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Chapter 1 : The Critical Role of Women in Sustainable Development | Worldwatch Institute

Those who believe that women ought to have a role to play in national development and progress cite the examples of modern Europe that was once poor and hungry but all their glory has resulted as a consequence of the toil put together by the two sexes.

Awareness was further enhanced in as a result of the effective participation of Nigerian women in the International Conference on Women in Beijing, China. In spite of these efforts, it is appropriate to state that the role of Nigerian women in development has not been sufficiently emphasised. In highlighting the Nigerian experience, three periods namely, the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial, will be briefly looked at. Precolonial Nigerian economy was basically at a subsistence level, and Nigerian women participated effectively in this economy. Apart from being mothers and wives and taking charge of the domestic sector, women contributed substantially to the production and distribution of goods and services. In the agricultural sector, the women farmed alongside their husbands and children. In south eastern Nigeria, women also took part in the production of palm oil and palmkernel. They also participated in local and longdistance trade in different parts of Nigeria and were fully involved in the procurement and sale of various food items and related commodities. Women in pre-colonial Nigeria were fully involved in food processing, for example, fish drying especially in the coastal areas of Calabar, Oron and the Niger Delta area, garri processing et cetera. In eastern Nigeria, the women of Okposi, Uburu and Yala were very active in salt production. Women were engaged in pottery making, especially in Afikpo in present day Abia State, and in weaving. In northern Nigeria, even the women in purdah were involved in food processing and also traded with the aid of their children. Most often, these women supplied the means of sustenance for entire households. Precolonial Nigerian women also provided health care and spiritual services, extensively. Most traditional religions feature immortal females as goddesses. Most goddesses in Nigeria were portrayed as river goddesses, fertility goddesses and earth goddesses. In the Niger Delta area, women provided music, songs and dances required during religious activities. Women also officiated as priestesses, diviners, healers, traditional birth attendants, and oftentimes as custodians of sanctuaries for gods and goddesses. The legal status of Nigerian women in precolonial times needs highlighting. Under the precolonial customary laws in most Nigerian societies, women were considered free adults. At the same time, certain limitations were imposed which subordinated them to male authority. Women had independent access to income. Since land was usually owned communally, whoever worked or tilled the land, whether male or female, derived the benefits. Nevertheless, women in many societies could not inherit land. Education in precolonial times was functional. It enabled women to obtain a skill in order to earn a living. Ogunshye observes that "a woman who was without a craft or trade, or who was totally dependent on her husband, was not only rare, but was regarded with contempt" Aliyu, . As regards politics, women in precolonial Nigeria were an integral part of the political set up of their communities. Most often, they carried out separate functions from the men. These functions were fully complementary. In precolonial Bomu, for instance, women played active parts in the administration of the state. They held very important offices in the royal family, including the offices of the Megira the Queen mother and the Gumsu the first wife of the Mai or King Ola. Women also played a very significant role in the political history of ancient Zaria. She had a daughter called Amina who later succeeded her as Queen. Queen Amina was a great and powerful warrior. She built a high wall around Zaria in order to protect the city from invasion and extended the boundaries of her territory beyond Bauchi. The people of Kano and Katsina paid tributes to her. She turned Zaria into a very prominent commercial centre. The story was not different in ancient Yorubaland. The Oba ruled with the assistance of a number of women referred to as the ladies of the palace. The ladies of the palace consisted of eight titled ladies of the highest rank. The significant role played by prominent women such as Moremi of Ife, Emotan of Benin and Omu Okwel of Ossomari in the precolonial history of Nigeria cannot be ignored. Moremi and Emotan were great amazons who displayed tremendous

