

**AN ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN-S CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE AKURE-NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ONDO STATE.**

**BY**

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**BEING A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND  
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## **DECLARATION**

I, CHUKWU BLESSING CHIAMAKA, EDU1802756, do hereby declare that this dissertation entitled An Assessment Of Women Contribution To National Development In The Akure-north Local Government Area Of Ondo State, is my original work and not a duplicate of someone else's. All materials used therein are adequately acknowledged by way of reference.

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**CHUKWU BLESSING CHIAMAKA**

## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this research work was written and submitted by **CHUKWU BLESSING CHIAMAKA, EDU1802756**, to the Department of Adult & Non Formal Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo

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**Date**

**DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to God almighty and my lovely parents for their support. For all that you have had to give up in raising me, Thank you.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My profound gratitude goes to Almighty God for his grace and knowledge given to me to complete this work. The thoughts and strengths come from Him. To Him be all the glory and honour forever.

To all my lecturers who showed me the knowledge light in the Department of Adult and Non Formal Education, University of Benin, Benin City, I say it could not have been better without them. I am most grateful and may the good Lord bless them all abundantly.

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study focused on assessing women's contribution to national development in the Akure-North Local Government Area of Ondo State. The objectives of the study were to identify the problems affecting women's contribution to national development, ascertain the ways women contribute to the development of the country, find out the measures put in place by the government to support women's

participation in development activities, investigate the ways culture has affected the contribution of women to national development and find out the influence of religion on the participation of women in development activities. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. Findings from the study revealed the problems affecting women's contribution to national development in the area are low level of education, poverty, religious beliefs and practices, cultural practices, Ignorance, lack of support from the government, too many home responsibilities, lack of support from men, gender stereotype, Poor participation of women in politics and the low interest on the part of women. It was concluded that culture and religion have a great influence on women's contributions to national development. The researcher recommended that the government need to intervene, proffering a more lasting and sustainable solution to gender equality and formal and specific organized steps should be taken by the non-government organization and agencies to help protect the fundamental human rights of women.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of the Study**

The issue of women's marginalization presents a moral question to which generally scholars, economists and social scientists have all contributed since the

issue of women's development came into the global arena. The marginalization of women has gone a long way in setting back the developmental effort in our societies. The marginalization of women can be described as the denial of access of women to their basic human rights.

The plight of women differs from country to country. Women in developing economies, however, bear a double burden of discrimination as a result of the social and economic deprivation resulting from the domination of men over them. It is therefore wise to say that men see themselves as head and leaders over women and this makes it easier for them to keep women disempowered through the use of patriarchal values because patriarchy itself is sustained by customary, religious and traditional values (Ajanaku, 2001).

Ugwu (2001) stated that ↑the concept of women in the world view is elusive and exploitative by men and society. For example, the general belief of men is that women are weaker, feeble and have poor reasoning attitude↓. This statement shows to a great extent that the problems of women are not just allowed to share useful ideas but even when such ideas are shared, they are ignored. In some communities, women are also not treated equally with their male counterparts even in the educational sector. They are denied the right to education with the conclusion that their education ends in the kitchen. Women are equally denied the freedom of

speech and they are often intimidated, abused, ignored and neglected (United Nations, 2006).

United Nations (2006), the report revealed that the marginalization of women causes a lot of ills to our society in the areas of economic, political, social, cultural, community and national development. The marginalization of women has affected the development of communities negatively because women are discriminated against and they lack the power to fight back (Ajanaku, 2001). According to the author discrimination is sustained due to women's powerlessness, he maintained that women are poor, do not own land, are relegated to the informal sector with micro-enterprises, and are denied resources such as large-scale credit facilities. They lack access to political power which gives access to all of the other resources. Occupationally, for example, women are expected in the nursing, hairdressing, secretarial and clothing professions. It is considered taboo for women to want a job as an auto-mechanic, cab driver or shoe cobbler. It is the socialization process entrenched from the village to the national level that constitutes a lot of problems and sets back women from participating effectively in community development. These do not mean differences in sex roles, which are determined by women's biological peculiarities and sexual anatomy. Rather, it talks about the differences in gender functions, which are culturally determined over time by the norms and traditions of the people. Typically, in the African setting, the

discriminatory gender functions were anchored on gender myths, which permit the menfolk to dominate, control and exploit women economically, educationally and politically. It is evident to say that women operate within a restricted scope in the context of both community and national development.

The roles of women cannot be overemphasized, globally women comprise 43% of the world → agricultural labour force → rising to 70% in some countries. For instance, across Africa, 80% of agricultural production comes from small farmers, most of whom are rural women. Women notably mothers, play the largest role in decision-making about family meal planning and diet. And women self-report more often their initiative to preserve child health and nutrition. The responsibility of women is many in terms of caretakers, educators, business, head of household and support workers.

Furthermore, women occupy a low position in the social, religious and political structure because of the cultural pattern. The adoption of such culture as a tool to marginalize women in the fast-changing and sophisticated society hampers development in its totality. It was on this note that in 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Several world conferences have been held on the same issue. Despite the progress made, Ghali (2006) noted that much more remains to be done as women → concerns are still given second priority almost

everywhere. He further lamented about gender disparities and unacceptable discrimination against women, in public and private life, on a daily basis, in all parts of the world.

