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CHAPTER TWO

GENDER, POLITICS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Urim, U. M., Imhonopi, D. O. and Ahmadu, F. O.

Chapter Synopsis

There is a nexus that binds the troika of gender, politics and industrial development. This chapter aims to interrogate this nexus and how gender politics has undermined the role and participation of women in industrial development in Nigeria. Nigerian women, like their African counterparts, have suffered from years of marginalisation, exclusion and underachievement owing to sociocultural albatrosses, some of which are antediluvian and anthropogenic in nature. Even government's policy thrusts to enact industrial development over the years have been gender blind and insensitive. This has produced ugly and unexpected policy outcomes which have only exacerbated rather than addressed the problem. The authors of this chapter contend that there is need to engage a politics of paradise built on the fundamentals of social transformation, women empowerment, gender-sensitive industrial development and gender equality. Through this politics of paradise, age-long sociocultural metal trusses in the path of women could be removed while repositioning them for a more positive and greater participation in industrial development in Nigeria.

Introduction

The debate on gender and gender-related issues has generated much furore over time, creating epistemological blocs and resulting in the development of dichotomous theories and nuances. Gender scholars have made attempts to look at how gender relations fare when situated within the contexts of poverty, health, access to resources, education, globalisation, governance, conflict and emergencies, wars, human rights and others. Furthermore, the connexion of gender, politics and industrial development scholarship throws up a more dialectic analytical process that could be everything but simplistic but that generally accentuates the “war of the sexes” and the disequilibrium that plagues women and other vulnerable members of the society. This slew of inequalities suffered by women within many contexts continues to engage the interests of the state, academia, policy, faith and civil society at both the local and international levels. Of concern to this chapter are the inequalities that border on the division of responsibilities, and access to and control of resources as they apply to industrial development and these are played out in the gender relations within communities, markets and the state

Nevertheless, shifting the intellectual battle ground from a focus on the isolation of women to a focus on gender seems to stimulate a more panoptic understanding of the cooperation and conflict between women and men as Wach and Reeves (2000) have vehemently argued. This also helps to bring

to bold relief the need to continue to question and rethink the methodologies, solutions and intervention paradigms necessary to correct the ills faced by half of the world's population. The world cannot talk about genuine freedom for all, for instance, if half of its population are manacled by iron clutches of cultural, social and anthropogenic entanglements. Borrowing the words of the United Nations Development Programme, 'If development is not engendered, it is endangered' (UNDP, 1997:7), therefore, when women are marginalised and subjugated, the industrial development of such a society could suffer episodic growths or disconcerting latency.

This belvedere is simpatico with the assertion made by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a former Secretary-General of the United Nations, when she said:

Without progress in the situation of women, there can be no true social development.

Human rights are not worthy of the name if they exclude the female half of humanity.

The struggle for women equality is part of the struggle for a better life for all human beings and for all societies (Adeyemi & Adeyemi, 2003, p. 364-5).

Thus, it is clear, from a human rights perspective, women have the same right to development as men but if society diminishes their access to economic and social development by invoking some prehistoric or antediluvian cultural, social and androcentric prejudices, then this right becomes violated. Society could become endangered because women are often the linchpins of their communities, with key roles in ensuring the health, nutrition, education, and security of those around them and they are half the labour force meaning that discrimination against them could erect an ironclad barrier to private sector development and economic growth (Eftimie, Heller & Strongman, 2009).

In this chapter, authors seek to investigate the troika of gender, politics and industrial development. Particularly, authors opine that a politics of paradise could retune the seemingly autarchic nature of existing gender relations that seems to favour a sex category over the other and restore a sane paradigm that promotes equality for all and more empowerment and engagement of women in industrial development in Nigeria.

Clarifying the terms: Gender, Politics and Industrial Development

In gender scholarship, there is a difference between gender and sex. Sex is what an individual is biologically (male or female), while gender is what someone becomes socially and/or culturally (Imhonopi & Urim, 2012). In other words, gender creates an identity that points to an individual's sense of conviction that he or she is male or female and as such should be teleguided into discrete roles that fit the gender category that individual belongs to. This gender role for Imhonopi and Urim (2012) is a cultural stereotype that defines and disaggregates what is masculine from what is feminine. Their position has been informed by the fecund oeuvre on the subject of gender by leading feminist scholars such as Acker (1992) and Musami (2010) who see gender as a cultural construct that changes from time to time. For these feminists, the differences between men and women are rooted in the society or nurture and not in nature, and as such can be historicised. The World Bank (2012) adds that while gender points to culturally-based expectations of the roles and behaviours of males and females, it distinguishes the socially constructed from the biologically determined aspects of being male and female. Put differently, gender is a social construct rather than a biological constitution (Cameron, 1996). This is because a woman could be feminine not due to the fact that she is biologically a female, but by repeated practice and imitation of being a woman in the process of social learning. Men can also behave in ways stereotypically associated with femininity making them out as sissies while women can be masculine making them out as tomboys. A woman may display masculine behaviour when she needs to appear strong. Therefore, according to Cameron (2003), gender representation is a set of repeated regular feminine and masculine behaviours which are learnt. They are, therefore, not innate because gender is

