountered were then examined. The place of patriarchy in the marginalization, and exclusion of women from participation in politics was thereafter put in perspective. Emphasis was placed on how the manifest patriarchal constraints have prevented the empowering of women, thereby making the women’s social movements not to have created any significant impact.

Chowdhury et al (1994)<sup>1</sup> opined that women are barely visible in formal political institutions. They contended that political systems, no matter their ideology, form, mobilization capacity are predicated on virtual exclusion or marginalization of women from formal politics. It is argued that half of the world’s population routinely holds only 5-10 percent of formal positions in political leadership and that there is a bleak picture of women’s participation as national leaders, cabinet ministers, members of national legislature and incumbents in the high civil service.<sup>2</sup>At the end of the 1990s, available data indicates that only 5 % of the 159 countries in the United Nation had some women as chief executives in nearly all the 100 countries. Even within the United Nations System, less than 5 percent of senior managers are women in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup>

At the national levels, the picture is more or less the same; Onokala P.C. and Onah F.O. (1998) are of the view that the participation of women in politics in Nigeria in the 1970s and 1990s was very low. In 1991 only 27 out of 172 legislators in the House of Assembly of one of the Eastern States were women. In 1999 there were 106 male Senators with only 3 females Senators. Out of 360 members of the House of Representatives in 2003, 345 were males and only 15 were females.<sup>4</sup>There has been little improvement in the political empowerment of women in recent time. Even then men still account for 90 percent of the country’s legislature despite the promises made in 2001 to increase the legislative posts of women to 30 percent ratio of women to men in political appointment which is still insignificant.

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<sup>1</sup>Chowdhury, N., Nelson J. B., Carver, A. K., Johnson N. J. and O’Loughlin, P.L. (1994) “Redefining Politics: Patterns Of Women’s Political Engagement from Global Perspective” in *Women and Politics Worldwide* (Ed) Barbara J. Nelson and Najma Chowdhury, London: Yale University Press, P15.

<sup>2</sup>Chowdhury, N. et al Ibid, p15

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p15

<sup>4</sup> Onweagba, A. E. and Nwaihu, E. C.(2004) “Scope of Developing Rural Infrastructure” in *Journal of Agricultural and Food Science* Vol. 2 No 2 p91-97

Apart from political and elected appointments, women are equally grossly underrepresented in many other fields – academia, education, employment etc. Onweagba A.E and Nwaihu (2004) opined that female faculty members in some of the universities in Nigeria occupy middle management and entry level positions.<sup>5</sup> They observed that there is gender bias and discrimination in higher institutions of learning in South- Eastern Nigeria.

Onokala and Onoh carried out a survey of the University of Nigeria Nsukka from 1980 to 1997 and discovered that the number and percentage of female academic staff of the total number was lower than that of the male staff in all the faculties<sup>6</sup>.

The marginalization of women and their near total absence from decision making processes as well as their lack of participation in politics makes the study of social movement and the place of patriarchy in various degrees of constraints relevant. Every member of the society including women and girls need to be equipped with knowledge, skills and habits to be able to make their contribution towards the development of the society. Furthermore, there is the need to promote gender equality. It needs to be emphasized that we have reached a stage in human development in which rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals are not determined by the fact of been born male or female a stage where both men and women can realize their full potentials. In this regard, there is the need to create more awareness in the efforts at incorporating gender perspective in policy making and the adoption of gender inclusive approaches in the implementation of development related goals in order to empower women. To achieve this, at regular basis, we need to examine and analyze impediments to the political and socio-economic empowerment of women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The political backwardness and social subordination of women must be brought to focus to encourage maximum support and participation of women in decision making and development of the nation.

### ***Women's Social Movements***

Social movements of different categories have been recorded in history among different societies in different part of the world. When it was first applied in the 19th century it had a more specific meaning. It meant movement of the new industrial working class with its socialistic, communistic and anarchistic tendencies<sup>7</sup>. They were in the continental Europe identified with the labour movement until the second decade of this century. Sills opined that a social movement is 'a wide variety of collective attempts to bring about a change in certain Institutions or to create an entirely new order.'<sup>8</sup> When people get organized and extend their activities beyond the immediate confines of the group, they become a core of a social movement.<sup>9</sup> It is a large grouping of people who are organized to bring about or block a change in the social – cultural system.<sup>10</sup> Social movement can be regarded as rational ways by which a group of people with a common life experience come together to change conditions that they view as disadvantages to them. They are a common expression by groups of people who finds themselves victims by polarizing forces inherent in a highly organized and stratified society.<sup>11</sup> They are grounded in the past, but as part of their ideology and programme, they must articulate a vision of a better future. In the light of this, social movements articulate an alternative to the on-going process of social, economic and political development.

