A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SEXISM AND ROLE STEREOTYPE OF THE FEMALE GENDER IN NIGERIA AND RWANDA

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Abstract

Gender role stereotypes and sexism over the years continues to be highly pervasive, manifesting in different dimensions and in different cultures in Nigeria and other countries in Africa. Women are under-represented in almost every sphere of social life including politics, commerce, agriculture, industry, military and educational institutions mainly due to gender roles constructed by the society. The major objective of this study is to evaluate sexism and stereotypes faced by women in both Nigeria and Rwanda.. This study therefore adopts the Liberal feminist theory and Marxist feminist theory as a framework because of its relative proficiency in gender analysis and the status of women as well as its potentials for the promotion and protection of women's rights and indeed gender equality and the empowerment of women which are the necessary pre requisite for national development. Hence the study employs qualitative method by analyzing a wide range of finding from majorly secondary sources. The major finding in the study reveals that in the comparative analysis carried out on gender inequality between Nigeria and Rwanda; Nigeria is having greater gender inequality compared to Rwanda. Women enjoy greater benefits and there is presence of fewer stereotypes in Rwanda compared to Nigeria which is still heavily stereotypical in various social political and economic spheres. Recommendations given in the study implied that The Nigerian Government should encourage active participation from both females and males, that will help socialize people early on how harmful these stereotypes are in the society and to encourage young girls to be aware of their rights in order to build a more sustainable national development by trying to adopt means the Rwandan government has adopted in promoting gender equality in the country and encouraging the rise of feminists.

KEYWORDS: Gender role Stereotypes, Sexism, Gender roles, Gender Inequality, Feminists, Women's rights.

Introduction

One of the major debated topics in the world has been the struggle to find a common ground for equality between the sexes and human right issues in gender relations. Sexism has been a major issue in contemporary societies which mainly affects the female gender and their ability to work or perform in the society (Makama, 2017; Afolabi, 2019). This involves discrimination due to her being a female and perceived as weaker or incapable to perform most roles in comparison to men. It also involves derogatory remarks that are very negative and show little or no respect for the female gender and her efforts. Women constitute about half of the population of the Nigerian State and are known to play vital roles as mothers, producers, managers, community developers/organizers and so on. Their contribution to the social and economic development of societies are also more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. Yet their participation in formal and informal structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant (Makama, 2017).

In other terms, sexism is commonly known as gender discrimination; where one gender is often seen as more capable, more efficient and superior to the other gender. This occurs in various social spheres and environments around the world. Historically in Nigeria, gender inequality has been influenced by a number of factors but mainly culture and religion (Alade, 2014). In Africa as a whole, culture limits a lot of women in various aspects of their life. At work, women are often given minor positions of power and it is often rare to see women in top positions. In schools, we are taught to know about people like Herbert Macaulay, Tafawa Balewa, Mungo Park but iconic roles of women like queen Amina of Zazzau, Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti are often under looked and not given as much importance as males in the society. This is clearly a major proof of gender discrimination in Africa as a whole. Feminism and the fight for equality had not appeared until about 40 years ago with the agile support of strong women like Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti who fought hard enough to make the female gender as empowered as the male which helped go a long way in Nigeria (Kuti, 2016).

The Nigerian society has been patriarchal in nature which is a major feature of a traditional society. (Aina, 2018). It is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women (Stacey 2013; Kramarae, 2014). It is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females. The patriarchal society sets the parameters for women's structurally unequal position in families and markets by

condoning gender-differential terms in inheritance rights and legal adulthood, by tacitly condoning domestic and sexual violence and sanctioning differential wages for equal or comparable work. Tradition or culture and religion have dictated men and women relationship for centuries and entrenched male domination into the structure of social organization and institution at all levels of leadership. Patriarchy justifies the marginalization of women in education, economy, labour market, politics, business, family, domestic matters and inheritance (Salaam, 2015).

Also, this culture of patriarchy is a very strong determinant of male dominance over female and as a result man will sit back in the family to keep the family name and lineage growing while women will be married out. Thus, men are being trained for leadership activities while women are confined to domestic activities; roles ascribed to them by culture which affect them later in life, thereby making them to lose self-confident/worth and have low self-esteem in their career in adult life, politics inclusive (Makama, 2017).