performative in nature (Chan, 2008). In their research on gendered behaviour, Koch, Schey & Thimm (2003) suggested a simplified list of feminine and masculine attributes that pitched men as being more assertive, direct, analytical, logical, aggressive, and verbose, and women as being friendlier, more cooperative, empathic, holistic, less assertive, more indirectly aggressive, and with higher communicative competence than men. For Waylen, Celis, Kantola and Weldon (2013), gender is not about sex but varies by race, ethnicity, nation, class, and a variety of other dimensions of social life. They also observed that across the globe, gender determines who goes hungry and who gets adequate nutrition and water; who can vote; run for office; marry, or have rights to children; who commands authority and respect and who is denigrated and dismissed; and who is most vulnerable to violence and abuse in their own homes and intimate relationships. Thus, gender relations shape religious and sociocultural practices and define access to political, economic and cultural rights in a society. As Waylen et al (2013) put it, gender profoundly influences the very ways human beings organise and think about the world and their ways of knowing the world.

Politics, on the other hand, can be narrowly construed as the activity of government or the governing process (Waylen et al., 2013). Politics is also seen as the study of power, and sometimes by extension the study of the powerful. But some far-reaching conceptualisations of politics like that of Dahl (1984, 9–10) not only relate politics with power and political systems, but also see it as “any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves, to a significant extent, control, influence, power or authority.” Politics has also been fundamentally connected with the distribution of resources. David Easton leads this school of thought in which politics is seen as “who gets what, where, when and how” or the authoritative allocation of value (Easton 1953, p. 50). The question then is, does politics administer the authoritative allocation of resources equally among citizens or is the allocation of these resources gender-coloured or elite-determined? It seems as Wayne et al (2013) have contended that politics which should ensure the equitable distribution of or access to resources in the state has been androcentric or male-dominated for a very long time thereby perpetuating male dominance in the political *mise en scene*. In fact, politics has been accused of gender blindness and insensitivity as most states in the world are composed of more men who control the power structures and channels and have continued to nourish the untoward status quo which reveres and advances the male gender but subjugates and hegemonises control over the female gender. However, politics as a structure and institution in the society can be a useful tool in the dismantling of the heavy yokes of gender inequality in most societies, choreographing greater equality and freedom for all citizens of the world irrespective of the gender category they belong to.

Conversely, industrial development is the transformation of an agrarian society into an industrial society where traditional raw materials are converted into semi-finished or finished goods. The use of massive technology, manufacturing sector, innovations, creativity in product development and a potpourri of management systems, division of labour and specialisation is highlighted. Governments all over the world are keen on having a vibrant and robust industrial sector because of its key position as a linchpin for economic development. However, a disenfranchisement of women from participation in industrial development in the country via archaic and questionable sociocultural hangovers, policy barriers and others means the exclusion of half of the population. This, without gainsaying it, this could deny Nigeria the immense potentials and contributions from women to the economy and create frightening economic interregna.

The State of Industrial Development in Nigeria and the Politics of Gender

A history of industrial development in Nigeria depicts an active participation of both sexes. From the pre-colonial times, Nigerian women were involved in a wide array of economic activities including fishing, farming, trading and light manufacturing of products such as local soaps, raffia

products (mats and baskets), clothing materials, palm oil, and many others. In the area of food processing, Nigerian women living in the coastal areas of Calabar, Oron, the Niger Delta and in other communities were involved in fish drying, garri frying, salt production and many others. Even in Northern Nigeria, women were involved in economic activities as they processed food and engaged in different forms of trading with the aid of their children. Queen Amina of Zaria, for instance was not only a powerful and intimidating royal warlord, she used her position to transform Zaria into a commercial hub in northern Nigeria just like her other counterparts in southern Nigeria such as Moremi of Ife, Emotan of Benin and Omu Okwel of Ossomari, overarched their exploits beyond the battle fields into the industrial arena of their communities (Kolawole, Abubakar, Owonibi & Adebayo, 2012). These economic activities by Nigerian women belonging to different pecking orders provided additional income that boosted the livelihoods of their various families while contributing to the growth of the local economy. Therefore, apart from being mothers and wives and taking charge of the home front, Nigerian women in the pre-colonial dispensation were active players in the production and distribution of goods and services.