Social movements have been categorized into two broad groups based on the magnitude of their goals as either reform movement or revolutionary movement. Newman<sup>12</sup> contended that the reform movements seeks to limited aspects of a society, but does not seek to alter or replace major social Institutions, for example the United State Civil Rights movements of the 1960s. These movements sought for the opening of existing Institutions to full and equal participation by members of the minority groups. So also was the anti – Vietnam War movement of the same period. The movement largely questioned government policy but in the process brought down two presidents – Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. It did not seek to change the form of government in existence.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Onokala, P.C and Onah, F.O (1998) "Women in Academic Positions in the University of Nigeria" AAU p24.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p24

<sup>7</sup> David L. Sills (ed) International Encyclopedia of Social Science vol. 13 New York Macmillan Company and the Free Press p. 439

<sup>8</sup> Ibid p438

<sup>9</sup> David M. Newman (2006) Sociology Exploring the Architecture of Everyday life 6th (ed) London: Sage Publication p. 513

<sup>10</sup> S. S. Shashi (2007) International Encyclopedia Social Science vol. 17 New Dethi: Ammol Publications PUT Ltd p. 4509

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p4510

<sup>12</sup> Newman opcit p. 513

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p 513

Other examples of reform movements are the nuclear freeze movement, the Labour Union movement, School prayer movement, Environmental movement, and Women's movement.

Revolutionary Movement on the other hand attempts to overthrow the entire system itself whether it is the government or the existing social structure. They do this, in order to replace it with another one, for example, the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and the African Revolution of 1996.<sup>14</sup> These were movements that toppled existing governments and created a new social order in their various countries and social structures. However, it should be noted that even though revolutionary change in basic social Institutions can be brought about through non – violent means peaceful labour strike, democratic and Civil disobedience, most successful revolutions have involved some level of violence on the part of both movement participants and group opposing revolution.

Social movement comes into existence when dissatisfied people see their condition as resulting from society's inability to meet their needs. They develop when certain segments of the population conclude that society's resources – access to political power, high education, living wages, legal justice, medical care, a clean and healthy environment etc., are distributed unequally and unfairly.<sup>15</sup> The Militants in the Niger – Delta of Nigeria, and the ongoing strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities in the same nation is a good example. Social movements come alive when people come to believe that they have a moral right to the satisfaction of their unmet expectations and that this satisfaction cannot or will not occur without some effort on their part. Sills<sup>16</sup> observed that all major social movements develop a more or less elaborate, more or less consistent set of ideas which its members must accept more or less uncritically as members of a religious group accept as a creed. Modern social movements resort to abstract principles concerning the nature of man, his destination, and his natural rights in combination with a critique of the existing economic, political and cultural Institutions.<sup>17</sup> The ideology comes in a form of coherent system of beliefs, values, and ideas that justified its existence. The ideology developed by the social movements help to frame the issue in moral terms and make people to become willing to risk arrest, personal, financial cost or worse for the good of the cause. Such an ideology defines a group's interest and help in identifying people as either supporters or enemies. It provides those participating in the movements with a collective sense of what the specific goals of the movements are or should be. But for ideology to be effective, it must be spread through social networks of friends, family, co-workers and other contacts.<sup>18</sup> However, at times, social movements form outside the groups of people whose interest the movement represents. In Nigeria, such movements seek the support of Traditional Rulers, members of the legislature arms of government as well as some past Military heads of State.

Complementing the ideology of the movement is group consciousness. A sense of belonging and of solidarity among the members of a group is essential for social movements. Consciousness is generated through active participation and may assume various socio – psychological characteristics.<sup>19</sup> This consciousness is critical because they are a specific kind of concerted action groups. They last longer and are more integrated than mobs, masses, and crowds.

The Nigerian social movements came actively alive in 1929 when the women participated in anti-colonial resistance and in the wave of nationalist liberation movement. The women dug deep into the traditional institution of "setting on a man" to humiliate and teach the men who violated women's right. They used it as a collective political tool against the British colonial authorities. This social movement was a direct response of women to the colonial introduction of Taxes in 1927 and 1927 and 1928 in some Southern provinces of Eastern Nigeria.<sup>20</sup>

In the post-colonial era, the market women exploited their relatively acquired position in the informal sector as traders to form different types of social movements at different stages of development of the society. They organized themselves into associations and networks to assist themselves and to change their situation.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid 514

<sup>15</sup> Ibid 514

<sup>16</sup> Sills opcit p. 493

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p 440

<sup>18</sup> Newman opcit p. 515

<sup>19</sup> Sills opcit p. 493

<sup>20</sup> T. Falola and N. A. Amponsah (2012) *Women's Roles in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Oxford: Creenwood p. 159

In early post-colonial period, in some part of Yoruba Land, the market place and used their control of the space to persuade influential men in Yoruba society ‘who also wanted financial assistance from the women.’<sup>21</sup> The social movement set up among the Egba women by Funmlayo Ransome Kuti in 1947 is in the forefront of such persuasion. This was later transformed in 1953 to the National women’s Union and later the Federation of Nigerian Women’s Society (FNWS). FNSW metamorphosed into the National Council of Women’s Societies (NCWS) in 1958 consequent upon affiliations by women movements from the Eastern and Western parts of the Country. However, the inherent contradictions in NCWS between the Muslim and Christian Women on the dissolution of customary marriages especially with regards to who and how to claim marriage price back, made the Muslim Women to see NCWS as a Christian inspired movement. As a result of this, the Muslim Women’s groups formed their own Federation called FOMWAN the Federation Muslim Women Associations in Nigeria.<sup>22</sup>