Sexism is seen in the work place were women face discrimination everyday due to many "stereotypical roles" against them. Like the belief that women are not supposed to have office jobs and are best suited for housewives and child bearing. This affects the average woman in the work place as whenever there is a situation, a man will always be put in preference as it is believed that a woman will choose her family over efficiency in her job. Situations like these are very derogatory as it denotes that just as the man is a superior being, he should be superior in the workplace which goes strongly against the ethics and beliefs of gender equality. In Nigeria, this is seen in many places, doctors should be male while nurses should be female, and fathers should be the major bread winners of the family while mothers should either have little supporting careers or should fully rely on her husband, as her major role is upkeep of the home (Mustapha, 2012).

Regardless of how this is the common feature in most Nigerian homes and workplaces, I decided to use "Rwanda" as a contrasting country which has shown greater efforts of gender equality and attempt to make the female gender feel very comfortable in the workplace and social sphere. Rwanda has the highest rate of female empowerment and gender equality in Africa and in comparison, to Nigeria, they are making global efforts to ensure that all forms of discrimination and sexism is eschewed (Habimana, 2017). For instance, they created the ministry of gender and family promotion which has given women the right to own properties equally with male counterparts, to have positions in government, military, and also gain the highest level of education attainable freely (United Nations Development Programme(UNDP) Gender

Mainstreaming Strategy, 2018). In the parliament, the Rwandan government has created positions for at least 30 percent of its members to be female and has created a gender monitory office, and a commitment to gender-based budgeting that ensures the promotion of gender equality.

The government supports programs like women for women international Rwanda, which focuses on women of the country becoming economically independent. It has achieved greatly in the aspects of equality and ending stereotypes that are common in Africa. Rwanda has all pushed for girls' education since the mass genocide (Brown, 2014). In 2004, the Girls' Education Task force (GET) was created under the ministry of education to promote education for young girls and has been very productive in pushing for equality in the country. Women in Rwanda have also been working to close the gender-based wage gap (Habimana, 2017). In 2018, Rwandan women make eighty-eight cents to a man's dollar, which puts Rwanda as number 25 for economic equality among genders (Mumporeze, 2020) and in the year 2020 Rwanda was ranked 9th in the Global Gender Gap Index published on the 17th of December that year making Rwanda to be the only African country among the top 10 countries in gender parity.

Statement of the Problem

The major theme here is stated as sexism and how it affects the female gender. The major problem being identified and discussed here are those issues that women face due to stereotypical roles assigned to them in the society which brings about sexism and discrimination in the social environment. Discussing the problems issues and challenges encountered by different women in both countries and how this tells on the general improvement of the country as a whole, why is there such a high rate of discrimination and preferentiality of the male gender in Nigerian social spheres in comparison to Rwanda which are both third-world African countries, and slow or no gradual improvement to support the motion for female empowerment in Nigeria. This study examines the history of sexism and discrimination in Africa, its religion and culture and how it prohibits a lot of improvement for women. How feminism was introduced and how far feminist movement has gone to secure equality for women in the countries.The purpose of this study is to help expose those aspects which will be more understandable and visible to readers in order to know and identify cases of racism and gender discrimination and also know how they can contribute to ending inequality of gender discrimination, bridging gender gaps and destroying stereotypes.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to do a comparative study of Sexism and Gender role stereotypes of the female gender in Nigeria and Rwanda. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Evaluate sexism and stereotypes faced by the female gender in Nigeria and Rwanda.

2. Explain the various factors responsible for sexism and stereotypes encountered by women in both Nigeria and Rwanda.

Research Questions

These research questions are in this study are:

1. What is sexism and stereotypes faced by the female gender in both Nigeria and Rwanda?

2. What are the various forms of sexism and stereotypes encountered by women in both Nigeria and Rwanda?

Conceptual Framework

Sexism: Sexism is a prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender. Sexism can affect anyone, but it primarily affects women and girls. It has been linked to stereotypes and gender roles, and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another. Sexism in a society is most commonly applied against women and girls. It functions to maintain patriarchy, or male domination, through ideological and material practices of individuals, collectives, and institutions that oppress women and girls on the basis of sex or gender.

Glass ceiling: The glass ceiling is a metaphor referring to an artificial barrier that prevents women and minorities from being promoted to managerial- and executive-level positions within an organization. One example of the glass ceiling can be seen in the office of the president of the United States. There's no law that prevents a woman from occupying this office, yet it still has not happened. A glass ceiling is a metaphor used to represent an invisible barrier that keeps a given demographic from rising beyond a certain level in a hierarchy. The metaphor was first coined by feminists in reference to barriers in the careers of high-achieving women. The concept of glass ceiling is generally viewed as a set of impediments and/or barriers to carrier advancements for women (Baxter and Wright 2000; Morrision 1987).