These showed that one of the major obstacles or constraints to effective community development is the marginalization and discrimination of women which thus affects their contribution to national development. In view of the above, this study is aimed at investigating the contribution of women to national development in Akure-South local government, Ondo State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The marginalization of women is one of the major hindrances, obstacles and constraints to women's participation in national development. If there is no integration of women and their affairs in the community, national development may become unrealistic. Over the years, many women have faced daunting challenges of joblessness, lack of a source of livelihood, widowhood, and single parenthood. These challenges notwithstanding, the roles played by women in national development and all facets of human endeavours have been quite notable. Though there has been considerable progress in developing the capabilities of women, their participation in economic and political decision-making remains very limited. However, in Nigeria, women are still relegated to the background as they

lack the educational, economic and political power necessary to actualize their innate potential. With this regard, the marginalization of women will separate them from participating actively in the community and national development respectively. These popped-up questions like, does it mean women have nothing to contribute to the nation's development? Why are they still marginalized if they are considered the backbone of development? All these questions are what this research study intends to find answers to.

### **Research Questions**

What are the problems affecting women's contribution to national development?

In what ways can women contribute to the development of the country?

What are the measures put in place by the government to support women's participation in development activities?

In what ways has culture affected the contribution of women to national development?

What is the influence of religion on the participation of women in development activities?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to assess women's contribution to national development in the Akure-North Local Government Area of Ondo State. However, the specific objectives include to:

Identify the problems affecting women's contribution to national development.

Ascertain the ways women contribute to the development of the country.

Find out the measures put in place by the government to support women's participation in development activities

Investigate the ways culture has affected the contribution of women to national development.

Find out the influence of religion on the participation of women in development activities.

### **Significance of the Study**

The finding of this study will be of immense benefit to the women in Akure North Local Government, the government/policymaker, the students and researchers. In addition, it will bring awareness to the women to enable them to work towards getting support from the government and non-governmental organisations in

society so as for them to be able to perform their roles effectively in National development.

To the women, the finding from this study will serve as an eye-opener to them as it will enable them to know the various challenges hindering their effective contribution to national development and the dimension and manifestation of these challenges and how to solicit support from the necessary body for assistance.

The study will also help the government (local, state and federal) and policymakers to know the importance of women in our society and the need to give them the necessary support that will enable them to perform their roles effectively in Nation development. It will also be useful in providing a platform for educating Nigerians and particularly policymakers toward entrenching policy options that would be favourable to all women and will in terms bring immense benefits to the society at large.

### **Scope & Delimitation of Study**

The study seeks to assess the contributions of women to National Development in the Akure-North Local Government of Ondo State. The study is delimited to four zones in Akure North Local Government namely: Iju, Itaogbolu, Oba-Ile and Igbatoro.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Concept of Women**

The Woman has been defined in so many ways as; the weaker vessel, feeble-minded being, child-bearer, emotional being, man's helper, caretaker, man's better half, man's wealth preserver, man's soul mate, home manager, among

others (Okereke, 2010). No matter the number of categories the woman is placed on as stated above, she is more than these. A woman is powerfully created with superior structures. She is impeccably and uniquely made by her creator. The emergence of the 21st century laden with sufficient evidence; scientifically and otherwise, has proved that women are capable of holding leadership positions as men.

However, women, as many think, are not naturally weak. They neither have limited contractual capacity nor lower intelligence quotient than men. This is proved in the likes of women like Margaret Thatcher ↑the iron lady↓, former Prime Minister of Britain, Indira Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, Queen Elizabeth II of England, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia. In Nigeria, we have women like Dr Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Finance Minister, Late Professor Dora Akunyili, former Minister of Information and Director of NAFDAC, Dr Ndi Okereke Onyiuke among others who distinguished themselves in leadership and administration of Nigeria. In the last two decades, according to Olaleye (2008), debates, on the status of women and the need to integrate them into the development process of any nation have ranged on at national and international workshops, and seminars among others.

Furthermore, in Nigeria today, women have come a long way in business, politics, education, sports and other professions. They have made an indelible mark

in their efforts to conquer the limitations of the past which have sought to place them permanently in the kitchen and bedroom. Nigerian women are still relegated to the background as they lack the educational, economic and political power necessary to actualize their innate potential. Ifedili and Ifedili (2012), asserted that Nigerian women are stalled by culture, which made them, vulnerable to effectively join the workforce and contribute to economic and thus, national development. The majority of Nigerian women have not been fully mobilized and empowered to contribute to national development. Otherwise, we would not still be talking about women's empowerment.

### **Concept of Development**

The concept of development has been viewed from different angles; social, economic, political and cultural. Okemakinde (2014) viewed development to depict positive change and development in socio-economic and political conditions or situations of the society. Olomukoro (2012), views development in terms of human potentials and capabilities in the context of relations with other social groups. He further emphasized that development means a greater understanding of the social, economic and political process, enhanced competence to analyse and solve problems of day-to-day living, expansion of manual skills, greater control over economic resources, restoration of human dignity, self-respect and equality.

Thus national development is a multidimensional process involving the transformation and improvement of the economic, social and political situations.

