



## WOMEN IN ALL INCLUSIVE DECISION MAKING TOWARDS FAMILY AND NATION BUILDING

**Iyam, Mary A.<sup>i</sup>**

Home Economics Unit,  
Department of Vocational Education,  
University of Calabar,  
Calabar, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

Women are important in every sphere of life. Their inclusion in decision making can give a good yield in family and nation building. There has been a social prism that women are meant for only domestic duties and not to be too engaged in public issues. This conference paper addresses these issues and highlights the need for women involvement in all inclusive decision making towards family and national building. The place of the woman, the man, the society, the government and the Non-Governmental Organization is as well highlight to solve the diagnosed problem. As part of the recommendations, the woman is expected to put herself in a place where the society and the government will see her that she is ready to take up the mantle to participate in decision making. This can be done through constant updating herself at the slightest opportunity to meet up the challenge of the day and to contribute meaningfully to the family and the nation at large.

**Keywords:** women, all-inclusive decision making, family building, nation building

### **1. Introduction**

Conceptually, one can refer a woman to be the female fold of the humans, although usually reserved for an adult with girl being the usual term for a female child or adolescents. A woman is central to everything humans do. According to William Shakespear as quoted by Emy (2014), the world would be imperfect without the presence of the woman. He added that the woman came out of man's rib, not from the feet to be trampled on, not from the head to be superior but from the side to be equal, under the arm to be protected, next to the heart to be loved. This is a fact to see the relevance of women in our today's world. Women are expected to walk and work with men side by side to achieve family and national goals not to be suppressed or deprived

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<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [mary.iyam@yahoo.com](mailto:mary.iyam@yahoo.com)

of partaking in decisions that concern them, the family and the nation at large. In our today's world, women are not acting as they ought to. This has instigated this paper.

Women have often times been seen as domestic helpers whose duties only starts and ends at home especially in the kitchen and the bedroom. This is a wrong social prism. Again, women are viewed to be good home makers, preparing food and maintaining the homes. In recent times, gender roles have changed greatly. This problem started when originally, women never saw reasons to seek for paid jobs outside the home where those who happen to seek for job at all go for jobs that are lesser paid than that of their male counterparts. As changes in the labour market for women came about, availability of employment changed where women took up tedious and cleaner jobs just like their male counterparts, more respectful jobs where more education for women was demanded and women took up the challenge. These shifts in the labour force led to changes in the attitude of women at work, allowing for the revolution which resulted in women becoming career and education oriented (Gere & Helwig, 2012). Now that women have fully regained their place, there is need for women inclusion in decision making both at home and the nation at large.

Tracing antecedents, it is documented that in the 1970s, many female academics, including scientists, avoided having children since it was wrongly viewed that having children, having to carry the foetus for nine months and having to nurture it for one to two years will interrupt with public duties. But the solution was not to avoid having children but to carry up all these roles concurrently as this is what makes the woman even more unique and powerful. However, throughout the 1980s, institutions tried to equalize conditions for men and women in the society (United Nations General Assembly, 2014). Even so, the inequalities at home stumped women's opportunities to succeed as far as men.

However, different movements advocate equality of opportunity for both sexes and equal rights irrespective of gender. Through a combination of economic changes and the efforts of the feminist movement, in recent decades women in many societies now have access to careers beyond the traditional homemakers. There is need for involvement of women in all inclusive decision making in our nation Nigeria. This is because, without the woman in the corridor of decision making, the act is not complete.

## **2. Purpose of the Paper**

The primary purpose of this conference paper is to raise consciousness about the place of women in an all inclusive decision making toward building families and the nation. Specifically, this paper seeks to appraise the role of:

- 1) women in family and nation building
- 2) men in supporting women to realize their place in family and nation building;  
and,
- 3) the society and government in creating a convivial environment for women to achieve these roles.

### **3. The Problem**

The position of women in the society especially in relation to man has been two ways apart. There have been some constraint that has contributed to women not been carried along in decision making starting from the family and by extension the society. It is worrisome that professional women are still generally considered responsible for domestic labour and child care. As people would say, they have a “double burden” which does not allow them the time and energy to succeed in their career. Non-inclusion of women in decision making can be viewed as violence against women as violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Furthermore, this can be seen as manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women. This is to say that there is a wrong social prism in the society on how the woman is viewed. It is based on this diagnosed problem the authors were interested in raising consciousness on the place of the woman in an all inclusive decision making toward family and nation building.

### **4. Women Participation In All Inclusive Decision Making**

Globally, the need for women involvement in decision making has giving rise to women’s contributions toward a strong and vibrant society been increasingly well documented, and gave a growing understanding of why women’s meaningful participation in decision making is essential to building and sustaining families and nations. To this end, there is growing recognition of the untapped capacity and talents of women and women’s leadership. For instance, in the last 10 years, the rate of women’s representation in national parliaments globally has grown from 13.1% at the end of 1999 to 18.6% at the end of 2009. Some regions have seen particularly dramatic increases, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of women in parliaments has risen from 10.9 to 17.6% (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2010). This is all to give women the opportunity to participate in decision making.

