GLOBALIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
(A CASE STUDY ON AFRICAN WOMAN)

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Abstract: Culturally, the values held by the womenfolk within Nigerian traditional social system were symbolically tied to their ascribed social roles. Such roles, as obtainable in larger segments of sub-Sahara African societies, often include procreating, household chores such as cooking, cleaning, caring for others. Aside from these, it was commonly believed that women could hardly be relevant elsewhere. However, with the advent of globalization, functions have become unprecedently differentiated. New challenges have been presented to humanity. Skills and capabilities have come to replace cogent nefarious considerations, which had limited women's involvement in the process of globalization on contemporary Nigerian women's existence. This paper is set to examine critically the impact of globalization in the late modern world.

Keywords: Cultural imperialism, Culture, Globalization, women

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

As it is with every process of social change, globalization as a phenomenon has been universally welcomed with varying degrees of departures. While some talk of it as a 'borderless world' where every known impediment and limitations of humanity would become obliterated, many critics – especially, of the patriarchal and post-modernist orientation – have often been prompt at connoting it as an imperialist cultural conscription through which people lose their tradition values and begin associating with the value system of the dominant people or nations.

In fact, to the feminist, men's sustained dominance over the control or productive resources of the society would continue to reinforce such unhealthy extent of disparity between men and women, even in this globalizing era. It is contextually imperative to point out at this juncture that justifying the veracity of such an idea of a globalizing culture is not in any way within the purview of this study. Rather, specific relevance of the notion to contemporary state of women's socio-economic empowerment related to tradition and era age in Nigeria will be the basic issue this research piece will seek to address.

II. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

This study basically focuses on analyses on analyzing the impact(s) of the globalizing culture bedihon on women's socio-economic empowerment in Nigeria.

Equally, the study will strive to: (a) Know how acceptable are vagaries of the globalizing culture to the Nigerian Political elite (b) vis-à-vis women empowerment policies' advancement (c) Understand the effectiveness of specific attributes of the globalizing culture in relation to women's emancipation. (d) Globalization and religion interpretation.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since professionalism and individual creativity have come to replace feudalistic determinism and stratified ascriptions – concepts that structured modes of social relation and categorization in the hitherto un-informed society, it is therefore expedient to understand the influence of such a globalizing process of social change on extemporary mode of social relations in Nigeria. This study basically attempts to investigate the nature of changes that globalization – which serves to dilute to distinctive aspects of the society's culture – has brought to bear on the socio economic status of women in Nigeria.

Essentially, the research work will be relevant in re-inventing the phenomenon of globalization; to better serve the path of social justice in the country.

IV. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Cultural imperialism: Indicates the imposition of a dominant culture on other weaker cultures.

Gender: The social fact of maleness or femaleness. It depicts identities of masculinity and feminity in relation to patterns of human existence.

Globalization: The idea of a 'borderless world' where culture, language, space and expertise would no longer be barriers to human interaction and emancipation. It is a process of pervasive social change in which virtually everything is transformed.

Globalized culture: Situationally used in this study to depict the process of globalization, which may not necessarily be utopian in context. Rather , seeking to tie us all – nations, communities, individuals – closely together through the social, economic and technological spheres.

Housewifisation: A colonial system of domesticating married women who work at home, doing cooking, cleaning *et cetera* but do not have any job outside the house.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Africa society, we are afraid of intense feelings, we have been taught that certain kind of behaviors are appropriate and other are not. Men and women are assigned societal roles and expectations that blunt their feelings, and eventually blunt their ability to feel.

Meanwhile, the advent of the phenomenon of globalization in parts of Africa, women in Nigeria were often unduly exposed to varying forms of institutional discriminations as a result of the simple fact of their femaleness; ought to have been understood on the basis of its mutual usefulness (Obbo 2005:22). The tradition social structures in the country have glaringly offered limited incentives to the amendment of the prevalent, skewed distribution of power between men and women. Peculiar cultural practices, such as early/forced marriage, wife-inheritance, denied inheritance right and various widowhood practices have been potent impediments to the evolution of imperative entrepreneurial spirit among the womenfolk (Adeniran 2007:4). Equally, as part of evil doctrine of European on our own land, the coming of the colonial rule worsened the state of womanhood in the country. Specifically, the institutionalization of the ideology of domesticity *(Housewifisation),* which focused on offer of domestic education for the framework, denied the access to formal educational training.