This success by Nigerian women in industry was however truncated by the colonial enterprise whose interest was not just political subjugation of the Nigerian and African peoples, but economic hegemony that tended to torpedo the autarky of the people and entrench a culture of consumerism of foreign goods. Thus began the Nigerian syndrome where the country produced what it did not consume and consumed what it did not produce. Businesses belonging to Nigerian men and women suffered setbacks as expatriate firms such as John Holt, United African Company (UAC), Lever Brothers and others jostled to dominate the industrial space. With lack of education, denial of access to loans which could have supported or expanded their businesses and the absence of cash crop incentives, technology and innovations which were restricted to men, women businesses in Nigeria began to unravel. Moreover, the colonial enterprise further introduced colonial policies and statutes which were patently sexist and biased against women.

Although women's involvement in enterprise and the labour force was enhanced in the post-colonial era because of women's greater access to Western education, training and empowerment, yet, the politicisation and genderisation of industrial development seemed unwavering as men still played dominant roles in industry.

At the political or policy level, the low participation of women in leadership and decision-making positions in the country has denied them the opportunity to directly influence policy outcomes or political decisions. This must have informed government's insistence since the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo to the present administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan that a greater number of women be involved in critical sectors of the economy at the governance and business levels. However, policies such as the privatisation programme have not benefitted women as more men seem to be the ones with the economic clout to buy up or invest in public-owned companies. For instance, the ongoing reforms in the power sector which have resulted in the emergence of generating companies (GENCOs) and distribution companies (DISCOs) interested in restructuring the sector, none of the companies is owned or controlled by women. A report (UNIDO, 2012) has also noted that the genderisation and politicisation of industrial development are evidentialised by the lack of gender-sensitive public sector spending, including a dearth of gender budgeting and audits; low levels of public expenditure in healthcare, education and training, childcare and infrastructure, including clean water and roads; lack of gender-blind industrial policies, including low levels of industry competence, lack of political will to work on gender issues, lack of recognition of women's "reproductive" or unpaid work and lack of sex disaggregated data. This report points out the error of lumping together the sexes, without understanding that there are discrete needs that each gender category requires to blossom effectively. For instance, the challenges boy children may have at school may not be the same that girl children have. Consequently, ineffective sex disaggregation

resulting into policies and programmes targeted at helping boys and girls in schools may just assume that they have the same needs or share the same challenges and this could engender unsatisfactory or unexpected policy outcomes. This error is further taken into the society when government fails to orchestrate gender-sensitive industrial policies that take into cognizance the particularistic challenges of women. By assuming that policy initiatives put in place can both serve the men as well as women, without removing deep-seated sociocultural albatrosses which have plagued women for a long time, government creates a bumpy or skewed playing field that favours more men than women.

This gender blindness has been extended to credit or SME finance for businesses. Government, represented by its own financial institutions such as the Bank of Industry, the National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND) and others place before fund seekers (made up of both sexes) the same conditionalities required for access. As Imhonopi (2014) observed, how can women setting up microenterprises, SMEs, or formal large-scale businesses, be able to access funding for their businesses based on the generic conditionalities for such facilities when they face varying degrees of sociocultural difficulties such as lack of ownership of collateral and absence of credit histories? Most African traditions, including Nigeria's, do not cede property rights to women and when they are even married, property is either solely owned by their husbands or jointly owned by the couple. This could reduce the economic independence of women especially if they have non-cooperative spouses. These authors also criminalise extant tax laws as being gender blind and insensitive. The same tax rates are expected of men-owned businesses as well as women-owned businesses in spite of the innate challenges that the latter face. These challenges though subtle make it more difficult for women to fully participate in industrial development in Nigeria and Africa.

Labour policies at the organisational or institutional level as identified by UNIDO (2012) have also been discriminatory. Bias in labour policies that dictate gender differentials in earnings exists; the labour market is segmented according to socially constructed gender roles and gender-designed division of labour; there are low levels of women's participation in leadership and decision-making including in trade unions and in trade associations; machinery and technology designed by and for men and are not always appropriate or accessible by women; casual, irregular, informal and unprotected employment exists; data collection concerning industrial players remains gender blind and there is lack of sex disaggregated data; there seems to be no affirmative action or quotas for women and the presence of women micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the informal sector is a testimony to the deliberate or involuntary exclusion of women from mainstream formal industrial space. Thus, this status quo has forced women, in spite of their numerous contributions and immense potentials, to be fringe players in industrial development orbit in Nigeria.