The emergence, spread and transformation of women social movements across the globe has continued to put in the front burner issues of women’s marginalization and subordination in their multi sectorial perspectives. J. Scoth and G. Marshall viewed a social movement as an organizational effort by a significant number of people to change (or resist change) in some major aspects of the society<sup>23</sup>. Both are of the opinion that it was used first in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by St. Simon in France in his attempt at situating the movement of the social protest that emerged in that country and later elsewhere and was applied to new political forces opposed to the status quo. Social movements are currently most applied to groups or organization outside the mainstream of political system. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it increasingly became an important source of political change.<sup>24</sup> It is a purposeful and organized form of collective behaviour. It includes civil rights, gay rights, trade unionism, environmentalism and feminism. The individuals, groups and organizations that comprise a social movement are united by their common goals and concerns. Their involvement in common action operates outside the regular political channels of the society. But they may penetrate quite deeply into political circles. As interest groups goals may be narrow or broad, revolutionary or reformists, but they have in common the active organization of a group of citizens to change the status quo in some way.<sup>25</sup>

Globally many types of women’s social movements exist in various communities or nations. The most common issue in these women movements are “women issues”. These issues incorporate gender issues and sex issues. The gender issues relate to the social construction of the relations between women and men and among various groups of women or men. The sex issues encompass the biological similarities and differences between and among women and men.<sup>26</sup>

Among the gender issues are maternal and child health, child care, income generation, support for mothers and education. Over the decades, the women social movements have articulated these issues significantly. On the other hand, the sex issues are typically associated with women in the sex gender division of labour, of importance is also a considerable ranged of political and social problem.<sup>27</sup> However, the women are always on the lookout for any issue that can appear on the socio-economic and political horizon. This is why women social movement has remained dynamic and probably proactive in activism. No issue is tied solely to one political context or economic conditions though, there conditions shape the way issues are experienced.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid p108

<sup>22</sup> C. K. Macgarvey (2009) Muslim and Christina Women in Dialogue. The Case of Northern Nigeria Oxford: Peter Long Ltd p. 142 -143

<sup>23</sup> Scott, J and Marshall, G. (2005) Oxford Dictionary of Sociology Oxford: Oxford University Press. P612

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p612.

<sup>25</sup> Scott, J and Marshal, G. Ibid p613

<sup>26</sup> Chowdhury, N., Nelson J. B., Carver, A. K., Johnson N. J. and O’Loughlin, P.L. (1994) “Redefining Politics: Patterns Of Women’s Political Engagement from Global Perspective” in Women and Politics Worldwide (Ed) Barbara J. Nelson and Najma Chowdhury, London: Yale University Press, P15.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p11

<sup>28</sup> Chowdhury, N., Nelson J. B., Carver, A. K., Johnson N. J. and O’Loughlin, P.L. (1994) “Redefining Politics: Patterns of Women’s Political Engagement from G global Perspective” in Women and Politics Worldwide (Ed) Barbara J. Nelson and Najma Chowdhury, London: Yale University Press, P11

The political problems that steers women in the face include ensuring personal safety, security and autonomy, reproductive rights maternal and child health programmes, equalizing access to public, communal and market resources for problem solving, empowerment and remaking the political and legal rules of the game.<sup>29</sup> Women everywhere have consistently define their political interests in terms of coping with or changing the demands that they contributes so much to reproductive and domestic activities that they cannot get full values and self-directed choices in other spheres of life.<sup>30</sup>

The women, have continued to gather experience in many nations as a mobilizing force even in the face of powerful ideologies that suggest that women do not have problems worthy of note or that current solutions will provide remedies Chowdhury et al(1994) contended that the Marxist ideologies tells women that their problems are secondary to a reordering of productive arrangement; liberal ideologies tells the women that mechanisms of government are really gender neutral; while authoritarian ideologist tells the women on the other hand that leaders are attending to their needs with fatherly benevolence, the women social movements try to expose the inadequacies of these ideologies to solve problems from women perspectives. As a result women's experiences act as a catalyst for their political engagement.<sup>31</sup>

But from the 1980s, women social movements became internationalized not only because the world was increasingly becoming a "global village" but also the realization that important political commonalities coexist with marked social difference.<sup>32</sup>