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bravery and strength in the politics of Ife and Benin respectively, while Omu Okwei dominated the commercial scene of Ossomari in present day Delta State Omu and Makinwa, " While it placed women at a great disadvantage, it enhanced the economic status of the British, Lebanese, Syrian and a few male Nigerian merchants. Many of the smaller markets hitherto dominated by women gradually disintegrated as a result of the emergence of expatriate firms such as John Holt, United African Company U AC. Women were denied access to medium and large scale loans which were vital in operating at the bulk purchase level of the colonial economy. In agriculture, cash crop incentives, technology and innovations were restricted to men Curtin, Colonial policies and statutes were clearly sexist and biased against women. During the colonial period, education was functional. The curricula emphasised religious instruction and clerical! Technological and scientific based education was not encouraged. The curricula for girls enabled them to become good housewives, rather than income earners. As regards politics, colonialism affected Nigerian women adversely as they were denied the franchise and very few of them were offered any political or administrative appointments. It was also only in the s that women in Southern Nigeria were given the franchise. While the situation in the public sector remained unsatisfactory, it was markedly different from what had obtained during the precolonial! Five years after independence, only 6. In , the percentage of women had risen to Similar patterns were maintained in State Civil Services. In , women constituted 4,9 per cent of agricultural manpower in Nigeria, 1. It was only in the medical sector that women constituted The position of women in education in post colonial Nigeria has not improved much. According to the Population Reference Bureau, in, only 6 per cent of adult Nigerian women were literate. University admission figures also reflect a low percentage of female entries in the new era. Successive postcolonial governments have encouraged female education and expanded educational facilities for girls. In spite of these efforts, however, the impact on women is still low. As a result of increasing cost of education, most parents, especially in the rural areas, prefer withdrawing girls from school, instead of boys. To stem this tide, some State governments have passed edicts granting free education to girls up to certain levels, in other states, women with children are allowed to attend school and it is considered an offence to withdraw a female child from school before a stipulated age. Subsequently, all State Ministries of Education did same. Until very recently, women were not allowed to stand bail for a suspect. The statutory provisions still do not favour women in many respects, including divorce and inheritance. In spite of massive support given to various political parties by women, women organisations, market women movements etc. In Southern Nigeria, women already had the franchise by ; thus in , Mrs. Mokelu and Miss Ekpo A. Young also contested elections, won and became members of the Eastern House of Assembly. In northern Nigeria, however, women were still denied the franchise even after independence. As a result, prominent female politicians like Hajia Qambo Sawaba in the North could not vote and be voted for. It was only in that women in northern Nigeria were given the franchise, following the return to civilian politics. During the Second Republic , there was further progress. A few Nigerian women won elections into the House of Representatives at the national level. Some of these women were Mrs. But, on the whole, very few women won elections into the State Houses of Assembly during the Second Republic. During the same period, only two women were appointed Federal ministers. A number of women were appointed Commissioners in the states. In , Ms Franca Afegbua became the only woman to be elected into the Senate. Also, very few women contested and won elections into the Local Government Councils during this time. With the return of military rule in December , the first formal quota system was introduced by the Federal Government as regards the appointment of women into governance. The Buhari administration directed that at least one female must be appointed a member of the Executive Council in every state. All the states complied with this directive; some states even had two or three female members. In the early s, two women were appointed Deputy Governors. KLiforiji Olubi served as Chairperson of a bank, i. There was, however, no female minister. In the elections into local governments heralding the Third Republic, very few women emerged as councillors and only one woman, Chief Mrs Titilayo Ajanaku, emerged as Chairperson of a Local Government Council in the West. During the gubernatorial elections, no female governor emerged in any of the states. Only two female Deputy

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Governors emerged, namely: Cecilia Ekpenyong of Cross River State. In the Senatorial election held in , Mrs. Kofo Bucknor Akerele was the only woman who won a seat in the Senate. Very few women won election into the House of representat ives. Amongst the members of the Transitional Council appointed by President Babangida in January , only two were women, namely Mrs. Emily Aiklmhokuede and Mrs.

Chapter 2 : E. The role of women in rural development

Women occupy a very significant and decisive place in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Ethiopia. Their importance is evident both in modern and traditional sectors, not only as housewives and mothers in society a para-eminent role, but also by their contribution to the quality of day to day life.

The role of women in rural development The Conference welcomed the introductory statement of Mrs. The Conference expressed unanimous approval for the inclusion of this item on the Agenda of its Session and a number of countries indicated that it wee long overdue. It wee strongly urged that this issue be not dealt with in isolation, but be a continuing concern of FAO subject to systematic and periodic review. The Conference discussed the role and status of rural women within the context of overall development at country, regional and international levels. Many delegates expressed support for the belief that the full integration of women into the rural development process required a multi-disciplinary approach, as their problems and conditions could not be considered in isolation. Modernization and transformation of the agricultural sector which would provide adequate rural infrastructure and services was considered to be a necessary pre-requisite for improving the lives of rural people and especially rural women. It was stressed, however, that unless rural women were actively involved in decision-making and in the planning and implementation of programmes for action, modernization could have adverse effects on their lives. Several delegates expressed justification for giving special attention to the provision of opportunities for rural women so that they would be capable of assuming equal responsabilities and taking advantage of equal rights open to them. There was consensus that equal opportunity in education and training was important if rural women of developing countries were to participate effectively in the development process. The Conference stressed the need for more training to improve information, knowledge and skills in the areas of health, hygiene, nutrition, child care, household management, food storage, family budgeting, family planning and home based income producing activities. In view of the recognized relationship among the multiple roles of women particularly in agricultural production, nutrition, family and community life, the Conference strongly urged that all FAO unite and divisions seek ways to contribute to this effort within their regular programme of work and allocate more of the regular programme budget for this purpose. The Conference decided that there wee an immediate need for FAO to review, reorient and coordinate activities in its regular and field programmes in order to ensure that the involvement of women in the development process could be given the strongest possible support. Several delegates requested the assistance of FAO in preparatory activities needed within their countries to plan and conduct realistic programmes for improving opportunities for women both as participants and beneficiaries of rural development. The Conference welcomed the initiatives of the Home Economics and Social Programmes Service in promoting the full integration of women in rural development and agreed that this involvement should be continued and expanded and adequate resources be provided. Some delegates pointed out that the magnitude of the task seemed more than could be expected of the projected resources in the Programme of Work and Budget. In order to extend the limited technical and financial resources available for measures to improve the conditions of rural women, the Conference strongly urged close collaboration in the planning and implementation of action programmes between and within countries, among UN Agencies, Bilateral Programmes and Non-Governmental Organizational Some delegates pointed out that FAO should increase its collaboration and joint activities with the UN Economic and Social Commission. It was also recognized that the Non-Governmental Organization had a significant role to play and should be involved in the planning and implementation of activities in collaboration with FAO. Several delegates inquired as to measures being taken to increase the proportion of women in professional positions in FAO, particularly in decision-making posts. It was urged that the issues related to the role of women in rural development should be incorporated in the deliberations of all FAO Regional Conferences. Reaffirms the Council decision to: Invites all Member States of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to support measures ensuring that women share in the