At the sociocultural level, women still face rigid and traditional gender norms that make it difficult for them to be owners of land, property or assets and as a result limit their economic and financial independence. And much more, this limits the role they could play in industrial development in Nigeria. Women and girl children make up two-thirds of the illiterate population globally (UNDESA, 2010), thus limiting their roles in the economy and industry. Many of these women and girls are suitable for casualised and unstructured labour while those who are not employable in industry or have their eyes on self-employment gravitate naturally into the informal sector where a majority of them run MSMEs. In Nigeria, while the leadership spatial environment is gradually opening up for women leadership in industry, there are still iron ceilings that limit women's rise to leadership while the social acceptability of women in leadership and decision-making positions is still very low. Much more importantly, familial and customary demands mandate women to seek the consent of their husbands, fathers or relatives before aspiring to any political or top-level business positions and where this support is lacking, such women might as well remain stuck in mediocrity and underachievement even though they may be more qualified for such positions than their male counterparts.

Backlash of Gender Politics in Industrial Development in Nigeria

There are repercussions arising from the gender politicisation of industrial development in Nigeria. The marginalisation of women from full participation in industrial development in the country has rebounded with the following results:

First, the manufacturing sector has suffered immense setbacks with the deliberate or unintentional exclusion of women through gender-blind and gender-insensitive policies. Women still account for only 24% of jobs or less in the manufacturing sector and when engaged are more likely than men to access low-paid, low productivity, casualised or vulnerable jobs with no basic rights, social protection nor voice (UNIDO, 2012). The limited involvement of women in the real sector therefore limits its development, national productivity and income.

Second, akin to the point above, approximately one third of women in the manufacturing sector are informal entrepreneurs operating MSMEs. They tend to be smaller than those run by men, with fewer employees, low-level technology, and without access to training, formal credit, information systems and professional networks (UNIDO, 2012). Tied to this, these businesses are often an extension of women's domestic activities such as garment making, weaving and food processing and their lack of access to capital means limited production and expansion ability and limited market access. Thus, these informal women entrepreneurs that are critical to economic growth are not able to provide the important forward and backward linkages needed to run and grow the local economy.

Third, even though women are reputed to produce between 60 and 80% of food in most developing countries and are responsible for half of the world's food production, and play vital roles as managers of natural resources, income earners, and caretakers of household food and nutrition security (Eftimie, et al., 2009), they are susceptible to least distribution of food within the household, and during food crisis situations are the most affected because of a patriarchal system that androgenises access to all resources within the state including food and water.

Fourth, the genderisation of access to resources which has limited women's education, skills development, ability to attract funding for their business initiatives and acquire modern technology tools for their work seems to further cause setbacks to women's businesses because of their inability to compete in a globalised market that favours technology-motored production and skilled labour. Lack of modern technology infusion in women's businesses means they are unable to cope with the fast pace of changes taking place in the modern marketplace, and this further festers their economic subservience and subjugation by men-owned enterprises.

Fifth, another damaging effect of the politics of gender in industrial development in Nigeria which has resulted in the greater location of women businesses within the informal economy is the growing loss of tax income that government should have earned were these businesses have been located within the formal economy.

Sixth, there is constant loss of contributions and wasted potentials of women in the industrial development mix of the country as long as there is failure on the part of government and other stakeholders to tap the rich resource reservoir of female half of the population.

Seventh, by the disenfranchisement of most women from participation in industrial development, their income opportunities are limited and this perhaps explains the reason for the increased poverty and fallen standards of living of many Nigerian families.

Eighth, when half of a population is quarantined from participation in the economy or industrial development processes of the country, this could stunt economic development at best or at worst set the country backwards in its industrial development strides.

Ninth, lack of engagement of qualified and competent women professionals and talented entrepreneurial prodigies because of the sexual category they belong to is tantamount to encouraging a climate of mediocrity and industry incompetence, a prospect not suitable for Nigeria as it plans to build a world-class industrial sector.

Lastly, there will be limited forward and backward linkages to be provided by women businesses when the same are not allowed to participate in the industrial development processes of government and this too may not augur well for industrial development in Nigeria.

Gender Mainstreaming and the Role of Politics of Paradise in Industrial Development in Nigeria

Eftimie et al. (2009) have argued and these authors concur totally with their submission that investing in women and assuring their participation in industrial development is not only key for their own development, but also for the socioeconomic transformation of their families and communities. There is a clear development case for investing in women and ensuring their access to resources. Where women have better access to education, they are more likely to delay marriage and childbirth, reduce their risk of contracting or spreading HIV/AIDS, and earn more money which could be used to improve the family purse, stabilise the family welfare, support their children's education and generally have more confidence to make a foray into industry as service/product providers or workers. Also, as an IMF report noted, mothers who have more education are also more likely to immunise their children, seek medical care for family members, and keep children in school much longer (IMF, 2007) and for each additional year of a mother's education, infant mortality drops by 10%. It goes then without saying that any society that empowers its women not only preserves a generation but also protects its present and future.