VI. GLOBALIZATION AS A CULTURE

Cultures as a learned, adapted way of existence is often predicated upon a full-fledged language associated with technical inventiveness, a complex of expertise that in turn depends on a capacity to organize exchange relationship between communities (Kuper 1994:0).

However, discourses on global culture are more likely to generate an admix of analyses centering to is promises and threats. Therefore, the most significant issue to be clear about is that globalization is not itself the emergence of a *Globalized culture.* Rather, it connotes a complex pattern of interdependencies that have arisen in the late-modern world (Tomlinson 1999:25). He observed further that globalization is heavy with implications for all spheres of social existence – the economic, the political, the environmental, the educational, the technological, as well as, the cultural. In all these realms, it has the effect of tying 'local life' to 'global structures, processes and events', that is, the *Globalized culture.* For instance, while youth restiveness in the oil-rich Niger Delta region in Nigeria would have implications for socio-economic life in the 'West'; so also, feminist activism in the 'West' does impact on women's empowerment drive in Nigeria. Since globalization seeks to infiltrate the distinctive aspects of a society's culture, hence technology in its many ramifications has increased the speed of cultural diffusion and has enhanced the distribution of cultural elements (Alfino et al: 1998). Feminism, as a concept associated with the western societies is therefore seen to be impacting positively on the state of womanhood in Nigeria via the platform of the global culture.

VII. A GLOBAL CULTURE AND THE NIGERIAN GLOBALIZED WOMAN

The Nigeria *Globalized* woman is seen as an essentially 'empowered being'; Empowerment in the regard basically connotes the expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape an individual's life (Narayan 2005:4). It indicates the possession of formidable control over resources and decisions.

Thus, such women's empowerment is likely to entail not only their gaining new individual capabilities, but also the emergence of new beliefs about their right to exercise these capabilities and take advantage of opportunities in their community. In Nigeria of today, it is believed that issue like gender stereotyping and pervasive sexism are fast paving way for more impact women socio-economic development participation.. As observed by Mabogunje (1989:14-

17), it would be grossly untenable to still believe that the status of Nigerian women, especially among the southerners is discouraging in view of the evolving transformation of their socio-economic roles courtesy of the increasing spate of globalization. He opined that to a considerable, Nigerian women are now more economically and socially emancipated. This is evidenced by rising number of women going to schools. According to the Africa Atlases (2002:118), 41% of the female-gender in Nigeria is now being educated compared with below 20% in the 1980s.

VIII. THEORETICAL PLATFORM FOR THE STUDY

This research piece is situated within the postulates of Herbert Spencer's *Developmental Hypothesis.* Spenser (1852) observed that social development (or change) essentially entails a process of evolutionary transition; often from a homogeneous condition that was innately unstable to a heterogeneous and stable one, emphasizing the importance of 'organic analogy'. He premised this perspective on four main concepts: Growth, Differentiation, Integration and Adaptation, ideas commonly present in developmental biology and which could easily be brought into the context of a developing, transiting society like Nigeria.

From mid-20th century, the dominant developmental perspective has been the *modernization* theory, which essentially re-positions Spencer's Development proposition. It opines that for underdeveloped countries to become developed, they must follow instances of the developed nations by identifying with their culture and social peculiarities. In an update of the modernization perspective, Rustow (1960) identified five stages that are entailed in such a process of social transformation: the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take off, the drive for maturity and the age of high mass consumption. However, since cultures has always played a significant role in the study of global change, it is worth reaffirming that the origins of the phenomenon of 'development' in respect of enhancing societal progress lie in the same set of 19th century ideas which were associated with the origins of the concept o cultured.