Development is the transformation of the community into socially, economically, politically, educationally, orderly, and materially desirable conditions, to improve the quality of life of the people. It is also referred to as the uniform distribution of resources, the integration of the people into the national economy; it is a socio-economic process which seeks to bring about a more equitable distribution of resources and income within the society (Mundi, 2008).

According to Ohagwu (2010) development is not the same thing as change, growth or modernization, but the nature, content and course of a society, it is the choice of goals for achieving the realization of human potential. Gboyega (2003) described development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies an improvement in the well-being of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future, it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances. Naomi (1995) believes that development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth but also some notion of equitable

distribution, and provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all to improve the individual and collective quality of life.

Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) assert that development could be seen as the process of empowering people to maximize their potential and the ability to exploit nature to meet daily human needs. It can also be seen as a process by which the quality of human lives and the capacity to surmount daily needs are considerably improved.

Chrisman (1984) views development as a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the well-being of people is generated through strong partnerships between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in society. It is reasonable to know that development is not only an economic exercise but also involves both socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of societal life.

Development is not just a matter of getting more money into the hands of the poor, but ensuring that increased production, and its resulting increased income, leads to an improved standard of living (IsiugoAbanihe, Isamah and Adesina, 2002). Every meaningful, concrete and lasting development begins and ends with a focus on human resources. Human resources refer to all economic resources that are wholly and directly supplied by human beings, this includes the suppliers of

labour services and entrepreneurial functions (Onyeka, 2010). The size of the human resources depends largely on the population size while the quality is a product of educational, health services and environmental factors (a conducive environment that promotes an investment-friendly platform)

### **Concept of Women's Empowerment:**

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2014) defined empowerment as giving somebody power or authority to do something; to give somebody more control over their own life or the situation they are in. Mills and Friesen (2001) see empowerment as the authority of subordinates to decide and act. It is something people do for themselves which involves solidarity and participation in the struggle for greater control over their lives. Empowerment according to Okereke (2010), is a process of giving strength, push or enablement to do something to make it perform the desired or expected task. He further explained that empowerment in relation to a human being is a mental, spiritual, intellectual moral and physical re-awakening. It is strengthening the feeble or weak-minded person(s) and helping them rise and be part of the political and economic revolution going on in the nations of the world. It is stirring up the spirit of a person to do the extraordinary or seemingly impossible thing.

Consequently, Lasiele (1999) described women empowerment as the provision of adequate opportunities for women to develop their potential and contribute to the development of the nation in particular and the world in general. It is seen as the provision of a conducive environment or opportunities for women to contribute their quota to the social, political and economic development of a nation. Okereke (2010) viewed women's empowerment as the act of strengthening women to rise and handle the challenges of life. He further said it is about motivations which help women to do what they thought they could not do. Okemakinde (2014) see women's empowerment as a veritable mechanism to increase women's skills and abilities, their control over the resources and decisions affecting their lives. Woman empowerment is, therefore, regarded as the breaking of barriers that limit women from doing certain things men do in society. It is setting women free from cultural and traditional bondages that militate against their productive powers and development. The history of development teaches us that nations are built by the collective will of the citizens and creative hard work. It is evident that one of the weaknesses of the emerging economies of African nations today is the failure to deeply involve women in the process of governance and development (Okereke, 2010).

It is important to note that no nation can develop to the limit of its potential unless women are fully empowered to take up responsibilities as men and work

collectively towards the political and socio-economic development of the country. To fully empower women requires a holistic approach to breaking the cultural and traditional barriers that hold women in bondage in a free world of equal opportunities. The time has come when women should be fully integrated into the scheme of things for national development. It is against this background that the paper discusses factors that inhibit women's contributions to national development. It identifies various economic activities through which women meaningfully contribute to national development, areas women can be empowered for national development and recommendations that will empower women to contribute meaningfully to a rapid and effective national development will be given.

### **Women and Education**

According to Uzuma (2003), Nigeria significantly influences the achievement of the MDGs in sub-Saharan Africa because of its sheer size. Nearly one in every four women in sub-Saharan Africa is Nigerian. Hence, the situation of women and girls in Nigeria has a key role to play in determining the progress of the whole region. Nigeria has performed poorly in terms of gender equality. According to the 2012 Gender in Nigeria Report, data suggest that Nigeria ranks 118 out of 134 countries in the Gender Equality Index. At every educational level, women earn less than their male counterparts and in some cases, men with less

education earn more than better-educated female peers. Also, Nigerian girls drop out of school earlier than their male counterparts.

In addition, in Uzuma in *Gender Statistics* (2010), evidence has shown that more than two-thirds of 15-19-year-old girls in Northern Nigeria are unable to read a sentence. Of course, these facts are devastating in their own right, but what is more worrisome is that it seems efforts by the Nigerian government for the past 20 years to tackle the gender disparity in education have not had any significant impact. With regard to women's education, Nigeria's education policy has evolved since the 1980s towards a gender focus.

However, women are critical actors in the education process. The roles of women in schools are often defined in terms of their 'natural' affinities with children and their innate love for teaching and nurturing, as well as their ability to do it. Nonetheless, men still dominate women in every country in the world, Nigeria included; resulting in widespread discrimination against women and girls. The impact of unequal power relations and discrimination is often felt most severely when material poverty exists, as this increases vulnerability. Inequality in Nigerian society inevitably has an impact on the provision and content of education, as well as on the ability of girls to enter, and remain in, school (Oniye, 2010).