benefits of development in the rural sector, particularly through the recognition of their full legal equality and the adoption of measures implementing such equality: Invites Governments of Member Nations to ensure that women participate on an equitable basis with men in the policy-making, planning and implementation process in all agriculture and rural development programmes, in particular those related to food and nutrition planning;

4. Requests the Director-General to ensure that a current programmes and projects in nutrition, agriculture including fisheries and forestry and rural development be reviewed by all departments and divisions concerned with these activities with a view to arrive at the full integration of women, who should be provided with the benefit of education, training, extension, cooperative activities, credit marketing and other community facilities in order to enable them to participate fully in agricultural and rural development; b plans, programme and sector analyses, and programme documents incorporate an impact statement of how such proposed programmes will affect women as participants and beneficiaries; c matters relating to the role of women in rural development be included in the agendas of the Regional Conferences so that specific programmes may result;

5. Requests further that information on progress and projections on the integration of women in all FAO programmes be submitted periodically to the Council and Conference in such reports as the Review of Field Programmes and the Medium-Term Objectives. Adopted 26 November F. Policies and programmes for improving human nutrition

It recognized that increased production and productivity was not by itself sufficient to improve nutrition, since maldistribution of food supply due to the insufficiency of distributory channels added to lack of purchasing power was at least as important as food shortfall in causing malnutrition. The Conference recognized that, to reduce and if possible eliminate hunger and malnutrition in the coming decade, governments must clearly express their political will to cope with the problem and, by concerted action and a multidisciplinary type of operation, integrate food and nutrition objectives in development plans. While particularly stressing the importance of food and nutrition planning with a view to a solution in the long term of the problem of world malnutrition and hunger, the Conference emphasized the need to continue and expand short-term actions undertaken to remedy nutritional deficiencies such as food aid programmes, nutritional education, and fortification of foods with special attention to the role of Vitamin A, and promotion of breast feeding. The need to develop appropriate mechanisms for interdivisional cooperation in this respect was stressed. As some delegates expressed their concern over the reduction of resources available to the Food Policy and Nutrition Division, the Conference requested the Director-General to give all possible attention to the funds available to that Division to enable it to meet its increasing responsibilities stemming from the world food situation and to reach the objectives set by the World Food Conference. The Conference underlined the need to define food and nutrition planning not only as a technical exercise but as a continuing process involving political decisions, and the need therefore to recognize that each country must be responsible for the development of its own food and nutrition planning. The emphasis should therefore be on building national capacity for food and nutrition analysis and planning. Some delegates stressed the need to undertake food and nutrition planning in all countries. The Conference noted with satisfaction the efforts undertaken by the United Nations system in general and by FAO in particular, in conformity with the recommendations of the Conference and Resolution V of the World Food Conference, to assist countries to assess the magnitude and frequency of hunger and malnutrition, inter alia through preparation for the Global Nutrition Surveillance System, to develop their nutritional planning potential, and prepare programmes with a view to immediate action especially by continuing expansion of food aid programmes. The Conference noted the progress achieved by organizations of the United Nations system and bilateral aid agencies in the area of coordination of initiatives in the nutrition field. It considered, in particular, that the ad hoc Committee on Food and Nutrition Policies, with membership open to all FAO Member Nations, should continue within the framework of its present terms of reference to play its role as a catalyst and coordinator of nutrition activities within FAO and with organizations of the United Nations system. Several delegates pointed out the lack of basic data in many countries which limited the possibility of identifying and assessing malnutrition formulating programmes designed to combat it, and utilizing food and nutrition planning methods. Some delegates stressed