Feminism, believe to an offshort of the globalizing modernity; engendered by 'western' cultural inclination has been impacting the state of womanhood in Nigeria. It focuses on the liberation of the womenfolk from all patriarchy-propelled tendencies, which had hitherto hindered women's socio-economic participation. To a considerable extent, Nigeria women are now more economically and socially emancipated. In Nigeria of today, it is glaring that issues such as gender stereotyping and pervasive sexism are quickly paving way for more impactful women socio-economic participation

courtesy of the platforms offered by thee ensuing process of globalization.

IX. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

In order to determine the specific impact(s) of the globalization culture on women's socio-economic empowerment in Nigeria, it is imperative to have a concise of the concept and to depict a framework that links women's socio-economic empowerment to improvements changes brought by the prevalent globalizing culture and identifies determinants of such changes. Women's empowerment is basically the enhancement of the asset base and functionalities of the womenfolk to engage in and influence decisions or actions to shape their existence. Advancing from this general definition that laid insistence on institutions and interaction between women and men, fig. 1 below explicates a conceptual analysis that is useful in understanding such tangible determinants that engender women's efforts to improve their socio-economic status, in this era of globalization and also impact attainment of overall human development in Nigeria.

The conceptual analysis consists of one 'super-empowering axis' and three distinct empowerment determinants; that is: (a) The 'globalizing culture' (or globalization) – the super-empowering axis (b) Institutional/social determinants (c) Political determinants (d) Economic determinants
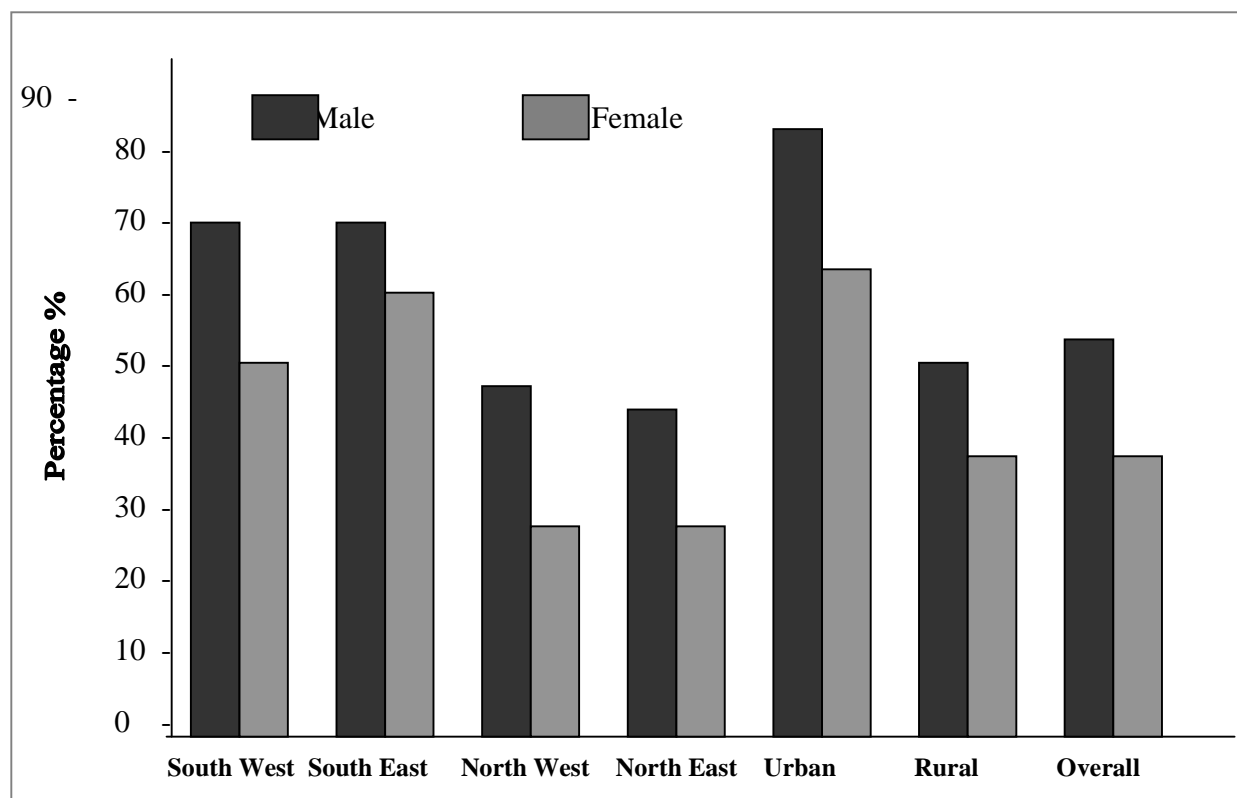
The unilateral 'super-empowering axis' is defined by vagaries of the 'globalizing culture', that is, factors facilitating enhanced level of self-consciousness. The empowerment determinants are defined by broader institution/social, political and economic context of formal and informal rules and norms within which women pursue their interests and their capacity to take purposeful action. While the 'super-empowering axis' provides the necessary platform for adequate functioning of the identified determinants, related determinants functionally impact each other and collectively they have effects on women's emancipation.