In our society, there are some limitations for women to progress in education and to be considered outside their family roles, expectation and responsibilities. Reinartz (2002) argues that balancing work and family is a major hurdle for working women. Hence, family responsibilities influence the careers and education choices of women who mostly have disproportionate work in the care of children and the home. The tradition, customs, sociocultural values, ethics, and motherhood instincts are some of the factors influencing gender bias in the education sector. Cultural and social beliefs, attitudes and practices prevent girls from benefiting from educational opportunities to the same extent as boys. The achievement of girls → right to education can address some of the societies → deeply rooted inequalities, which condemn millions of girls to life without quality education → and, therefore, also all too often to a life of missed opportunities. Education is seen in some societies as a fear of change and now with globalization, the fear becomes even greater- fear to lose the cultural identity, fear of moving towards the unknown or unwanted. Furthermore, the gender disparity is exacerbated by the powerful economic and social rationale for investing in the education of sons rather than daughters, as daughters are perceived to be less valuable once educated, and less likely to abide by the will of the father, brother or husband. The plight of women, in terms of education, is compounded by the negative attitude of parents toward female education (Oniye, 2010).

Another implication for poor educational opportunities for women is involvement in low-paying ventures. It has been noted by Oladunni (1999) that because of societal stereotypes and stigmatization of certain professions and subjects as the exclusive preserve of men and or women most Nigerian women have been forced into less-paid jobs (teaching, nursing services, agriculture, small-scale food processing, secretarial duties, clerical duties, note- counting in banks, cleaners and middle-level professional occupations). In most societies, both the public and private sectors continue to be dominated by men, leading parents to ask themselves: why bother educating our girls if they will never make it anyway.

On the contrary, the current wave of globalization has greatly improved the lives of women worldwide, particularly the lives of women in the developing world. Nevertheless, women remain disadvantaged in many areas of life, including education, employment, health, and civil rights. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development and the World Bank, 57 per cent of the 72 million primary school-aged children who do not attend school are females. Additionally, girls are four per cent less likely than boys to complete primary school (Gender Statistics, 2010). While many gains have been made with regard to the overall level of education worldwide and more children than ever are now attending primary school (King, 2013), there is still no worldwide gender parity in education. In every income bracket, there are more female children than male children who

are not attending school, especially in developing countries. Generally, girls in the poorest 20 per cent of a household have the lowest chance of getting an education (Jensen, 2010). This inequality does not necessarily change in adulthood.

### **Effect of Culture, Tradition and Religion on Women's Development**

Culture is defined as the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people or society. Culture often determines the values, world-view, attitudes, behaviour and practices of women from birth to death.

Understanding culture is important in considering how we might best approach the issue of gender. Only then can one determine an effective strategy for recreating the defined values, norms and practices. Although most cultures look down upon women, and up to men, they express it differently. Traditional African Society looked up to women as perpetual dependent on males. Women have to be protected and guided by men. Women are often objects of exploitation and a source of wealth to men who handle them like personal property.

In some African cultures, women are treated equally to their male counterparts. In Uganda, women cannot eat chicken wings. Otherwise, they would fly like a chicken and not be submissive, especially in bed. In some cultures in West Africa, women are to be beaten at least once in three months in order to remain disciplined. If they are not beaten, the women ask for it. In some cultures, women need to go

through Female Genital Multination (FGM) to be tamed, so that she does not become sexually promiscuous. This primitive practice is still active. The Kenya Demographic survey in 1998 indicated that 50% of women aged 35 years and above are circumcised. This hinders true love among the women and it hinders good rapport between husband and wife. It would also restrict any women to contribute effectively to national development.

In Nigeria, men inherit the wife of a deceased brother or uncle to seize the properties of a deceased brother in the name of culture. This hinders the freedom of the wife to marry her own choice as well as take a decision on their own. This affects their morale and hindered their contributions to family affairs as well as national development.

### **Cultures and Tradition:**

Various cultures and traditions in Nigeria restrict the role of women in domestic activities, such as keeping the home clean, bearing children, and cooking food for the entire family members among others. Society today sees these roles as less important as they require less extensive formal education for one to be able to perform them. Most cultures and traditions in Nigeria depict male dominance in all situations and as such females are inferior. These unfortunate belief systems have

been a major obstacle to women's development in Nigeria and as such constraints to their contribution to national development.

### **Religious Beliefs:**

The different religions in Nigeria have different views as regards the position of women in worldly affairs. Some religions strongly believe that women should only be seen and not heard while some view men as superiors and few others see them as equal. This difference in beliefs adversely affects the way women are treated and the opportunities provided to them. As such what they believe in affects their effort towards national development.