Still drawing inference from women participation in politics, women’s meaningful participation in politics will create room for participation in decision making which affects both the range of policy issues that are considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. Research indicates that a legislator’s gender has a distinct impact on policy priorities, making it critical that women are present in decision making to represent the concerns of women and other marginalized citizens and help improve the responsiveness of policy-making and governance. Furthermore, as more women reach leadership positions within their political parties, priorities are tend to be made on issues that impact health, education and other quality of life issues. Never the less, there is strong evidence that as more women are elected to public offices or giving equal opportunity to make decisions, there is also an increase in policy-making that reflects the priorities of families, women and ethnic as well as racial minorities.

Women's participation has profound positive and democratic impacts on communities, legislatures, political parties, citizens, nations and family's lives.

In maintaining peaces and nations' stability, women are deeply committed to peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction and have a unique and powerful perspective to bring to the negotiating table. This is achieved when women are involved. It is true that women often suffer disproportionately during armed conflict and often advocate most strongly for stabilization, reconstruction and the prevention of further conflict. Therefore, peace agreements, post-conflict reconstruction and governance have a better chance of long-term success when women are involved (Chinkin, 2003).

Women have been found to make reasonable decisions in leadership. According to Wollack (2010), when women are empowered as political leaders, countries often experience higher standards of living with positive developments in education, infrastructure and health, and concrete steps being taken to help make democracy deliver. Using data from 19 member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), researchers found that an increase in women legislators results in an increase in total educational expenditure (Chen, 2008). For instance, in India, research showed that West Bengal villages with greater representation of women in local councils saw an investment in drinking water facilities that was double that of villages with low levels of elected women, and that the roads there were almost twice as likely to be in good condition. The study also revealed that the presence of a woman council leader reduces the gender gap in school attendance by 13 percentage points (Beaman, 2007). This is true for other countries including Nigeria where female representatives have contributed immensely to nation building.

#### **4.1 Insight to women given equal rights**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, enshrines "*the equal rights of men and women*", and addressed both the equality and equity issues. In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for legal implementation of the Declaration of elimination of discrimination against sex. Described as an international bill of rights for women, it came into force on 3rd September 1981. The Convention defines discrimination against women in the following terms, "*Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.*" It also establishes an agenda of action for putting an end to sex-based discrimination for which states ratifying the Convention are required to enshrine gender equality into their domestic legislation, repeal all discriminatory provisions in their laws, and enact new provisions to guard against discrimination against women. They must also establish tribunals and public institutions to guarantee women effective protection against discrimination, and take steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination practiced against women by individuals,

organizations, and enterprises. Therefore, involving women in decision making is a clear indication of equality in context.

## **5. Recommendations**

All hands must be involved in ensuring that the rights of women are not trampled upon. The woman herself has a role to play in ensuring that she takes up the mantle to contribute her quota to family and nation building. The man has to support the woman, the society has to encourage the women, the government needs to create a convivial environment for women to strive and contribute their quota. Finally, Non-Governmental Organizations need to be advocates for women equal participation in all spheres.

### **5.1 The place of the woman**

The ability of women to attain financial autonomy or access to economic resources is also necessary for their greater participation in political life and decision making. Worldwide, women's lower economic status, relative poverty and discriminatory legal frameworks are substantial hurdles to overcome. Because women control and have access to fewer economic resources, they are often unable to pay the formal and informal costs associated with gaining a party's nomination and standing for election. Therefore, to gain the relevance we advocate for and gave the opportunity to partake in all inclusive decision making, women should give themselves out for education and seek to work as well to gain financial independence. The world and the society need s to see it in the woman that she is ready to take up responsibility of contributing and partaking in decisions that will build the family and nation at large.

### **5.2 The place man**

The support of male leaders, brothers, husbands, and fathers as well as uncles is also a key ingredient in creating a climate that encourages women's participation in all inclusive decision making for better family and nation building. The women will need all these supports to strive in the midst of all these challenges. Men are not to see women as threat to their existence but as a partner to achieving family and national goals.

### **5.3 The place of the society**

There must be the willingness of citizens to accept new ideas about gender roles in society. There are still many societies that discourage women from competing directly with men or consider childcare and housekeeping to be the exclusive domain of women. As such, it is common throughout the world to see women activists supporting democratic activities at the grassroots level, yet to see few women in leadership positions and decision making, thereby creating an absence of women from whom to draw for higher levels of political leadership. Therefore, concerted efforts must be made

to raise awareness of gender inequality and the ways in which women can be fully involved in decision making from home to the nation at large.

#### **5.4 The place of government**

In countries where women's public roles are only beginning to develop, women's absence from this history can present significant barriers. However, by giving women the tools they need to lead, creating the opportunity for advancement and helping build networks of like-minded men and women, and ensuring that women's legal rights are firmly entrenched, a pathway to power can be developed.

#### **6. Summary and Conclusion**

In earlier times, women were exploited through every possible means by the society. They suffered a lot of criticism, lacked freedom and stood nowhere next to men. They were even deprived of the basic birthrights of a human being. It took a lot of effort and courage for them to mark an impression of "women power" and make a significant place in society. This conference is one that has helped increased awareness to the need for women participation in decision making for better families and nation building.

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