Two components of the conceptual framework call for emphasis. First socio-economic change is basically and interactive issue, emanating from exchange across gender categories. This takes place through rules, regulations, right and privilege, as well as, the norms, behaviors and processes governing the interactions between women and men within Nigerian society. Second, women's empowerment courtesy of the 'globalizing culture' requires both top-down changes in institutions and organizational processes and bottom-up changes in women's organization and networks and their individual assets.

To broaden our understanding of this conceptual framework, an enhanced depiction of its specificities has become expedient. However, for the 'globalizing culture' to really improve on socio-economic conditions of the womenfolk, tangible changes among the distinct empowerment determinants are deemed necessary. This will entail the formal and informal institutional/social impediments that prevent women from taking effective action to enhance their socio-economic well-being, individual or collectively. It equal implies the need for changes in economic and political components that perpetuate unevenness in social relations.

Fig: 1: Literacy Rates for selected Zones in Nigeria (1991)

Source: Africa Atlass – Nigeria, Les Edition J.A; 2002: Page 118.

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X. OBSERVED WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF THE FRAMEWORK

Productive relationships among vagaries of the 'globalizing culture', that is, the 'super-empowering axis' and relevant empowerment determinants often provides the imperative platforms for women's socio-economic emancipation. Such relationships have been evidenced by (a) Enhanced level of income (b) Improved social opportunities (c) Economic empowerment (d) Enhanced access to basic services (e) Enhanced level of women's advocacy and enlightenment.
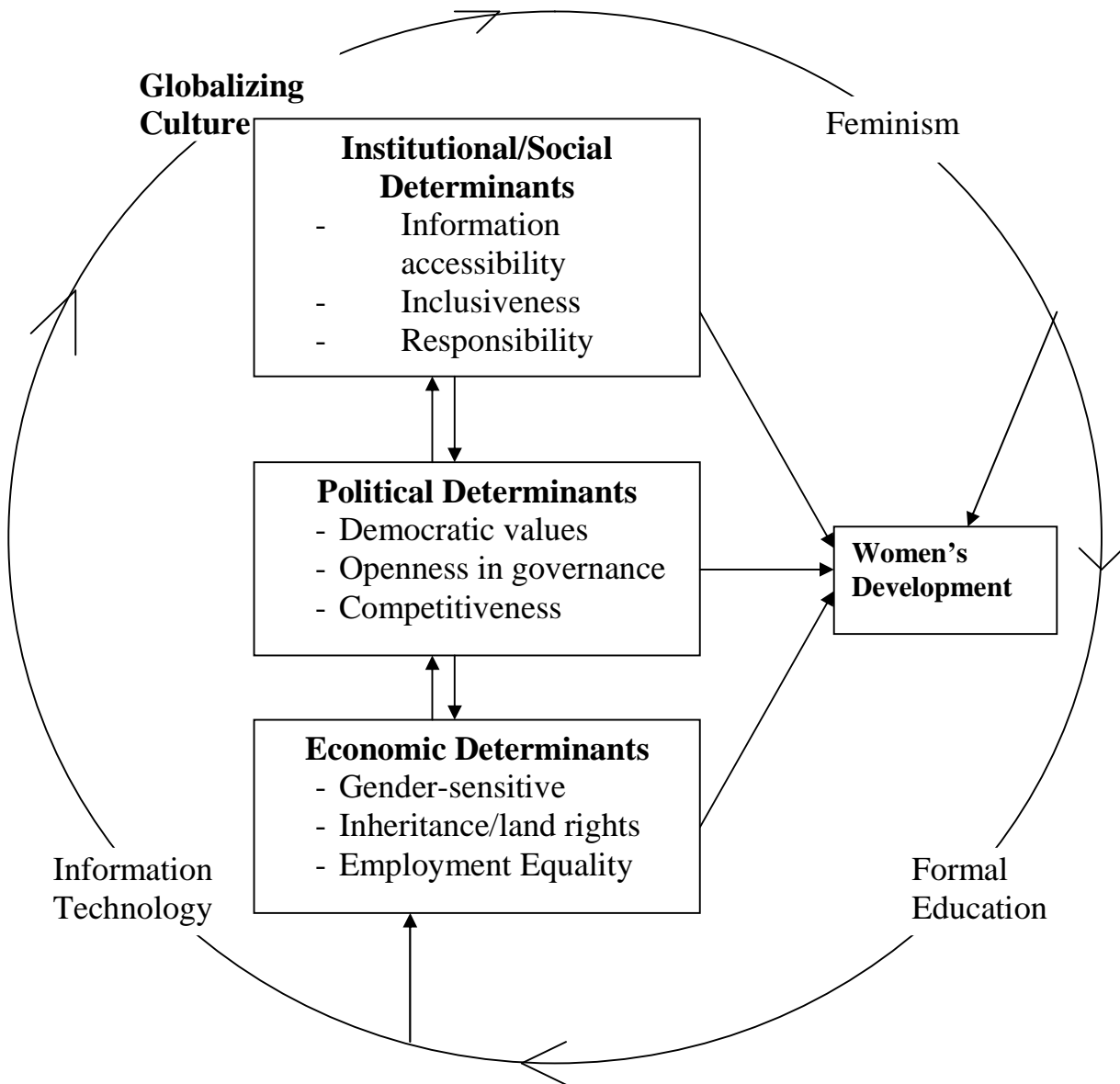
XI. METHODOLOGY

The method of *systemic observation* was applied in determining the level of involvement of Nigerian women in formal educational training. Equally, their changing social status courtesy of their enhanced involvement in the economic life of the country was studied through this method. It was observed that such economic empowerment has led to an increased