## **THE ROLE OF NIGERIAN WOMEN IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

One of the most serious problems faced by Nigerian development is the non-active participation of women in national affairs. Women had tangible records of economic activities, largely in peasant societies where women made large contributions to the community and national development. However, these contributions are not recognized, but the truth is whether one holds a pragmatic or a humanistic view of development, the participation of women is necessary for national development. The analysis of women's traditional and preservation responsibilities demonstrated that they filled significant roles in the economy and society, such as cultivation, food processing, food preservation, animal husbandry

and marketing, in addition to caring for their homes and families (Okereke, 2010). The following areas have been identified as potent avenues by which women have collectively contributed to national development:

**Grassroots Solidarity:-** Women's grassroots initiatives, groups and organizations are highly functional and supportive of communities and nations. Women's capacities for cooperative action were a large part of the reason for identifying them as the 'backbone of rural development' (Okereke, 2010). They organize themselves for wide-ranging purposes, mutual savings and loan systems, house construction and improvement, cooperative farming and marketing, mobilizing funds for scholarships, starting a nursery centre and installing water supplies. Despite the substantial accomplishment of women groups, women are still regarded as not contributing meaningfully to national development.

**Food Production:-** Women's traditional roles in economic activities were neither evident nor even acknowledged in the modern sectors of agriculture, industry, commerce and government. The contribution of women to food production in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Over time, women have paid their dues immensely both as individuals and as groups in Nigeria in the food production process. They clear the land, till, plant and tend crops. They harvest, store, preserve and even ensure that produced food ends up edible

on the dining tables. In Nigeria, women work on the land and feed the population. Women are instrumental in the development of the most prosperous agricultural regions in different parts of the country and Africa in general. The devaluation of women's work done in sustainable economies is the natural outcome of a system constructed by capitalist patriarchy. These roles are not accorded their rightful recognition in society but are seen as mere at times.

**Food Preservation And Storage:-** Apart from the roles women play in the cultivation of crops and livestock domestication, they preserve and store food crops. For example, African breadfruit, cassava, palm oil, and cocoyam, among others are specially preserved by women. These foods that are preserved and stored provide food, especially during planting seasons when food is in short supply. It provides food security for the family and community. Women have continued in their struggles to be relevant in the development process of the nation through their efforts are neglected in the nation's planning process. In professional technical occupations, they are found mostly as teachers and nurses. Some are also found in clerical occupations. Generally, women dominated the non-wage sectors. Okogie and Ker (1999) observed that women make their greatest contributions to the economy in the agricultural sector. Trading is another area women

contribute to the economy of the country. Many are engaged in both local and cross-border trade which boosts the economy.

## **EFFORTS MADE SO FAR TOWARDS WOMAN'S EMPOWERMENT**

Women over the years have made several efforts to change their conditions but such efforts have been sporadic, uncoordinated and unsustainable. Deliberate organized efforts aimed at changing the status quo of women are a recent phenomenon. World conferences with women's issues top on the agenda has been held at various times. There was the 1975 conference at Mexico City, 1980 at Copenhagen, 1985 at Nkrobe, the 1995 Beijing conference and even the recent women's summit held on 18th October 2014 at Abuja at the instance of Dame Patience Jonathan, the wife of the Nigerian president, all geared towards women improvement. These conferences have succeeded in bringing gender issues to global attention.

The international conference gave the problem of women a global outlook and emboldened them to articulate the issues of critical concern and lobby for attention and assistance. This made International and National Institutions and agencies more responsive to women's needs and aspirations. The international conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in

1994 was a breakthrough in the empowerment of women. It identified the empowerment of women and the improvement of their status as essential to the realization of the full potential of economic, political and social development of any given human society.

The Beijing conference centred on upholding the earlier conventions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The Beijing conference recognized the need for the empowerment of women and equality between men and women as prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all the peoples of the world. In Nigeria, several bodies and organizations emerged intending to empower women and protect and promote their interests. The defunct Better Life for Women Programme, the Family Support Programme (FSP), the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), the National Women Commission (NWC), and the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS), are Governmental Organizations (G.Os) that were all geared towards women empowerment. There are also non-government bodies with similar targets. Many African countries have formulated policies to promote women's empowerment and development. For instance, Nigeria has adopted a ↑National policy on Women↓. This is to promote and protect the rights of women and increase their participation in government. The National Economic

Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) document expresses the government's commitment to 30 per cent representation for women and the Federal Government is trying to keep to that policy. All these and other efforts put in place have not yet yielded enough fruits as a majority of women remain unempowered even though some have received the supposed vehicle (Education) through which empowerment could be conveyed. This is mainly due to some variables that constitute obstacles/barriers to empowerment that have not yet been removed and the Modus Operandi of the exponents of women empowerment.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter deals with the procedures and methods that will be employed in carrying out this study. This chapter is organized under the following subheadings

Design of the Study

Population of the Study

Sample and Sampling Technique

Instrument for Data Collection

Validity of the Instrument

Reliability of the Instrument

Administration of the Instrument

Method of Data Analyses

## **Design of the Study**

The study will use a descriptive survey research design. The survey design attempts to examine the existence or occurrence of a phenomenon or variable. It is usually employed by collecting data and describing systematically the characteristic features or facts about a given population from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group

## **Population of the study**

The population of the study consists of all women living in the communities in Akure North Local Government.

## **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample for the study will consist of two hundred (200) respondents selected from the four communities, that is, fifty (50) respondents each were selected from the community. All the selection was done using a multi-stage sample procedure.

## **The Research Instrument**

Data for the study will be collected through the use of a self-constructed checklist and questionnaire which will be designed based on the research questions

raised. The instrument for this study is a structured questionnaire which was designed by the researcher. The questionnaire comprises sections A and B. Section A of this instrument focuses on gathering personal information of the respondent such as Age and Sex, while, B and C focus on issues raised in the research questions.