Feminism: Feminism has to do with the belief in the need to secure rights and opportunities for women equal to those of men and those that are committed to pursuing the goals are called feminists. Quite simply, feminism is about all genders having equal rights and opportunities. It is about respecting diverse women's experiences, identities, knowledge and strengths, and striving

to empower all women to realize their full rights. Feminism is a range of social movements, political movements, ideologies and social movements that share the common goal to define, establish and achieve gender equality (Bhasin, 2003).

Patriarchy: A form of social organization in which the father is the supreme authority in the family, clan, or tribe and descent is reckoned in the male line, with the children belonging to the father's clan or tribe. Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. Some patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage. It is a system which oppresses women through its social, economic and political institutions, where women are subordinates and unequal to men in terms of power and status. They believe it is right for men to command and women to obey. In patriarchal societies, there is unequal access to power between men and women.

Gender equality: Cambridge dictionary gave the definition of gender equality as the act of treating women and men equally: gender equality does not imply that women and men are the same, but that they have equal value and should be accorded equal treatment. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development. For example, it may imply that women and men should be paid the same for doing the same work or that they should be treated with different medicines and methods in order to make healthcare equal. According to late Kofi Annan, "Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance." —Late Kofi A. Annan, Nobel Prize winner, 7th Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Gender inequality: The European institute for gender equality defined gender inequality legal, social and cultural situation in which sex and/or gender determine different rights and dignity for women and men, which are reflected in their unequal access to or enjoyment of rights, as well as the assumption of stereotyped social and cultural roles. Gender inequality is the idea that men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual's living experience. These differences arise from distinctions in biology, psychology, and cultural norms. Some of these types of distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed.

Gender: Gender is used to describe the characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed, while sex which is often mistaken for the same definition refers to those that are biologically determined. People are born female or male, but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. According to oxford dictionary, gender refers to either of the two sexes (male and female), especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones.

Stereotypes: In social psychology, a stereotype is an over-generalized belief about a particular category of people. It is an expectation that people might have about every person of a particular group. The type of expectation can vary; it can be, for example, an expectation about the group's personality, preferences, or ability. A simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group the use of stereotypes is a major way in which we simplify our social world; since they reduce the amount of thinking we have to do when we meet a new person. By stereotyping we infer that a person has a whole range of characteristics and abilities that we assume all members of that group have.

Gender stereotypes: The use of stereotypes is a major way in which we simplify our social world; since they reduce the amount of processing (i.e., thinking) we have to do when we meet a new person. By stereotyping we infer that a person has a whole range of characteristics and abilities that we assume all members of that group have. Gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men.

Discrimination: The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. It refers to treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favour of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit: racial and religious intolerance and discrimination.

Gender discrimination: Gender discrimination is unequal or disadvantageous treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on gender. Discrimination takes place due to the prejudiced treatment of men and women based on gender alone.

Sexism

Sexism is gender-based prejudice or discrimination. As with other forms of prejudice and discrimination, it functions to maintain status and power differences between groups in society. One manifestation of sexism involves prejudice and discrimination against girls and women who seek to achieve in prestigious fields traditionally associated with males. Another manifestation of

sexism, however, occurs when pressures are placed on boys and men to conform to traditional conceptions of masculinity (Leaper, 2014).

Sexism is also expressed when peers discriminate against individuals by teasing and rejecting them for being gender atypical or nonconforming. Most frequently, this type of gender harassment includes homophobic bullying and name-calling (e.g., calling someone "fag" or "dyke"). This type of harassment is especially likely to target sexual minority youths (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer [LGBTQ]) and gender nonconforming youth (Williams, 2005) example is the recent mainstream media coverage of bullying LGBTQ teens Los Angeles Times headline "Transgender teen who spoke on YouTube of bullying takes her own life,"

Types of Sexism

a. Benevolent Sexism

Benevolent sexism is best thought of as a set of attitudes toward or beliefs about women that categorize them as fair, innocent, caring, pure, and fragile. Rather than being overly misogynistic, these attitudes are often characterized by a desire to protect and preserve women. In many situations, these attitudes may be casually referred to as chivalry or traditional values. However, despite their seemingly positive characteristics, the attitudes that constitute benevolent sexism are often dangerous and damaging to women's rights and even their safety.

b. Hostile Sexism

This is much more openly misogynistic than benevolent sexism. A hostile sexist is likely to think of women as manipulative, angry, and seeking to control men through seduction. Hostile sexism often views gender equality as an attack on masculinity or traditional values and seeks to suppress movements such as feminism. Hostile sexism often represents a significant danger to women.

c. Ambivalent Sexism

At first, hostile and benevolent sexism seem to be incompatible. It may seem impossible for individuals to simultaneously believe that women are both pure and fragile and also manipulative and angry. However, ambivalent sexism may be understood in light of sexism more broadly. Particularly within Western societies, sexism is largely based on traditional gender norms, which place men in positions of ambivalent sexism of authority in the home, the community, and

government. In the majority of cultures, women are expected to submit to male dominance. (Becker, 2011).