level of women engagement in the public and political realm in Nigeria.

Government data and related text were also studied. When juxtaposed with recent Nigerian histories,

greater numbers of Nigerian women were observed to be playing prominent roles in virtually every sector of the society – be it economic, education, politics, diplomatic and related issues inclusive and, even religious.

Fig 2: Comprehensive Overview of the Conceptual Framework

XII. SPECIFIC FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

From the study, it was discovered that: (a) Cogent attributes of the traditional social system (wife inheritance, denial of inheritance rights, unfair household workload *et cetera)* were potent barriers to women socio-economic empowerment. (b) In spite of

the lackadaisical disposition of contemporary Nigerian political leadership towards the female-gender changing socio-economic status, the ensuing waves of the globalizing culture have been contributing immensely to the process of women's socio-economic development in the country.

XIII. THE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommendation canvbe summarized as (a) Biased intuitional and religious myths impeding women's education should continue to be de-emphasized within Nigerian and african society; **(b)** An empowering method, incorporating women as invaluable partners for socio-economic development should be encouraged in policy planning and implementation in Nigeria; **(c)** Essentially, the basic tenets of contemporary platform to achieve socio-economic development, that is, globalization should be utilized in a more effective and practical way so as to make the drive towards attainment of women's empowerment realizable in the African continent.

XIV. CONCLUSION

In this study, the attainment of overall human development in Nigeria has been predicated upon the reality of the liberty and empowerment of our women and the best hope for peace and progress lies in the improvement of the range of opportunity for women.

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