### **Validity of the instrument**

To determine the validity of the instrument, the researcher will adopt the expert judgment approach. By this, the instrument will be given to experts in the area under study to be assessed for validation. The experts involved in the assessment will include my supervisor and other lecturers in the Department of Adult and Non-formal Education, University of Benin.

### **Reliability of the instrument**

A test-retest reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument. The instrument was administered twice in a pilot study, which will involve twenty (20) respondents. The measures of the two sets of data were correlated using Pearson  $r$  statistics, and a 0.76 reliability index was gotten.

### **Administration of the instrument**

The researcher administered the instrument personally together with a research assistant. This helped to ensure easy and accurate distribution and collection of the instrument from the respondents

### **Method of Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data, the researcher shall make use of frequency count, simple percentages, and mean score analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This chapter focuses on the presentation of results collected from the investigation. The findings are also discussed. The analyses were also done in relation to the demographic data of the respondents and the research questions examined.

**Table 1.1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex.**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	20	8.8
Female	205	91.1
Total	200	100

Results in Table 2.1 shows that 20 or 8.8% of the sampled respondents are male while 200 or 91.1% are female. This means that the Female participants are highly represented in the study. The sex distribution of respondents is demonstrated in the bar chart below

**Figure 2.1**

**Table 1.2: Distribution of Respondents by Education.**

<b>Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Primary	0	0%
Secondary	50	22.2%
Vocational	60	26.6%

Tertiary	115	51.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

From the Table, it can be seen that none of the sampled respondents has a primary education, 50 or 22.2% of them have secondary education, 60 or 26.6% of them have vocational education and 115 or 51.1% of them are with tertiary education.

This shows that the majority of the participants in the study have tertiary education.

The education distribution of respondents is demonstrated in the pie chart below:

### Question 1

What are the problems affecting women's contribution to national development?

*The Responses to Research Question 1 are presented in Table 2*

**Table 2:** Distribution of responses on the problems affecting women's contribution to national development

	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Remark</b>
	Low level of education	200	2.9333	<b>Accepted</b>
	Poverty	200	2.9333	<b>Accepted</b>
	Religious beliefs and practices	200	3.0444	<b>Accepted</b>
	Cultural practices	200	3.0667	<b>Accepted</b>
	Ignorance	200	3.0444	<b>Accepted</b>

	No support from the government	200	3.1111	<b>Accepted</b>
	Too many home responsibilities	200	3.5455	<b>Accepted</b>
	Lack of support from men	200	2.5778	<b>Accepted</b>
	Sex stereotype	200	3.0000	<b>Accepted</b>
	Poor Participation of Women in Politics	200	2.9556	<b>Accepted</b>
	Low interest on the part of women	200	3.1111	<b>Accepted</b>

The data in Table 2.1 above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 met the mean score standard of 2.50 and, therefore, were accepted. This, therefore, means that the problems affecting women's contribution to national development are Low level of education, Poverty, Religious beliefs and practices, Cultural practices, Ignorance, No support from the government, Too many home responsibilities, Lack of support from men, Sex stereotype, Poor participation of women in politics and the Low interest on the part of women.

## **Question 2**

In what ways can women contribute to the development of the country?

*The Responses to Research Question 2 are presented in Table 3*

**Table 3:** Distribution of responses on the ways women contribute to the development of the country.

	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Remark</b>
	Taking-up leadership position	200	3.0000	<b>Accepted</b>
	Participating in community development activities	200	3.1111	<b>Accepted</b>

	Engaging in the human rights campaign	200	3.0444	<b>Accepted</b>
	Up-holding justice in areas of responsibility	200	2.5778	<b>Accepted</b>
	Paying tax and other duties	200	3.1778	<b>Accepted</b>
	Serving in various government and non-government administrative capacities	200	3.0222	<b>Accepted</b>
	Being productive in their respective areas of occupation	200	2.6000	<b>Accepted</b>
	Fighting corrupt practices in the country	200	2.7045	<b>Accepted</b>
	Supporting the government in developmental programmes and projects	200	3.0444	<b>Accepted</b>
	Participating in development activities in the community	200	3.0000	<b>Accepted</b>

The data in the table above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 met the mean score standard of 2.50 and, therefore, were accepted. This, therefore, means that women can contribute to the development of the country by Taking-up leadership positions, Participating in community development activities, Engaging in the human right campaign, Up-holding justice in areas of responsibility, Paying taxes and other duties, Serving in various government and non-government administrative capacities, Being productive in their respective areas of occupation, Fighting corrupt practices in the country, Supporting the government in developmental programmes and projects and Participating in development activities in the community.

### **Question 3**

What are the measures put in place by the government to support women's participation in development activities?

*The Responses to Research Question 3 are presented in Table 4*

**Table 4:** Distribution of responses on the measures put in place by the government to support women's participation in development activities.