Causes of Sexism in the Workplace

A primary cause of gender discrimination in the workplace is that women are under-represented in many different industries, especially in male-dominated industries such as the auto industry. As a result, men in authority in these industries don't always have an open, progressive view about welcoming women, and that can create conflict, tension, and a negative work environment. Discrimination, however, doesn't exist solely in male-dominated industries; it also crops up in diverse industries in which male executives and male staff employees view women as less capable or less able to perform work tasks at an acceptable level (Cubillo & Brown, 2013).

Glass Ceiling and Glass Wall

The glass ceiling is a metaphor referring to an invincible barrier that prevents women and minorities from being promoted to managerial- and executive-level positions within an organization. One example of the glass ceiling can be seen in the office of the president of the United States (Shakeshaft, 2016). There's no law that prevents a woman from occupying this office, yet it still hasn't happened. A glass ceiling is a metaphor used to represent an invisible barrier that keeps a given demographic from rising beyond a certain level in a hierarchy. The metaphor was first coined by feminists in reference to barriers in the careers of high-achieving women (Bolat, 2011; Shakeshaft, 2016).

The term "glass ceiling" generally refers to transparent cultural, organizational, and attitudinal barriers that maintain rigid sex segregation in organizations. The politics of the glass ceiling are commonly attributed to the closed-ranks mentality and fraternity of a generalized male bureaucratic and organizational culture (Davidson and Cooper, 2012). Wirth (2014) outlines the notion of the "glass ceiling" and "glass wall" as a metaphorical barrier blocking women (or minority groups) from promotion, or opportunity for promotion.

The "glass wall" represents a barrier preventing a woman or minority from moving to a position that has a promotional ladder attached. In other words, instead of simply blocking a woman or minority's potential rise-the "glass ceiling", the 'glass wall' effect works laterally, taking away the very opportunity for the said group to be promoted.

Davidson and Cooper (2012) claim that it is no secret that in many organizations, some people are more fortunate than others; some get promoted while others stay at the middle or even the bottom of the positional ladder. This inability to rise in rank may not be a result of inexperience

or lack of capabilities, many activists claim, but rather other factors like gender or race. This school of thought deals with what is known as the "glass wall" effect. This is a relatively new concept, while its parent, the "glass ceiling" effect, dates from 1979, but both are used in association today.

Cubillo & Brown (2013) consider that the concept of the "glass ceiling" has limited explanatory power while Shakeshaft (2016) argues that general notions of "glass ceiling" politics have been postulated with little regard for cultural differences within institutions, or across socio-cultural, political and economic contexts.

Theoretical Framework

Since the focus of the study is sexism and role stereotypes of the female gender in Nigeria and Rwanda, the following theoretical framework are adopted to buttress that sexism is a phenomenon that can retard the social and economic development of any society. The theories are as follows:

Marxist Theory of Feminism

Notable Marxist feminists include Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai, Angela Davis, and Claudia Jones and so on.

The materialist (Marxist) analysis of the women question takes a different dimension on the feminist question. It examines the status of women in relation to the economic system, rather than the relationship between men and women. The theory analyzes the ways women are exploited through capitalism and the individual ownership of private property The end point is that, women's oppression is in connection with production. The Marxist feminist believes that the cause of women's subordination and oppression primarily is as a reason of class system in the society and male domination; patriarchy.

Marxist feminist, consequently focus on housework and its relations to capital arguing that house workers directly under the capitalists, the men (husbands) act as the domestic capitalists or compradors, who subject the housewives to exploitation as the latter's laboring the home including providing services as laundry, cooking, cleaning the environment and child rearing, are not subjected to economic evaluation or monetization and be so rewarded accordingly. Women's oppression will cease to exist, in the projection of George (2010), when class oppression disappears as a result of proletarian revolution, which will invariably emancipate both men and women from capitalist exploitation. Unfortunately, the dream of women liberation and emancipation from men's oppression may not be attainable because of the demise of communism, which had intended to provide the ideological framework and foundation for such

revolutionary Putsch by the oppressed workers. Gender theologists in their justifications; rationalize religious injunctions as the determining basis for gender inequality in the society. These theoretical factors are assembly deterministic of the sex roles in the society, and by extension, decide life opportunities and how far each sex can go in the societal scheme of things. (Uwa, 2018). Marxist feminists believe that there is a hierarchical relation between means of production, ownership of property in the economic sector between men and women. Marxist feminists focus on work related inequalities. To Marxists, women oppression is as a result of the unjust structure of the society. Men are always put in higher positions as unlike women as men are perceived to be smarter and better options than women. The way our society is structured and has constructed gender roles is responsible for the inequality women face. They believe that capitalism is the primary oppressor of women and men i.e. patriarchy is the secondary oppressor.