the important role of women in improving nutritional levels and regretted the lack of reference to this in the document. Some delegates emphasized the role of rural social and health workers in nutrition activities in rural areas, and also the need to stimulate community initiatives and mobilize human resources for the improvement of nutrition. FAO was requested to prepare policy guidelines for the establishment of primary services to provide a framework for their food and nutrition activities at local level, which would also link central and community level planning objectives. The Conference emphasized the need for FAO and WHO to give greater support to these activities in order to accelerate their tempo, and pointed out the particular need to provide increasing technical assistance and advice to developing countries in food legislation, training and strengthening of their food control infrastructure. The shortage of specialized nutrition personnel, in particular in the nutrition planning sector, were mentioned by many delegates. The Conference requested FAO, with assistance provided by bilateral agencies, to organize international, regional and national seminars and training courses to train a new generation of nutritionists able to participate in the permanent planning process with the help of national organizations. The Conference asked FAO to develop its competence in the intersectoral planning area in collaboration with the other organizations concerned and inter alia in association with the United Nations University. It also asked FAO to take the initiative in developing applied nutrition research, especially in the food and nutrition planning field.

Review of the world fishery situation

The Conference reviewed the present state of some major fishery problems, discussed opportunities offered by the development of fisheries on unconventional resources and by aquaculture, and also drew attention to the possible implications of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea. The Conference expressed its satisfaction at the clear and concise presentation of the basic problems and issues relating to fisheries in the document. There was general agreement that FAO and in particular the Department of Fisheries had a major role to play in assisting developing countries in the development and rational management of fisheries. The assistance FAO had provided hitherto was acknowledged. The Conference stressed the important and increasing contribution fisheries were making to food production and the supply of high quality animal protein, and the need to ensure that the fisheries sector received adequate recognition and assistance both nationally and internationally. It was stressed that care should be taken to clearly identify fisheries as being an important part of agriculture when major policy matters were being considered. The importance of improving the statistical data and assessments of resource potentials in order to provide an adequate basis for development planning and rational management of heavily fished stocks which were in danger of depletion was emphasized. Although coastal states were assuming greater responsibilities for management of resources in wider areas off their coasts, there was also an increasing need for further international collaboration and coordination. It was recognized that while more of the conventional stocks were being heavily, and in some instances even excessively, exploited, there was still potential for further development of fisheries on some conventional stocks, both through increase of the total harvest and through improved use of the catches. It strongly endorsed the activities of the regional and interregional projects assisting some of these regional fishery bodies and noted that, with the support of the FAO Department of Fisheries, they already provided for decentralization of responsibilities and activities in a manner which was in any case well suited to fisheries and was possibly also applicable in other sectors. The regional bodies were, with this effective FAO support, actively promoting fishery development on a regional basis, coordinating development activities, promoting international collaboration and providing a focus to all assistance to fisheries in the regions. The Conference strongly supported the strengthening of these bodies and agreed that they should have increasing responsibility for stock assessment and management and also be free for working out development strategies suited to each region. The importance of international collaboration was emphasized and the useful role of FAO and in particular the Committee on Fisheries COFI in promoting coordination among all regional fishery bodies including those established outside FAO was stressed. A suggestion was made that a special meeting of experts on Collaboration in International Fisheries be organized and that this matter be discussed by the Sub-Committee on the Development of Cooperation with International Organizations of COFI. One delegate

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stressed that national jurisdictions should be fully respected whenever the regional and interregional projects undertook resource surveys. The importance of better utilization of catches, the avoidance of waste through better handling and storage, and the utilization of species hitherto discarded at sea through better processing methods was emphasized. In this connexion the need for better distribution and marketing methods, especially in developing countries, was noted. The need to develop low cost and appropriate technologies in the developing countries was also pointed out. Attention was drawn to the need for better and more timely information on production and marketing and a suggestion was made for the issue of a bulletin on a regular basis. The Conference noted the vast untapped potential in unconventional species notably the Antarctic krill, various cephalopods and small pelagic fish. International cooperation was needed to develop these fisheries particularly in view of the special fishing and processing techniques involved. The Conference noted the competence of the signatories of the Antarctic Treaty for all matters concerning the ecosystem of Antarctica, particularly its equilibrium and preservation, and the adoption of measures for the preservation of the Antarctic environment and its natural resources by the contracting parties over the last decade. The Conference agreed that FAO should keep itself informed of the relevant activities undertaken under the Treaty and coordinate its own activities with them. One delegate felt it desirable that the Director-General submit a report to the next COFI session clarifying the issues involved and delineating the relations between FAO and the Antarctic Treaty countries in this field. Much stress was laid on the development of small scale fisheries, and the initiatives taken by FAO through regional and country projects was welcomed. Development of small-scale fisheries was central to the improvement of the social and economic life of rural communities and its problems had economic, social and cultural dimensions much wider than providing pure technology. The special role of training and its indispensability in any fisheries development programme were pointed out. Training of fisheries scientific and technical personnel in research, stock assessment, catching and processing technology, pollution control, marketing and statistics was specifically mentioned. It was suggested that it might be useful to commence training national scientific counterpart staff immediately after a project was approved so that they would be familiar with the work when the international staff arrived and would be able to participate more fully in the project activities. The importance of providing training on the spot and in the appropriate environment and through regional research and training centres was also mentioned. The Conference looked forward to the World Conference on Aquaculture Japan, and expressed the hope that it would lead to the development of aquaculture on a broad front. It was pointed out that there was an urgent need to ensure adequately trained and qualified personnel in this field. Suggestions were made for the establishment of regional training and research centres, which would facilitate and promote aquaculture development. In view of its high returns and its wide and beneficial effects on large numbers of rural poor, it was agreed that aquaculture could be a suitable field for consideration for investment assistance from the proposed International Fund for Agricultural Development. The Conference noted that greater attention should be paid to environmental and pollution problems in relation to fisheries, particularly those in inland waters and coastal areas, both in developed and developing countries. The importance of these problems was emphasized and FAO was urged to take a more active part in this area and requested to collaborate closely with organizations and bodies dealing with this problem. In this connexion it was pointed out that conflicts in use of coastal zones were assuming a greater importance and the claims of fisheries were often being overlooked. It was necessary therefore to maintain close links with other bodies involved in coastal area development. A suggestion was also made that FAO should intervene in such situations in order to protect the living resources and that it should play an important role in coordinating these activities within the United Nations system. Recognizing that the Committee, as the only worldwide policy-coordinating body for fisheries, and FAO would have an increased role to play in promoting international cooperation and accelerating the transfer of technology to developing countries in the fishery sector, the Conference noted that a Sub-Committee of COFI would meet in March to consider these matters and suggest specific action. Review of the world forestry situation. The Conference considered document C which contained a review of the current forestry and forest