It was recognized that there are many national and community based forms of women's action. The fundamentally plural nature of women's understandings of their problems was becoming clearer. This occurred simultaneously with increased international communication, disagreement and cooperation among women. The women furthermore, came to understand that they were a group born of common interest and limited resources and the need for sustained efforts to improve women's place in economic development, and to mobilize opposition to violence against women. The United Nations (UN) promoted the development of international feminism and women's movements by creating national and international forums for action. The UN efforts led to international sport light on women, the impetus to gather and compare data, the ability of women's group to hold their governments to account and the occasions for international coalition building represented by three UN women conferences (Mexico City, Copenhagen and Nairobi). This strategic intervention catapulted the international connections among women to a qualitatively different level.<sup>33</sup> As observed by Chowdhury et al, the networks, committees and caucuses consequent of this were like reefs that protected the experiments on which women of different background worked together.<sup>34</sup>

In many parts of the African continent and at different historical epochs, women's social movements of different compositions, membership and objectives existed. According to Toure Thiam, Chief of the social and human sciences Sector (SHS) at UNESCO Dakar women's social movements were part of the Senegalese culture as every new – born girl already belongs to a sort of organization within her age group in the extended family, it is argued that many social movement existed and that they were built around diversity of issue, even though they were not monolithic entity.<sup>35</sup>

The contradictions that were prevalent during the period of colonial domination and subjugations, particularly the approach adopted by the Christian Missionaries in their evangelism nurtured women's social movement within the church. The missionary churches excluded women from the mainstream authority such as priesthood and other leadership positions.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p11

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p11

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 11

<sup>32</sup> Chowdhury, N., Nelson J. B., Carver, A. K., Johnson N. J. and O'Loughlin, P.L. (1994) "Redefining Politics: Patterns Of Women's Political Engagement from Global Perspective" in *Women and Politics Worldwide* (Ed) Barbara J. Nelson and Najma Chowdhury, London: Yale University Press, P11

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p9

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p9

<sup>35</sup> Thiam Toure, (2012) "Interview on Women Social Movement and gender based Violence in Senegal" UNESCO Office in Dakar. 18/10/2012. P13

They were restricted to only roles that revolve around women issues – women organize singing groups, cleaning and arranging church facilities, fund raising, catechizing of children, and cooking for church functions.<sup>36</sup> The women rejected both the patriarchal and leadership traditions and the gendered tendencies of the missionary churches and founded or cofounded their own African independent Churches. Falola and Amponsah (2012) contended that in 1954 in Zambia, Lumpi Church founded by Alice Mukanya Lenshina was the first recorded religious movement founded by a woman.

In Egypt on the other hand, the prevailing solution forced the women's social movement in existence to change tactics and moved from gentle persuasion to protest and strikes. The political party system that emerged in Egypt was such that many of the parties lacked a developed social and political agenda that are sensitive to women.<sup>37</sup> Class cleavages played a crucial role in the formation of women's social movements. The Egyptian society was divided along class lines and this made the bourgeois and middle class women to play significant roles in women's movement and women's political engagement. Early women's social movements were constituted by wives and daughters of large landowners. Huda Sha'rawi who founded the Egyptian feminist union shaped the social agendas of women from 1923 to 1947.<sup>38</sup> However, the battle line was drawn between the middle class women and the older generation. The former felt that by their own professional education and position, they were better placed to represent the Egyptian women.

Even though, the 1950s and 1960s were seen as the golden decades of Egyptian state, feminism".<sup>39</sup> Far back as 1936, the Egyptian feminist union began to lobby for women's suffrage. The union participated in the international Alliance for women suffrage in Rome and argued that while educated and well informed women of the bourgeois were denied suffrage, illiterate men were given the rights to vote.<sup>40</sup> In 1949, a new generation of feminist came into existence. The Bint al Nil (Daughter of the Nile) was born with a more confrontational strategy and embarked on series of protests. In 1951, it stormed the parliament to protest the exclusion of women from membership. It equally adopted hunger strike to press home its demand. In 1956, the representative of 20 women's associations formed a federation to collapse together efforts of different women's associations through the establishment of a larger organization that will bridge the communication gap.<sup>41</sup> In the 1970, more NGOs came into existence in Egypt but the state used its powers to restrict their political organization. Meanwhile, there was pressure from the introduction of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank sponsored Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) which forced the government of Mubarak to abandon its commitment to advance women's right and political engagement of women.

Just like in many other parts of Africa women's social movements were found in Nigeria and they have been transformed over time. They have reacted to the violation of varieties of discrimination and rights- education, health care, reproduction, citizenship or economic wellbeing. Gender equality advocates in different parts of the country built up efforts to address some of the gender imbalances. Some of them have been operating to address the invisibility of women in the decision making arena. Their efforts led to the establishment of the Feminist Movement in Nigeria (FEMIN) in 2005. However, across the continent of Africa, the women's social movements are not moving fast enough due to a variety of factors. Women's social movements, like many movements of its type can only work as a collaborative force. There is also lack of fund and it requires sacrifice and volunteerism from members, particularly time and resources. Apart from this, they are weakened by personality conflicts, power struggle and varying ideology and tactics of leaders. The government has been exploiting these differences to marginalize the female critics and opponents. Furthermore, conservative leaders, women's social movement work closely with government and benefit from such relationship. Above all these, at the national level official intervention co-opts and manipulate women's group to support and legitimize the man-made political machinery.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Toyin Falola and Nana A. Amponsah, Women's Role in sub-Saharan Africa California ABC –CLIO p. 13