Liberal Theory of Feminism

Many liberal feminists were inspired by John Rawls' liberal theory of justice. Rawl is best known for his defense of egalitarian liberalism. Liberal feminism conceives of freedom as personal autonomy, living a life of one's own choosing and political autonomy being co-author of the conditions under which one lives. Liberal feminists hold that the exercise of personal autonomy depends on certain enabling conditions that are insufficiently present in women's lives, or that social arrangements often fail to respect women's personal autonomy and other elements of women's flourishing (Wolf, 2013).

Liberal Feminists hold also that men and women's need and interests are insufficiently reflected in the basic conditions under which they live, and that those conditions lack legitimacy because women are inadequately represented in the processes of democratic self-determination. Liberal feminists hold that autonomy deficits like these are due to the "gender system", or the inherited traditions and institutions. Thus, the women's movement should work to identify and remedy them. The main trust of liberal feminism is that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal structures that blocks/restrict women freedom, entrance or success in the public world. Liberal feminism highlights the customary oppressive gender roles that have been used as excuses or justifications for hindering women freedom, giving women a lesser place or no place at all in the society (Ackerly, 2001).

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at all in the society (Bittman, 2005).Scholars associated with this theory include: Elizabeth Cady Staton, Gina Krog, Helen Tylor, Rebecca Walker and so on.

Methodology

This study was carried out to investigate a comparative study on sexism and role stereotype of the female gender in Nigeria and Rwanda. The research design that is employed in this research is the descriptive- explanatory analysis and synthesis as it will be analytical, comparative and evaluative in nature, therefore the study would employ the method mode of analysis using qualitative method by analyzing a wide range of finding from majorly secondary sources. The research population of this study is limited to Nigeria and Rwanda specifically focusing on sexism and role stereotype of the female gender in both countries. However, the sampling technique employed in the research work is non-probability sampling and using secondary means of data collection (that is from already existing documented accounts of the issues of sexism and role stereotype of the female gender).

Sexism and Stereotypes Faced by Female Gender in Nigeria and Rwanda

Sexism and Stereotypes Faced by Female Gender in Nigeria

The status of women in Nigeria in respect to gender equality has not been exactly impressive. Recently,Nigeria ranks 128th globally in Global Gender Gap Index, according to World Economic Forum. Although Nigeria recorded a marginal improvement according to the latest report by WEF from 133th position which it ranked in 2018 to 128th in 2020 out of 153 countries, regardless this still leaves shows the poor level of equality in the country and how women are still at loss. Various stereotypes are being faced by women in Nigeria on a daily basis and this has limited their ability to achieve a lot in society. BBC News (2015) wrote an article on what it means to be female in Nigeria, talking about gender discrimination and how various women are using social media hash tags to voice out their opinions. Based off of the feminist author Chimamanda Adiche's "We Should All Be Feminists" popular talk which were discussed by a group of women in a book club meeting who started describing their personal experiences and challenges they faced being women. The head of the book club Florence Warmate began to tweet her thoughts with the hash tag **#Being Female In Nigeria** which soon became flooded with other women sharing their unique situations due to gender roles, stereotypes and barriers that restrict a lot for them as women. The hash tag was used by both women and men to debate gender identity and describe how women not even just in Nigeria face sexism in the workplace, public places and even in their homes. The female gender in Africa particularly Nigeria seems culturally

suppressed resulting in the upsurge of feminists' movements for instance Women In Nigeria (WIN), National Women's Union, Federation of Nigeria Women's Union and so on. These various organizations focus and attend to different issues within the private sphere of the family and also the public aspect in areas like economic empowerment, violence against women, property ownership, political participation among women, leadership development among others (Madunagu, 2010).