	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Remark</b>
	Exposing women to their rights and privileges as a citizen	200	3.1556	<b>Accepted</b>
	Encouraging and supporting girl's and women's literacy education	200	2.9556	<b>Accepted</b>
	Financially empowering women	200	3.0222	<b>Accepted</b>
	Bring up policies that support gender equality	200	2.6222	<b>Accepted</b>
	Making and implementing laws that protect women's rights	200	3.5778	<b>Accepted</b>
	Encourage women's participation in political and administrative leadership	200	3.0000	<b>Accepted</b>
	Discourage any religious or cultural practices that deny women access to free participation in the development of the community	200	2.7778	<b>Accepted</b>
	Support programmes that focus on building women's capacity.	200	3.2222	<b>Accepted</b>

The data in the table above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 met the mean score standard of 2.50 and, therefore, were accepted. This, therefore, means that the measures put in place by the government to support women's participation in development activities include, Exposing women to their rights and privileges as a

citizen, Encouraging and supporting girls and women's literacy education, Financially empowering women, Bringing up policies that support gender equality, Making and implementing laws that protect women rights, Encourage women's participation in political and administrative leadership, Discourage any religious or cultural practices that deny women access to free participation in the development of the community and support programmes that focus on building women capacity.

#### Question 4

In what ways has culture affected the contribution of women to national development?

*The Responses to Research Question 4 are presented in Table 5*

**Table 5:** Distribution of responses on ways culture has affected the contribution of women to national development.

	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Remark</b>
	It has reduced women's roles to the kitchen	200	2.5333	<b>Accepted</b>
	It has reduced women's roles to childbearing and rearing	200	2.5778	<b>Accepted</b>
	It has silenced the voice of women	200	3.1556	<b>Accepted</b>
	Women do not have a say in matters that concerns them or their development.	200	3.2889	<b>Accepted</b>
	It has given men the power to be the only decision-maker in society	200	3.3333	<b>Accepted</b>
	It has contributed greatly to the dehumanization of women folks through practices such as genital	200	3.8444	<b>Accepted</b>

	mutilation, early marriage etc.			
	It has denied women access to formal education	200	3.1333	<b>Accepted</b>
	It has reduced the interest of women in a leadership position	200	3.0000	<b>Accepted</b>
	It promotes sex stereotype	200	2.5778	

The data in the table above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 met the mean score standard of 2.50 and, therefore, were accepted. This, therefore, means that the cultural effects on the contribution of women to national development are that It has reduced women's roles to the kitchen and childbearing and rearing, silenced the voice of women, and given men the power to be the only decision-maker in the society, contributed greatly to the dehumanization of women folks through practices such as genital mutilation, early marriage etc., denied women access to formal education, reduced the interest of women in a leadership position and promote sex stereotype.

### **Question 5**

What is the influence of religion on the participation of women in development activities?

*The Responses to Research Question 5 are presented in Table 6*

**Table 6:** Distribution of responses to the influence of religion on the participation of women in development activities.

	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Remark</b>
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	It has encouraged women to participate in leadership functions	200	2.6667	<b>Accepted</b>
	It has helped change the poor attitude of women towards the development	200	3.4000	<b>Accepted</b>
	It has helped change Men's attitudes towards women's participation in development activities	200	3.3778	<b>Accepted</b>
	It has helped empower women to play their developmental roles	200	3.0889	<b>Accepted</b>
	It has helped increase the literacy/education rate of women and girls.	200	3.0227	<b>Accepted</b>
	It contributed to the changing government's attitude towards women's education	200	3.0889	<b>Accepted</b>
	It aids government involvement in supporting women's participation in development activities in the community	200	3.2222	<b>Accepted</b>

The data in the table above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 met the mean score standard of 2.50 and, therefore, were accepted. This, therefore, means that the influence of religion on the participation of women in development activities are It has encouraged women to participate in leadership functions, changed their poor attitude towards development, helped change Men's attitude towards women's participation in development activities, empowered women to play their developmental roles, increased the literacy/education rate of women and girl, contributed to the changing of government attitude towards women education, and aided government involvement in supporting women participation in development activities in the community.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this chapter, the summary of the study is presented alongside the conclusion drawn from the analysis of data collected in the course of the study. The recommendations offered in relation to the findings of the study are also highlighted.

#### Summary

This study was designed to an assessment of women's contribution to national development in the Akure-North Local Government Area of Ondo State.

In order to achieve the purpose intended for the study, four research questions were raised to guide the study. The questions raised and examined include:

What are the problems affecting women's contribution to national development?

In what ways can women contribute to the development of the country?

What are the measures put in place by the government to support women's participation in development activities?

In what ways has culture affected the contribution of women to national development?

What is the influence of religion on the participation of women in development activities?

Two hundred (200) respondents were randomly selected from communities in Akure North Local Government state which constituted the sample for the study and were used to generate the data needed. The reliability index of the instrument was 0.76 using the Person product-moment statistical formula from data from the pilot study carried out on it. The data collected were analysed using frequency count, simple percentage, and mean score standard. The results obtained from the analysis were quite revealing and instructive. These results are presented here under

## **Findings**

The major findings from the study include:

The problems affecting women's contribution to national development in the area are Low level of education, Poverty, Religious beliefs and practices, Cultural practices, Ignorance, No support from the government, Too many home responsibilities, Lack of support from men, Sex stereotypes, Poor participation of women in politics and the Low interest on the part of women.