industries situation and set out the four main lines of action which FAO proposed to follow in this field. The Conference expressed its satisfaction with the content and presentation of this document, and agreed with the general thrust of the policy set out in it, which wee to concentrate on tropical forestry, on the harmonization of forestry with food production and general rural development, on development of pulp and paper industries, and on promotion of trade in forest, products. The Conference agreed that high priority should be assigned to work in tropical forestry. The importance of these forests, both directly and indirectly, in connexion with the production of food, the development of rural economies and as a source of raw material for a wide range of important industries wee stressed. The Conference expressed its approval of the "Tropical Forest Cover Monitoring Programme" being developed by FAO and UNEP in order to obtain the data needed to provide the framework for accessibility and land suitability investigations. In this connexion, the importance was stressed of ensuring and strengthening collaboration with national institutions which had long experience in tropical forestry. Attention was drawn to the importance of tropical forests in-the regulation of water yields for agriculture and in the protection of agricultural soils, and to the consequences for agriculture, in the form of floods and droughts, of the abuse or the removal of the forests where it performed these functions. The Conference noted with approval the proposed increased efforts that would be made by FAO to identify ecologically critical watersheds and zones and to assist in initiating suitable management systems for these areas, at the request of the national institutions concerned. The Conference also emphasized the more direct contribution that forestry could make to food production through agri-silvicultural systems that combined the production of both wood and food. While recognizing the complexities and problems involved, it was noted that a number of successful systems had been developed, appropriate to a range of different situations. Bearing in mind the size of the population in developing countries who lived in the forest zones and practiced shifting cultivation, and the low productivity of the latter system, the Conference endorsed the proposal to devote increased resources and attention in the coming biennium to the study and promotion of suitable agri-silvicultural systems in countries where these systems had been tested and accepted by the populations concerned.

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Chapter 3 : PARAGRAPHS: Women's contribution to the development of our country

FAITH EKONG ported on the contributions of women in agricul-ture, community development and physical de-velopment. For instance, Ekong () asserts that women are the real engine driving the econ-.

The position of women in the family and society has been shaped by many factors and there are strong cultural and historical roots of gender discrimination. Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic and traditional society that has been governed along tribal lines and by a weak central state. In addition, the long years of war and violence in the country, and the resulting unstable political and economic situation, have had a particularly severe impact on women. There were some attempts to introduce reforms but these were often met by strong tribal and religious opposition and resistance from conservative patriarchal forces, and later undermined during the civil war in the early s when Mujahideen leaders fought for control. The rights of women were eroded even further when the Taliban came into power in . With such fundamentalist religious forces taking the dominant position in society, the position of women suffered a major set back and even took a retrogressive turn. During the rule of the Taliban women were treated worse than in any other time. They were forbidden to work, leave the house without a male escort, or seek medical help from a male doctor, and they were forced to cover themselves from head to toe, even covering their eyes. Women who were doctors and teachers were forced to leave their work and sit at home, and girls were forbidden to go to school as a result of the prevalent ultraconservative policies of that period. Since the present regime came to power in , the political and cultural position of Afghan women has shown improvement to some extent. A robust policy framework has been put in place by the government for the welfare of women. There have been some notable improvements in the participation of women in public life, including in the Interim Administration, Emergency Loya Jirga, and national and local elections. Women now constitute 26 percent of civil servants, 24 percent of employees in the government-run media and 21 percent in private media companies. Of 17 Afghan ambassadors in other countries, two are women. Achievements are also being made at the local level, largely because of the growing focus within the government and among donors on providing aid assistance directly to communities. Women, who have traditionally not been consulted on community issues, are now being included in forums to determine village and neighbourhood development priorities, and to design and implement projects to address their problems. The increased presence and visibility of women, in particular through the National Solidarity Programme NSP which has achieved 24 percent participation of women in Community Development Councils, has been considered a positive step. This chapter presents an analysis of the most critical problems facing women in Afghanistan and the impact of government interventions to improve their status. A Survey of the Afghan People , and includes comparisons with the and surveys. Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People. Harjot Kaur is a Consultant for The Asia Foundation in Afghanistan and a gender specialist with over 16 years experience in the Indian government.