<sup>37</sup> Marat F. Hatem, "The Paradoxes of State Feminism in Egypt" *Women and Politics*. Eds Barbara, JN and Chowdhury J, 1994 op at p. 227

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 227

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 231

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 233

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 234

<sup>42</sup> Maria Nzomo and Kattheer Slaudt, "Man-Made Political Machinery in Kenya: Political Space for Women" in *Women and Politics* Eds Barbara, J. N. and Chowdhury J, 1994 op at p. 236

### ***Patriarchy***

Gender inequality, the subordinate role of Women as well as their inferior position in the society have been attributed to a variety of factors. Initially a lot of premium was placed on biological composition of the Women vis – a – vis their male counter parts. While Murdock<sup>43</sup> did not suggest that men and Women are directed by genetically based dispositions or characteristics he placed emphasis on the biological difference between men and women which as far as he is concerned, is responsible for the sexual division of labour. He argued that the greater physical strength of men and the fact that women bear children leads together roles out of sheer practicality. He contended that, while child bearing and Nursing tied women to the home, her physique made her limited to less strenuous tasks. However, in all societies all over the world, certain tasks are not always performed by men and others by women. Among the Mbuti pigmies of Africa, hunting and gathering society of the Congo rainforest, there are no specific rules for division of labour by sex. Both men and women hunt and share responsibility for the care of women. In a similar vein among the Australian Aborigines of Tasmania the women were responsible for seal hunting, fishing and catching opossums (tree dwelling mammals).<sup>44</sup> In some modern sovereign states, women form an important part of armed forces particularly in China, the former Soviet Union, Cuba and Israel. What is more, in India women work on building sites and in some Asia and Latin America Countries they have worked in mines. The socio – biological explanation first developed by E. O. Wilson in 1975 has been applied to sex and gender by David Brash in 1979.<sup>45</sup>

Taking a cue from the evolution theory, the proponents of this view opined that physical characteristics and behavior of human species evolved in time and space. They argued that the behavior of animals and human is governed by a genetic instruction to maximize the chance of passing on their genes to future generation by breeding. It is their contention that different reproductive strategies produce behavior in males and female and that this loads them to occupy different social roles. The socio – biologists perception of gender as natural and inevitable implies that the ways men and women behave cannot be changed, therefore, they should be left alone. Oakley<sup>46</sup> however contended that gender is socially constructed and that different behavior of the males and the females are learned rather than being the inevitable result of biology.

The concept of biological family was advanced by Shulamith Firestone<sup>47</sup> to address female inequality and subordination. It is her contention that women in the family are disadvantaged by their biology – menstruation, menopause and children. All these are physical burden on women with pregnancy and breast feeding having the most serious consequences. When the women are faced with these family problems, they are ‘dependent on males’ – brother, father, husband, lover, or clan, government and the community at large for physical survival. The biological family she concluded laid the foundations for all types of inequality and stratification.

Entrenched and institutionalized patriarchy in many communities, states or nations has continued to generate controversies in terms of both context and content. Patriarchy was originally used to mean domination by the father. But it was used by social anthropologists to describe family structure where the father other than the mother ruled.<sup>48</sup> The Marxist – feminists contended that there is inter connection between capitalism and patriarchy as the subordination of women in the household benefits the capitalist employers by providing them with free domestic labour. The capitalist system gave rise to the domestic diversion of labour between the males who are the bread winners and takes up paid employment and the house wives who looks after the household and brings up the children.<sup>49</sup> On the contrary according to Radical Feminists like Kate Millet (1970) and Shulanith firestone (1971) patriarchy is not specifically associated with capitalism as it is found in all known societies.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Murdock (1949) social Structure; New York: Macnclidou cited in Haralambos p. 90

<sup>44</sup> Ibid p99

<sup>45</sup> Ibid p96

<sup>46</sup> Oakley 1974 cited in opcit p. 96

<sup>47</sup>Shulamith Firestone 1970 cited in Haralambos Ibid p

<sup>48</sup>James Filcher and John Scott, Sociology 3r edition Oxford: Oxford University Press 2007 p. 160

<sup>49</sup> bid, 161

<sup>50</sup>Kate Millet, Sexual Politics, New York: Double day 1970 Shulanit Firestone, the Dialect of Sex London: Jonathan cape 1971; Walby S. Theorizing Patriarchy, Oxford: Basil Blackwell