Women can contribute to the development of the country by Taking-up leadership positions, Participating in community development activities, Engaging in the human right campaign, Up-holding justice in areas of responsibility, Paying taxes and other duties, Serving in various government

and non-government administrative capacities, Being productive in their respective areas of occupation, Fighting corrupt practices in the country, Supporting the government in developmental programmes and projects and Participating in development activities in the community.

The measures put in place by the government to support women's participation in development activities include Exposing women to their rights and privileges as a citizen, Encouraging and supporting girls and women's literacy education, Financially empowering women, Bringing up policies that support gender equality, Making and implementing laws that protect women rights, Encourage women's participation in political and administrative leadership, Discourage any religious or cultural practices that deny women access to free participation in the development of the community and support programmes that focus on building women capacity.

The cultural effects on the contribution of women to national development are that It has reduced women's roles to the kitchen and childbearing and rearing silenced the voice of women, given men the power to be the only decision-maker in society, contributed greatly to the dehumanization of women folks through practices such as genital mutilation, early marriage etc., denied women access to formal education, reduced the interest of women in a leadership position and promote sex stereotype.

The influence of religion on the participation of women in development activities is It has encouraged women to participate in leadership functions, changed their poor attitude towards development, helped change Men's attitude towards women's participation in development activities, empowered women to play their developmental roles, increasing the literacy/education rate of women and girl, contributed to the changing of government attitude towards women education, and aided government involvement in supporting women participation in development activities in the community.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings made from data collected and analysed, it was concluded that culture and religion have a great influence on women's contributions to national development. As a matter of fact, religion and cultural practice highly contributed to the challenges faced by women in society which hinders them from contributing their quota to national development.

## **Recommendations**

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby offered

In the first instance, there is a need for the government to intervene in the matter, proffering a more lasting and sustainable solution to gender equality in Nigeria.

Secondly, formal and specific organized steps should be taken by non-government organizations and agencies to help protect the fundamental human rights of women.

Finally, government and non-governmental agencies should evolve new ways of addressing the issue of women's marginalization.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

Having successfully carried out this study, though not without some limitations, it is suggested that further studies be carried out in such areas as:

The Influence of gender discrimination on Women's Contribution to Social and economic development

The assessment of government efforts to address the challenges of women in society.

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## **Appendix**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE ON AN ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN-S CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE AKURE-NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ONDO STATE.**

Dear Respondents,

The researcher is conducting a study on an assessment of women-s contribution to national development in the Akure-North Local Government Area of Ondo State.

We will like you to respond as correctly as possible. Your responses will be used solely for this research and as such will be treated as confidential.

Thanks for your understanding.

Yours faithfully,

**Researcher**

**SECTION A**

**DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

**Gender;** Male ( ), Female ( )

**Age:** 15-25 ( ), 26-35 ( ), 36-45 ( ), 46 above( )

**SECTION B**

Please tick ( ) to select from among the provided options

SA: Strongly Agreed

A: Agreed

D: Disagreed

SD Strongly Disagreed

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
	<b>What are the problems affecting women's contribution to national development?</b>				
1	Low level of education				
2	Poverty				
3	Religious beliefs and practices				
4	Cultural practices				
	Ignorance				
	No support from the government				
	Too many home responsibilities				

	Lack of support from men				
	Sex stereotype				
	Poor Participation of Women in Politics				
	Low interest on the part of women				
S/N	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>In what ways can women contribute to the development of the country?</b>				
1	Taking-up leadership position				
2	Participating in community development activities				
3	Engaging in the human rights campaign				
4	Up-holding justice in areas of responsibility				
	Paying tax and other duties				
	Serving in various government and non-government administrative capacities				
	Being productive in their respective areas of occupation				
	Fighting corrupt practices in the country				
	Supporting the government in developmental programmes and projects				
	Participating in development activities in the community				
S/N	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>What are the measures put in place by the government to support women's participation in development activities?</b>				
1	Exposing women to their rights and privileges as a citizen				
2	Encouraging and supporting girl's and women's literacy education				
3	Financially empowering women				
4	Bring up policies that support gender equality				
	Making and implementing laws that protect women's rights				
	Encourage women's participation in political and administrative leadership				
	Discourage any religious or cultural practices that deny women access to free participation in the development of the community				
	Support programmes that focus on building women's capacity.				
S/N	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>In what ways has culture affected the contribution of women to national development?</b>				
1	It has reduced women's roles to the kitchen				
2	It has reduced women's roles to childbearing and rearing				
3	It has silenced the voice of women				
4	Women do not have a say in matters that concerns them or their				

	development.				
	It has given men the power to be the only decision-maker in society				
	It has contributed greatly to the dehumanization of women folks through practices such as genital mutilation, early marriage etc.				
	It has denied women access to formal education				
	It has reduced the interest of women in a leadership position				
	It promotes sex stereotype				
<b>S/N</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>What is the influence of religion on the participation of women in development activities?</b>				
1	It has encouraged women to participate in leadership functions				
2	It has helped change the poor attitude of women towards the development				
3	It has helped change Men's attitudes towards women's participation in development activities				
4	It has helped empower women to play their developmental roles				
5	It has helped increase the literacy/education rate of women and girls.				
6	It contributed to the changing government's attitude towards women's education				
7	It aids government involvement in supporting women's participation in development activities in the community				