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Chapter 4 : Status of Women in Afghanistan - The Asia Foundation

PROJECT TOPIC- ROLE OF WOMEN IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: "A STUDY OF EBONYI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE" Abstract The study is about the effectiveness of women towards national development with special focus to Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

If not by the measure of their contributions to growth, then by how they and their households are on the receiving end in a distressed economy. Women on the African continent are on both end of the divide. Given their numerical strength, statistics have it that they are responsible for over 60 per cent of the labour force and family income. And by virtue of their commitment to family issues, women are often worst-hit by economic hardships in these countries. In African countries, Nigeria inclusive, the vulnerable conditions of the women-folks are more critical amidst the lingering gender inequalities, domestic violence, child abuse, and lack of social protection among others that worsen the economic misery through injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people. Women and concerned stakeholders reiterated this position at the National Women Conference that was recently concluded in Lagos. Chief host of the conference, Lagos State Governor Akinwunmi Ambode and his Kebbi State counterpart, Atiku Bagudu, in fact, called for women-friendly policies at all tiers of government to better the lot of women-folks nationwide. Ambode noted that the Nigerian women, in their numbers, play very significant role in the economy and must be encouraged and properly enabled so that the country can benefit more from their immense potentials. In recognition of their numerical strength and contribution to the economy, he said, the State Government had continued to increase its budgetary provision for women through the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, adding that his administration would continue in this line and create more platforms for Women engagement. While he called on other States to do the same, Ambode pledged that his administration would pursue programmes that will enable women to be self-reliant through the provision of financial facilities and capacity building. He promised to establish more Skills Acquisition centres to equip women to take charge of their destiny and show their relevance in the present economic turbulence. As part of measures to ensure that our women play an important role in the State, my government has also put in place policies to protect and secure our women. We are already on the right path in our battle against rapists and the need to protect rape victims. Kebbi State Governor, Bagudu, in declaring the conference open, commended the initiatives that Lagos has put in place to protect and empower women, adding that they are worth emulating nationwide. Bagudu said that the conference theme: He added that Lagos women would continue to enjoy more recognition in the food self-sustenance partnership programme between his State and Lagos. She said the theme of the conference was a clarion call to women to be prepared and sensitive to the economic situation in Nigeria and the world at large. Dapo-Thomas, in a paper titled: She explained that Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team DSVRT has been inaugurated as an immediate response to the increased incidence of rape, defilement, domestic violence, child abuse, neglect and maltreatment in the State, adding that these have made the enforcement of the Domestic Violence and Child Rights Laws much easier. The Permanent Secretary stated that as part of efforts to ensure that victims receive adequate treatment for their trauma, the State Government is collaborating with the Mirabel Centre, a sexual assault and reference centre, at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, to provide assistance to rape survivors without divulging their secrets. She however implored kind-hearted individuals, private and public organisations to continue to partner with the government in its quest to alleviate the suffering of women and improve their general well-being as well as that of the girl child.

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Chapter 5 : Contribution Quotes (70 quotes)

Zambia is increasingly recognizing that educating women will benefit families and the nation. Education can enhance women's share in the benefits of production and influence their childbearing practices and health behavior. (SK.