Various stereotypes faced by women in Nigeria can be primarily identified in facets such as:

Stereotypes Faced In The Household: Nigeria being an African country is still very traditional and cultural based. This implies that norms, laws and even the common way of life are centred on her age long traditions which are sometimes inhumane, degrading and fetish, very different from the way western countries operate which is more modernized. These traditions are seen both in the household, at school and even in the place of work. In Nigeria gender peculiarities and patriarchal construct remain the bane across virtually all spheres of life in the society (Ojukwu and Ibekwe, 2020). Gender roles are very prevalent in Nigeria , as boys are brought up to see themselves as superiors to girls, taught to be the head over girls and as such see themselves as stronger, indispensable and more important, while girls are taught to be caretakers and to see themselves as weaker or even as subordinates to men. This results in what is called a natural factor which implies that "this natural factor of being born a man or a woman places women in a subservient position in the society and thus situates them for positions indoors" (Ibekwe, 2018). For instance, most cultures in Nigeria due to the fact that patriarchal institution is giving prominence in the scheme of things, most of their laws or traditions are gender discriminatory hence there is no equity. In Hausa land they have a system known as '**Purdah**' which prevents young Hausa girls and women of puberty age of going out unescorted and getting involved in public life and activities. In most households in Nigeria a male child is often preferred to a female child because it is assumed that boys would take over the family name and responsibility while a girl would be married off to another family and become part of that family. In Igbo land in Nigeria, some people respond to questions on the sex of a new baby girl by calling it an 'ashewo' meaning prostitute especially if the mother had given birth to many female children in the past. Women due to their role of child birth are expected to be care takers , raise the children and are even most times advised to be housewives no to take up jobs so it doesn't conflict with their wifely duties. Women are expected to perform all household duties including cooking, cleaning, and raising of the children. Even while growing up, girls are told to learn to respect their husbands and see marriage as a priority or top achievement whereas boys are

encouraged to achieve all they want to achieve if possible. When a man is caught in infidelity most times the woman is blamed for causing his interests to divert elsewhere and she is urged to forgive the man or even pray over it but when a woman is caught, she is often hurled abusive names and immediately thrown out of her husband's house. Childlessness is an issue which has continued to be blamed on the woman but modernization has helped to give clarity and know that both the man or woman can be infertile which causes childlessness but even till date most traditions in Nigeria for example the Igbo's blame women for childlessness and the woman is seen a curse to the family she is married to and she is faced with all sorts of maltreatments (Ojukwu *et al.*,2020) then the man is advised to marry a new wife in order to find one that produces an heir which normally means a male child. This shows how little influence or authority a woman has in the home as she is just a subordinate to her husband and how these stereotypical roles in the house limit a woman from achieving anything for herself.

Gender Stereotype in Education: Nigeria's population ranks poorly in terms of educational outcomes by international standards. Nigeria ranks 103 out of 113 countries in the UNESCO Education for All Education Development Index (EDI) (2015). This index is based on four indicators: primary enrolment, adult literacy, gender inequality, and survival to grade 5. "Nigeria's structural peers (Algeria, Egypt, India, Indonesia, and Iran) have an average rank of about 80. Though indicators are difficult to interpret, they are useful in providing a snapshot of how Nigeria compares with other countries in key areas. Poor governance and underfunding of the education sector negatively affect education outcomes" (World Bank SCD, 2018). The out-of-school rate is higher among girls (32%) than boys (28%); the completion rates of primary education for boys are about 80% while only 66% for girls.

Furthermore, while access to schooling increased among more affluent quintiles, it is declining among the bottom quintile, widening the gap and reducing the human capital of vulnerable groups. (World Bank SCD, 2018). The gender imbalance in the area of educational level and qualifications finds expression in the concentration of women in some career paths and their absence in others. Typical female professions are nurses/midwives, teachers in kindergartens and primary schools and secretaries while typical male professions are engineering, banking, veterinary medicine and university lecturers (World Bank, 2015). Though overall the literature repeatedly records that most women who work do so in farming, farming related or other small business activities.

Religion and Sex Stereotype: Religion has an impact on women's ability to assert their rights in relation to child bearing and child spacing (Oluwagbemiga, 2016) and this plays into the

situation of most women in Nigeria, where access to employment is constrained by the opportunity cost of care and household responsibilities. Muslim women in Nigeria are more likely not to engage in any economic activities. The Purdah system prohibits women from holding noticeable social roles and so Muslim women are less able to participate in a visible work force when compared with women in other religions. They are more likely to work at home and be involved in sales activities or petty trading. (Oluwagbemiga, 2016). Other Christians and Catholic women tend to engage more often in professional/ technical/managerial jobs when compared with other religions.

Religious beliefs that discourage women from standing up against their husbands, partners and in-laws do not allow them to assert their rights on sexual matters and to resist intimate partner violence. Gender based violence (GBV) can reduce women's ambitions in livelihood activities further limiting women's participation and roles in labour markets.