They opined that men and women comprise “Sex class” the men as the dominant class oppress women and exploit them economically and politically, and that sexual domination is expressed in the intimate personal relationship of love, sex and marriage. The men use their personal relationship to dominate and control women.<sup>51</sup> Family relationships are perceived as the main site of patriarchy. Walby (1990) observed that there are multiple patriarchal structures that cumulatively produce male domination. These are household production, employment relations, the state, male violence, sexual relations and cultural institutions.<sup>52</sup> It is argued that there are two main forms of patriarchy- private and public. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, patriarchy took a mainly private form with individual males exploiting women’s labour in the house hold and excluding women from public life. The private form continued to exist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the intervention of feminist organization which was to force their ways into the public sphere.<sup>53</sup> In the public form of patriarchy state and employment relations were the dominant structures and patriarchy operated in a more collective way. With this development women were no longer excluded from work but were still segregated in lower grade and lower paid works.<sup>54</sup>

Nonetheless, religions like Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam contains patriarchal beliefs and practices. In Christianity, for example, God is generally represented as a male authority figure, while all the apostles were male and priests until recently been exclusively male.<sup>55</sup> Chowdhury et al (1994) are of the view that patriarchy is closely associated with fraternalism. Male culture and ethos of formal politics are fashioned by male lifestyles and characterized by an aggressiveness and competitiveness that are often viewed as male trait.<sup>56</sup> It is not surprising that in some parts of the world politicians hold their meetings late in the night or the wee hours of the day and the various levels of thurgry that goes with election processes. They observed that politics is rooted in fraternalism. They argued that all forms of representative governments are descendant of British parliamentary experiments and of the French Revolution’s initial participatory impulse and that both experiences emphasized the brother hood of men. Fraternalism as a source of political power has promoted exclusiveness of brother and protected fathers in limiting women access to formal politics. Culture and process of political institutions are major barriers to women’s equal participation in institutionalized politics.

These barriers include the concrete expression of patriarchal and fraternal privilege found in men’s expressive and problem solving styles, their network and their workdays etc. the recent raping of a female medical student in India and her eventual death in Singapore has once more made the world to review and re-examine the place of patriarchy in women exclusion and subordination not only in India but in the other part of the world. In India it has been revealed that it is responsible for the preference for male children. Findings from investigations carried out in India indicate that there is a strong preference for sons over daughters and this has been largely responsible for sex selective abortion. In a related development, many India women face threat to life at every stage in their growth and development. They are steered in their eyes by violence, inadequate health care, inequality, neglect, bad diet, lack of attention of personal health and wellbeing.<sup>57</sup> Amertya Sen of the BBC news reported that estimated more than 100 million women are “missing” worldwide who would have been around had they received similar health care, medicine and nutrition as men.<sup>58</sup> In a similar vein Economist Siwan Anderson and Debray Ray<sup>59</sup> estimated that in India, more than two million women were “missing” in a given year, and that roughly 12% of the missing women disappear at birth, 25 % die in childhood, 18 % at productive ages and 45 % at old age.<sup>60</sup> The manifest or latent features and impact of patriarchy are multi-dimensional and have sunk women further into poverty and lack of empowerment. For every step the women’s social movements took, patriarchy is always there to put a hurdle in their way. In Egypt even though in the 1960s as a result of the activities of the women’s social movements particularly the feminists, women were given the rights to vote in principle, the registration of women to vote was left as action to be decided by each individual woman.

<sup>51</sup> James Filcher and John Scott opcit p. 161

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 162

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 163

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 163

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 163

<sup>56</sup> Nayma Chowdhry et at opcit p. 16

<sup>57</sup> BBC News 29 December, 2012

<sup>58</sup> Ibid,

<sup>59</sup> Ibid,

<sup>60</sup> Ibid,



For the women to register, they had to petition the state for recognition and include them as registered voters. The disadvantage rural illiterate women and bureaucratic hurdles split women's movement.<sup>61</sup> When in the 1970s the NGOs emerged to put women issues in the front burner, the state used its powers to restrict their political organization. They were instead encouraged to provide services and income generating activities for the needy. It equally opposed the formation of middle class feminist organization. In the 1980s some of the parties given the wind of change in Egypt created feminist organizational wings. They advocated for less rigid interpretations of Islam gendered role and put premium on importance of women organizing around issues that unite them.<sup>62</sup> However, this failed to create any significant impact. In 1956-57 only 1 percent of the total number of registered voters were women; 1972 12 percent. In the same period only 9 representing 2.5 percent of women were elected.<sup>63</sup>

In Kenya, more than elsewhere in African formal political machinery was controlled by men and this is regarded as paradoxical, as the women were the majority of farmers in the agricultural economy. Virtually all women are economically active and women organization activities flourish. Women are more politically active at the grass root level, where institutionalized male political machinery is weaker.<sup>64</sup>