Colonial policies and programs Agricultural development and productivity -Program aimed at rural resource exploitation -no explicit commitment to gender mainstreaming -program implementation was dictated by the dynamics of local patriarchy First national development plan Educational services -General program of rural development whose implementation was dictated by the dynamics of the local patriarchy -No explicit commitment to gender mainstreaming Second national development plan -post-war rural development program; -comprehensive national program to foster unity and socio-economic development -Its primary focus was not about rural development. However, several of its contents touched on the rural areas. The framework of democratic participation encouraged women interest in electoral politics, which contribute in the area of enhancing their capacity to participate in national and local development programs. By attempting to empower the rural populace including the women , NEEDS had a substantive vision of eliminating rural poverty and promoting the development of the rural space through the agency of the women. As can be seen from the analysis, these modest achievements in encouraging women participation in rural development are relatively new. Several factors still militate against the full realization of women involvements in rural development practices. The next section discusses those factors. The Challenges for Integrating Women in Rural Development Agenda Given their position at the domestic and resource management levels, rural women constitute potential and critical agents for rural transformation. The rural women command a diversity of experiences in their daily management of resources ranging from participation in crop and animal farming and production, provision of food, water and fuel for the family, in addition to other livelihood activities. Despite these contributions, their voices are hardly heard, while their efforts and contributions are never mainstreamed in national and local development policies and practices in Nigeria. Several challenges militate against their integration and mainstreaming at any level of development. These include unfavorable cultural tradition, inadequate policy and institutional structures for capacity building; absence of rural infrastructures, limited awareness and access to social network and opportunities, etc. These are discussed under three broad themes as below: There are vital differences bordering on age, class, marital status, ethnicity, race and religion. Division of labour between men and women in relation to agricultural and other activities is deeply entrenched in the rural communities and households. This tends to discriminate against women and girls mostly in terms of opportunities to engage in income earning activities. Women do most of the household work, and are less likely to be involved in decision-making especially outside the family. Rural women are left with so many activities at the domestic levels in terms of childcare, food preparation, animal care, domestic cleaning, and could extend to include daily struggles for domestic water supplies as well as participation in farm activities. Virtually all what the rural women do in Nigeria is unpaid. Rahman had also observed a similar situation among rural women in Pakistan. These traditional roles leave women with less time for other activities involving self-development and career pursuits. Cultural tradition has been documented as the most critical barrier confronting the rural women. According to Kaur and Sharma Comparably, the Christian women are relatively freer, and can be involved in relatively limited development activities depending on the ethnic region. According to Blench Women are assigned a subordinate role in all traditional ideological structures, and in Islamic societies have been increasingly repressed by the extension of purdah to rural areas. In many societies of the south, women had considerably more social and economic freedom, as the phenomenon of large-scale women traders suggests. Even so, they were rarely permitted significant political power, a trend which continues today with the Nigerian state. Differential gender-based power positions reflect the general patriarchal structure of the Nigerian society, which seems to concentrate enormous power, resources, privileges and prestige in men over women. Some forms of social stereotypes and other forms of punishments

enforce these restrictive positions and status when the boundaries are crossed. These keep women away from open and active participation in rural development initiatives. Their voices are never heard, but could be operating in the background. Emphasis on male child is one of the subtle ways women employ to resist some barriers of domination in the matrimonial family. Absence of such basic infrastructures as water supplies and sanitation services, good road network, power supply services and telecommunications, places the rural women at a very disadvantageous position. Given the traditional role of women in the management of domestic resources and activities, poor access to water resources, for instance, exposes the woman to daily struggles to secure water for domestic usages. Several studies have demonstrated that women tend to spend a substantial amount of their time and resources for daily water supplies Akpabio Rural women in Nigeria hardly have access to modern domestic facilities to enhance the efficiency of domestic activities and save a substantial amount of labor for other activities. Their domestic and farm works are mostly manual with primitive tools. Access to basic home economics management education is non-existent. Access to modern domestic technologies has the capacity to improve the average household productivity among the rural women. In a study of rural women in northern India, Mann noted a very high workload spanning from early morning until late at night, with spells of rest only when they visited their parental homes. The study noted that improved household technology had reached only a few women from the privileged section and most women from low socio-economic groups still toil all day long with age-old tools. The paper argued that the desired change in their life and productivity can be brought about by simple scientific technologies, like accessible water points, electricity, biogas and simple technological improvements in processing and preparation of food in the home Kaur and Sharma In another perspective, poor road and communication network services in the rural areas are of great impediment to the growth of economic activities, which would be of practical benefits for the rural women. The challenges of having to commute from long and difficult peripheral areas into a nearby business or semi-urban areas are most costly and difficult for women. Experiences abound of rural women in southern Nigeria who daily suffer enormous economic losses due to inability to convey some perishables into the urban markets. Rural Nigeria also suffers a lack of access to other social and economic infrastructures including good schools, health care centers and financial institutions, among several others. These disadvantages work against the improvement of the rural women in terms of income, health and intellectual capacity to lead a meaningful and quality life. Even when these infrastructures may be minimally present in some contexts, their access and utilization may be further limited by prevailing cultural tradition. The relationship between infrastructure and development has long been theorized and empirically discussed. A discussion by Zhao and Kanamori These programmes could not survive successive political dispensation and governments due to factors ranging from corruption to the absence of institutionalized structures that could guarantee their continuity beyond any incidence of regime change. Institutional Barriers Most assessments and studies on gender relations and women inequality in the rural areas focus primarily on the role of women in the domestic sphere with much interest on the productive and reproductive issues. By concentrating in the domestic sphere, some opportunities for understanding the rural institutional aspects of gender relations seem lost. For instance, Little Beyond the domestic front, the Church arena in Nigeria represent an important space for understanding local gender relations and inequality in decision making, in sitting arrangements, in critical activities including church sermons etc. This trend had been observed in other contexts. For instance, Little had observed that the structure of parish councils and parochial church councils in two Wiltshire villages in the UK revealed a heavy bias in favour of male members, although, there was a tradition of women in the position of clerks. There are obviously weak or clear absence of institutional resources to cater for the interest of women by enhancing their relative position and contribution to the development of the rural areas. Institutional resources can be formal or informal practices including policies, legal provision, customary practices, administrative supports and working conventions. Despite claims by Attoe undated that pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial Nigeria progressively evolved some customary and legal instruments to improve the status of Nigerian women, the point remains that such