GBV is high in the South South zone and low in the North West zone. In addition, internally displaced women are especially vulnerable to gender-based violence due to their exposure to conflict, unplanned movements, and subsequent dislocation. (World Bank SCD, 2018).

Gender Stereotypes against Women in the Workplace: Despite professional eligibilities and ample opportunities, female employees are not aptly represented in the higher corridors of organizational power (Pillar, Prasad &Thomas, 2011). Today, the workforce in Nigeria is very unique because never before has the workforce been so diverse, as women and minorities are being integrated into the workforce. Despite the remarkable growth in the workforce, women's right of entry to high managerial positions remains restricted especially for senior management positions all over the world (Oakley, 2000; Black& Rothman, 1998). This situation of impeding women's upward advancement to top management positions in large corporations is well documented is referred to as Glass ceiling. It is an invisible barrier in the workplace to women's careers from advancing higher and not allowing them to reach their peak.

In most places in the world not just Nigeria, women are often looked down upon in the workplace and are seen as incapable compared to men due to the gender roles already constructed by society. Most people believe that women will choose a family emergency over her work and might prioritize the home over her job so she might not be consistent and reliable. In Nigeria women today, women are excluded from certain occupational categories due to barriers as well as informal barriers to entry. The formal barriers which continue to hinder the entry of women into such occupational categories like: lack of education or technical training, labour laws and trading customs. Few Nigerian women are engaged in top management cadre of

formal sector establishment simply because majority of them lack the educational qualifications necessary for those positions. The Federal Civil Service in Nigeria is regarded as the government employed staff in Nigeria and this can be used as a proxy to depict the employment situation in the country.

Women in Political and Public Life: Women persistently experience discrimination in the public and political spheres despite recent initiatives to address this. In theory, the Nigerian constitution does not discriminate women in politics. The Nigerian constitution (1999) Section 40 states that: "Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests".

Section 42(1) also states that: "A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person be subjected to any form of discrimination".

Furthermore, the National Gender Policy (2006), Objective 5, target b, stipulates that the State is committed to: "Adopt special measures, quotas and mechanisms for achieving minimum critical threshold of women in political offices, party organs and public life by pursuing 35% affirmative action in favour of women to bridge gender gaps in political representation in both elective and appointive post at all levels by 2015".

In its 7th and 8th periodic report, the government stated that: "Nigeria has put women in the fore-front of its foreign policy negotiations, diplomacy and economic development, especially in recognition of the Nation's role in Africa as a driver of peace, stability and centre of commerce and growth".

Several efforts have indeed been made to address the low representation of women in elective and appointive positions in Nigeria. Such efforts include: the establishment of the Women Political Empowerment Office and Nigerian Women Trust Funds; creation of the Women Situation Room Nigeria and the 100 Women Lobby Group; the adoption of a gender policy by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); the creation of the national multi-stakeholder dialogue; the initiation of several interventions to actualize affirmative action; and the convening of the Nigeria Women Strategy Conference. Nonetheless, in practice, only an extremely low number of women hold elective and appointive roles in the country.

Sexism and Stereotypes Faced by Female Gender in Rwanda

Rwanda is ranked 166 on the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Human Development Index and the World Bank estimates 77% of the population lives under the international poverty line of $1.25 USD per day (UNDP, 2011; World Bank, 2011).

Rwanda`s geographical location, population density and lack of infrastructure presents serious challenges to its overall economic development. Landlocked countries are inherently economically disadvantaged because transportation costs in international trade are high which increases import prices and reduces export revenues. Rwanda's transport costs are $165 USD per ton per km in comparison to the East African average of $95 USD per ton per km (World Bank, 2011). These additional costs make it difficult for Rwandan commodities to be competitive in regional and international markets and to attract foreign investments (Arvis, 2010). Beyond the main roads in the country's capital and feeder roads to other cities Rwanda lacks adequate infrastructure which restricts citizens' mobility and trade opportunities. In Rwanda, women are more likely to be involved in informal trade than men, thus the handicap of being land-locked and the lack of adequate infrastructure, prevents women from accessing national and regional markets hindering their ability to earn a decent wage.

Environmental degradation due to Rwanda`s population density and mountainous topography is a major concern for the country considering 90% of inhabitants reside in rural areas, the majority of which, are dependent on agricultural production. Soil erosion, sedimentation of water sources and deforestation has decreased agricultural productivity and this poses serious threats to food security and sustainable development (Population Institute, 2009). Women are particularly affected by environmental degradation because they are customarily responsible for gathering wood and water for household use, in addition to cultivating their family`s plot. Women are forced to travel longer distances as resources become scarcer which will inevitably further decrease agricultural production and negatively affect household consumption patterns.