During the colonial era, the nature of the colonial engineering created a public – private distinction between men and women. Men were viewed as breadwinners and public spokespersons and women domestic help mates. Christian missionary activities reinforced the public private distinction. With the introduction of indirect rule colonial officials designated chiefs (Invariably men) as local leaders and vested them with authority to collect taxes and maintain order.<sup>65</sup> Husbands acquired rights to their wife's labour and custody of their children, class interests of large landowners and businesses in Kenya permeated political machinery including the parliament, the office of the president and government bureaucracy after independence. The women were isolated from state establishment and excluded from political and economic opportunities. In the 1980s, the party in power (KANU) – took control of the largest national women organization Maendeleo ya Wanawake and party leaders meddled in its affairs.<sup>66</sup>

Aina (1998) opined that Nigeria society since ancient time has been a patriarchal society as patriarchal structure has been a major feature of the traditional society.<sup>67</sup> The structure contains a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women.<sup>68</sup> Patriarchy has subjected Nigerian women to, and predisposes them to various acts of gender based discrimination. Male dominance is reflected in marriage institution, political and governing institutions, religious institutions and other public and private institutions existing in the country. Very few women occupy leadership positions and participate equitably with their male counter parts in decision making. Cultural factors perpetuate the lower status of women and make the role played by women to appear invisible to the general public meanwhile across the different states in the country the women have a strong presence in important economic activities that touch the lives of many people. In Delta State, 90 % of Urhobo women are directly involved in agricultural production and petty trading. Men who own majority of the land are not fully engaged in economic activities. Only about 20 percent of men are engaged in diverse non – rural economic and socio-political activities.<sup>69</sup> Ikeoji (2000) observed that 70 percent of farmers in parts of Delta and Edo States are rural women and girls who engage in a variety of farming activities ranging from clearing to marketing and storage of food produce.<sup>70</sup> In Abia State in the town of Afugiri women are major food producers.

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<sup>61</sup> M.F Halam opcit p. 235

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 239

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 235

<sup>64</sup> M. Nzomo and K. Slaudt opcit p. 417

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 418

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 419

<sup>67</sup> Aina 1988 cited in Abidemi R. Asiyabola's 'Patriarchy, male dominance, the role of Women empowerment in Nigeria paper submitted for poster at the International Union for the Scientific study of population (IUSSP/VIESP) XXV International population Conference Tours, France 1823, 2005

<sup>68</sup> Cited in Abidemi R. Asiyabola op at

<sup>69</sup> Idisi P1, "Involving Women in Sustainable Agricultural Production Techniques: some critical Points of Note" in women Development and the Nigerian Environment, Ibadan, Voltage Publishers Ltd 1996 p 263

<sup>70</sup> Ikoji, CN "Training Needs of Rural women in Agriculture for Sustainable Development in Delta/Edo State of Nigeria", GASAT Africa Conference Proceedings 2000 p 145 – 150

They currently built more than 3 oil mills and cassava processing centres through their monthly financial contributions, but receive little economic reward from their labour.<sup>71</sup> In spite of this, the women encounter socio-economic constraints posed by gender and inequality – constraints include land ownership rights; of which women are after denied right; lack of rights of economic trees and cultural taboo associated with women harvesting palm fruits.<sup>72</sup>

Patriarchy has made the empowerment of women virtually impossible as it has permeate all fabric of the society making it a mountain task for the women's social movement to increase the quality as well as the quantity of women's engagement and participation in politics. Employment opportunities for women have not improved drastically. In 1990s, the opportunities were a bit impressive in certain sectors. Wage employment of women in non – agricultural sector was 46 % in 1996 and 62% in 1997 as a result of some ad-hoc women focused programmes – Rural women Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) initiated and implemented during those periods. But the decline in wage employment of women recently is quite alarming. Women are not empowered to be self-employed and they are the least to be recruited with poor remuneration.<sup>73</sup> Lack of access to land, capital and extension services have remained a major obstacle to women's economic empowerment. According to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) women made up 80% of food producers in some African countries but received only 2 to 10% of 'extension contacts' technical assistance.<sup>74</sup> Agricultural credit is often inaccessible to women. They rarely receive any agricultural credit for farming from any organization. Land reform programmes are male biased and failed to take into account women's right under traditional ownership structures.<sup>75</sup>

Education is critical to empowerment, engagement and women participation in politics. "When you educate a woman, you educate the nation" so says an adage. When women are given affordable, qualitative and comprehensive education, there will be more robust social women's movements and female activism. The national literacy level has remained low even though there is considerable regional variation in female literacy rate. Analysis made by the National Population Commission and United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) concerning literacy situation in Nigeria in 2001 shows that the literacy rate decline from 58% in 1990 to 49% in 1999. Literacy among women and girls declined from 44% to 41% during the same period. Regionally the South East and South West female literacy rates were 60% and 55% respectively compared with male literacy rates of 74% and 74.4%.<sup>76</sup>

On the other hand, the North West and North East zones had female literacy rates of 22% and 21% respectively compared to 40.3% and 42.1% for their male counterparts. Recent study indicate a gross enrolment ratio for boys remains higher than that of girls by over 10% with a male – female ration of 55% to 44.1%. At the secondary level girls' dropout rate is higher and 39.7% of female students graduate from University and 37.54% from the Polytechnic respectively.<sup>77</sup>