instruments were probably less active and relatively subordinated to informal cultural and religious norms and practices that perpetuated women subordination and inequality. Some institutional successes in enhancing the status of women may have been achieved for the urban women, which probably may have led to the emergence of few women in leadership position. These efforts were however subdued by inherent disadvantages in the rural areas as discussed earlier. Presently, there is no clear national legislative, legal and policy commitments to gender equality and mainstreaming in development activities saved for some ad hoc and piecemeal State policies on compulsory education for children including the girl child. The prospects of institutionally driven enhancements for women status and development in the rural areas remain very limited given the generally poor capacity of the rural women to make realistic sense of their world. As have been discussed, every infrastructure for building the capacity of women social, economic, physical, etc remains absent in the rural areas. Where some are available, several barriers relating to cultural, religious and customary practices limit their fullest utilization. These leave women unable to take advantage of the available opportunities in the rural areas to develop themselves and their societies. Although some rural areas may have necessary infrastructural resources for utilization, the long term impact of traditional, religious and cultural perception of their relative position in the society equally constrain the utilization of such opportunities by the majority of women.

Some Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

The importance of women in development has been underscored through the provision of some international resolutions and agenda and their subsequent domestication at national government levels, including Nigeria. The platform and action re-affirm the fundamental principle that the rights of women and girls are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The platform strongly opposes inequality and all forms of violence against women. Consequently, all national governments were required to develop strategies or national plans of action to implement the platform locally. The Beijing platform actually influenced some elements in the United Nations Development Goals which specifically addressed gender related issues such as achieving universal education Goal No. International declarations and resolutions focusing on gender right and women empowerment have always guided the Nigerian government actions on gender and women related issues over the years. Policy commitments and some programmes specifically directed at women especially in the rural areas include:

- Some policy commitments to achieving women participation in political activities. Women campaign groups on this issue have flourished helping to pressurize governments to concede some political positions for women. Progress at streamlining women participation at States and local levels have been rather slow, and complicated by the absence of useful statistics.
- National interest in guaranteeing universal basic education has been spurred by the Millennium Development Goals. Ensuring the implementation of universal basic education has been a tool strategically directed at enforcing girl child education at the grass root level. Offshoots of some programmes have been developed specifically to reach out to girls. Various State governments have pursued similar or related projects and programmes over the years beginning from when Nigeria transited to a democratic government.
- Subsidy Reinvestment Program SURE-P was launched in as a social safety net, aimed to alleviate the impact of the oil subsidy removal on vulnerable populations. The programme was to engage 10, women and youths in public works across each State in Nigeria. The SURE-P, not only sought to mitigate the immediate impact of partial petroleum subsidy removal on the population, it was equally to serve as a tool for empowering the rural women by involving them in some occupational activities aimed to better their lives and improve on their livelihood activities. These programmes have been very useful in principle. In practice, there is a paucity or complete absence of relevant statistics to assess their utility and relevance in enhancing the empowerment of rural women. It is also important to note that the existence of these programmes hardly receive solid institutional back up in the forms of legislations, etc. They exist, more or less, as ad hoc and regime-based programmes whose utility and existence are tied to politics and the longevity of a specific regime. Hence the rural women still face critical challenges in relation to participation in development activities. To strengthen the contribution of the rural women in development activities, the following critical areas for policy and implementations are recommended: There is urgent need

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to focus on developing strong institutional supports for gender mainstreaming. Nigeria has not made significant progress in domesticating relevant international agenda through local legislations. This challenge also applies to virtually all aspects of gender and women development issues including property inheritance, violence and other forms of abuse against women, universal education and gender equality. Many of the programmes and actions at the moment exist as administrative pronouncements, which rarely outlive changes in regime. The critical policy priority at the moment remains the need to achieve foundational empowerment of the present generation through quality education for the girl child and economic empowerment for the women in general. Agriculture still forms the mainstay of the rural women, which are organized under subsistent basis. Absence of basic infrastructures for the rural women undermines whatever efforts put forward to build their capacity.

Chapter 6 : Essay in Hindi on women contribution in national developement

Women are leading and conducting our country being head of governing body. They play an important role in the political field of our country. Women's contribution to the development of the country should be evaluated properly.

Chapter 7 : Women in the Development of Nigeria Since pre-colonial Times - www.nxgvision.com

CHAPTER 3. CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESULTS 17 include awareness-raising targeted to religious leaders, women, the media and the private sector.