Rwanda has one of the highest fertilities and maternal mortality rates in the world and this creates major obstacles to economic growth. The total fertility rate in Rwanda is 5.5 and women have a 1 in 16 lifetime possibility of dying during childbirth (Population Institute, 2009). High population growth outpaces the country's economic development and rate of poverty reduction which strains the government`s limited resources to provide adequate schooling, immunizations and other vital services. At the household level, maternal morbidity or mortality has obvious economic consequences and jeopardizes the future of women`s dependents.

In spite of the numerous challenges Rwanda faces on its path to economic development, the country has made remarkable progress post-conflict. The government has recognized the need to strengthen regional integration and has joined the East African Community (EAC) to increase its competitiveness in regional markets. Rwanda has substantially reduced its aid dependency from 85% in 2000 to 45% in 2010 and has garnered a considerable amount of respect within the international community for spending donor money responsibly (Hitimana, 2011).

According to the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators, Rwanda is the fourth least corrupt country in Africa (WGI Report, 2010). In an effort to overcome the limitations of its small, landlocked economy, the government has developed a long-term, gender inclusive strategy to reduce its dependency on agriculture production and has taken steps to becoming a regional leader in information and communication technology (VISION 2020, 2000). According to the Doing Business 2011 report, Rwanda came second on the list of the ten most-improved economies. The UNDP predicts that Rwanda will achieve many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Notably improvements have been made in providing free universal primary education, reducing child mortality and promoting gender equality and women empowerment (UNDP, 2010).

Unfortunately, even though the government has proven it is committed to gender equality, there is little evidence to suggest that these policies have begun to benefit the majority of women. A UNDP country assessment concludes that women are more likely than men to live in poverty and work in informal sectors. Incidences of gender-based violence remains high and women are more likely to contract HIV and underperform in school than their male counterparts (UNPD, 2007). This suggests that despite government efforts towards gender inclusive reforms, and a female majority in parliament, women's development opportunities largely depend on their socioeconomic status within society.

The research study has focused on Sexism and Role stereotype of the female gender in Nigeria and Rwanda. Hence, the following are the major summary of findings which can be made from the research study;

Firstly, this paper provided the background to the study which introduced that sexism has been a major issue in contemporary societies which mainly affects the female gender and their ability to work or perform in the society. Women constitute about half of the population of the Nigerian State and are known to play vital roles as mothers, producers, managers, community developers/organizers and so on. Their contribution to the social and economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the

productive and reproductive spheres. Yet their participation in formal and informal structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant. Rwanda has the highest rate of female empowerment and gender equality in Africa and in comparison, to Nigeria; they are making global efforts to ensure that all forms of discrimination and sexism is eschewed. For instance, the made the ministry of gender and family promotion which has given women the right to own properties equally with male counterparts, have positions in government, military and gain the highest level of education attainable freely. In the parliament, the Rwandan government has created positions for at least 30 percent of its members to be female and has created a gender monitory office, and a commitment to gender-based budgeting that ensures the promotion of gender equality. This was the major reason for choosing the tow particular countries in this comparative study. Rwanda compared to Nigeria has achieved so much in respect to gender equality and their achievements have been used in the study to shed light on the areas which need improvement in Nigeria and her government for a better gender equalized state.

Conclusion

The study focused on the Sexism and Role stereotype of the female gender in Nigeria and Rwanda. It is equally significant for society to address the problem of gender discrimination.

Gender stereotype and sexism exists in all countries of the world and it is almost always decried. Even in the western societies such as America and The United Kingdom where it is almost abolished there are feminists who are still fighting gender stereotypes. Gender discrimination is now universally recognized as unethical; every country strives towards gender equality by ensuring that both men and women enjoy equal opportunities in such important fields as education, politics, economy and commerce. In Nigeria and Rwanda, deliberate efforts are made towards improving the status of women through policies and programmes based on gender considerations. The feminists and women liberation movements emphasized the need for education enlightenment and national awareness on the citizens' constitutional and fundamental human rights in order to remove legal, cultural religious and other constraints against the full integration of women into the development process.

Recommendation

In line with the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proffered:

Relevant clauses of the Beijing Conference should be reactivated giving specific rights to women that will benefit not just countries supporting women's rights like Rwanda but even those that are

slow to adopt equality like Nigeria. This way, the personality and character of women will be respected. Further, the United Nations General Assembly should reaffirm its Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) thus making it mandatory for all nations of the world to adopt as cardinal objectives of its constitutions. Stringent sanctions should be meted out to any form of violation of this convention.

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