Overall, with the dependent capitalist system prevalent across Africa, women are super exploited and the reasons for this are not for fetched. In the first place, 'official' work is influenced by gender inscriptive roles that originate from the household sphere. African women's unemployment dropped from 6% of the total labour force in 1980 to mere 1.2% in 1985. The growth of women's employment could not be sustained between 1985 and 1990. Female unemployment was in the ascendancy because of the collapse of African economies which resulted from ineffective stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programmes. Apart from this, there was lack of political expediency, retrenchment policies and over saturation of the informal sector by retrenched civil service employees seeking additional income. After 1985, the percentage of female labour force in Africa dropped from 6% to a current 5% suggesting a loss of 2.5 million jobs for women.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid,

<sup>72</sup>Onweogba AE and Nwaihu EC op at p. 93

<sup>73</sup>Ibid, p. 93

<sup>74</sup>Toyin Falola and Nana A Amponsah opcit 133

<sup>75</sup>Ibid, p. 133

<sup>76</sup>Akudo C Ojoh, Empowering Nigeria Women in the 21st century: Measuring the Gap, Nunich GRIN Publishing Gaibh

<sup>77</sup>Ibid,

<sup>78</sup>Toyin Falola & Nana Amponsah op at p 100

Furthermore, they are paid less because their labour is regarded as occurring only provisionally (or partially) in the monetary economy. It could be recalled that all non-remunerated works are excluded from the calculations of national wealth because of the way gross national product has been defined.<sup>79</sup> They are said to possess many of the ‘primitive’ and undisciplined characteristics ascribed to the traditional sectors. They are even blamed for holding backward values critical to modernization.<sup>80</sup> The cumulative effect of all this is the increased feminization of poverty. Entrenched and institutional patriarchy intensified the ‘feminization of poverty’ which in itself made the participation of women almost impracticable. According to the Human Development Report (2005) rural women in poverty in the developing countries is estimated at 565 million and in Africa alone 130 million.<sup>81</sup> The Nigerian women represent 76 percent of the entire population in the rural areas. These rural women constitute the larger percent of the poor. They are less educated and majority of them engage largely in small agriculture and petty trading. Even though they form part of the labour as well as the production force which produce over 70 percent of the nation’s food supply, they have access to only less than 15 percent of the resources available in the agricultural sector (WIN 2005).<sup>82</sup>

The feminization of poverty and the impact on poverty of women which as a result of inequalities embedded in the patriarchal system has hinder women’s access to critical resources and political power. The poverty of women and the feminization of poverty are being emphasized because of its negative impact in helping the cause of the social movements in particular and the women in general. This would be appreciated if we understand the nature of politics in a country like Nigeria with its dominant ‘money politics’. This is why the men who are more wealthy than the women and have access to resources have continued to use them not only to intimidate and frustrate them, but to make it impossible for them to participate actively in politics and be elected into various positions in the country.’ Godfatherism’ is a dominant feature, and it always favours the men. The men use money to employ thugs who are going to work for them at the various processes of elections. Capitalizing on the corrupt system, they use money to bribe electorates, electoral officers as well as the security agents. In most of the party primaries therefore, the women hardly win. They find it difficult to pay for forms (at the party level) to contest elections; seek legal advice and legal representation in case they are wrongly or fraudulently prevented from participation.

In many Universities in a country like Nigeria, there is a wide gap in the male-female employment ratio. There are more male non-academic staff than female non-academic staff. The same can be said of those in the academics. In the Kaduna State University Kaduna, for example, there are 454 non-academic staff. Out of this number, 350 are male while only 104 are females. In the academics there are 263 academic staff and only 63 are female while the male academic staff are 200. In terms of leadership position, there is only 1 female director, 4 female heads of departments, 1 deputy director and 1 deputy dean.<sup>83</sup>

**Table Showing Distribution of Kaduna State University (KASU) Staff by Gender**

	ACADEMIC	NON ACADEMIC	DIRECTORS/HODS	DEPUTIES
MALE	200	350	45	5
FEMALE	63	104	5	3
TOTAL	263	454	50	8

### **Conclusion**

Entrenched and institutionalized patriarchal system is the root of the subordination of women, their inferior positions in many societies all over the world. Even though it may vary in content from one society to the other it has continued to nurture and sustain a second class status for women in the political processes and the aspirations of women to be elected not only to the highest elective posts in the land, but also to have a large numerical strength in the executive and legislative arms of government.

<sup>79</sup>Robert Biel, *The New Imperialism Crisis and Contradictions in North – South relations*, New York. Zed books, 2000 p. 132

<sup>80</sup>Ibid, p. 132

<sup>81</sup>Human Development Report (2005)

<sup>82</sup>Women In Nigeria 2005

<sup>83</sup> Kaduna State University 2012 Annual Report.

Its feminization of poverty and its lack of access to girl child education have continued to play a complimentary role in making it difficult for the women to participate in politics.

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