Gender mainstreaming within the context of an engagement of the politics of paradise will aid industrial development in the country, bringing government's tall dreams for transformation of the industrial sector to pass.

By politics of paradise, authors contend that the authoritative allocation of resources within the state using available political institutions and channels must henceforth be gender-sensitive and gender-lensd. Furthermore, politics of paradise, using the words of Imhonopi and Urim (2014, para. 57) encapsulates

the need for saneness, morality, justice and fairness in the design of the social and economic schema with respect to evolving a benign capitalist system that promotes inclusiveness and a politics of paradise built on an anlage of social and economic safety nets for all citizens or the vulnerable ones.

It also advocates the politics of social transformation, politics of women empowerment, politics of gender-sensitive industrial development and politics of gender equality in the industrialisation processes of the country. This will be briefly discussed apiece. In unfurling the politics of paradise with regard to greater gender participation in industrial development in Nigeria, obnoxious cultural and social practices which hog-tie the womenfolk, subjugate their persons, potentials and abilities must be eliminated because of the need to engage the vast resources, talents, wisdom and residual drives of this population to crystallise Nigeria's industrial development initiatives. This politics of social transformation means that all those antediluvian and Stone Age traditions which limit the access of women to land, resources and assets and increase their economic and financial dependency and vulnerability should be done away with and replaced with more benign, participatory, inclusive and rights-based practices that should empower women and girls and give them the impetus to participate more in nation-building and industrialisation of the country.

Another strand within the politics of paradise as conceived for greater women inclusion in the industrial development of Nigeria is the politics of empowerment. While the present government of President Goodluck Jonathan has done more than all his predecessors combined in empowering women, especially giving them access to more non-elective positions and appointments, more can still be done in this aspect. There is need for government not only to prioritise its spending on women by instituting and implementing a gender-sensitive budget but also by giving women more access to education, skills training, SME finance, tax holidays or waivers and other incentives that could help to calibrate the years

of neglect and marginalisation they have suffered in the society. In the area of credit, government can establish a Women's Bank that will be committed to funding only projects and business ideas from women. Through this bank, those hurtful conditionalities presented to women business owners seeking debt financing or venture capital funding for their businesses could be removed while the interest rate charged could be permanently made a single digit. This effort could turn around the fortunes of women-led businesses, spur innovation among women, generate new product or service brands in Nigeria, create more jobs for the women and citizens and reduce women's economic dependency or vulnerability.

The politics of gender-sensitive industrial development could start with government having a sex disaggregated dataset of women and girls in Nigeria, their educational and income levels and their needs. By so doing, government will know the amount of funding that should go into supporting women-owned businesses, for instance, and how government can help them grow and expand. More than this, the time to rescue many women-owned businesses that are already trapped in the informal economy is now. Reducing the fees for incorporation of these businesses, providing soft loans and practically unveiling a battery of programmes to provide management and entrepreneurship education to these women will go a long way in improving the lot of women professionals and informal entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

Lastly, government must ensure that it enthrones the politics of gender equality in industrialisation processes in the country. Women should be treated as their male counterparts if their potentials and endowments are to be tapped for industrial development in the country. Women who aspire for leadership positions in industry should not be waived aside or considered unserious if they are qualified for such positions and can deliver. Access to resources such as land, property and assets should not be delimited to men alone but where some women have the resources to buy pieces of real estate in the form of land and/or houses, they should be allowed to do so without undue cultural and social encumbrances. Government must seek more ways, create more windows and open up the industrial space for greater women participation.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that women play a fundamental role in the domestic economy because of their contributions to their family welfare, household incomes, wealth creation and employment, as well as education and health. Since women account for one-half of a country's potential talent base, a nation's industrial competitiveness in the long term depends significantly on whether it educates and engages its womenfolk and how it does it. Discrimination against them will become an ironclad barrier to private sector robustness, creativity and innovation, development and expansion, and could hamstring the drive towards industrialisation in the country. However, when the women population in the country is primed for industrial engagement, there is bound to be greater employment creation, greater industrial activity and output, more economic expansion and of course, greater guarantee of family welfare, health and quality of life. The world's modern economy and democracy depend on the participation of both sexes and any attempt to marginalise one of the groups could dilute the strength of the other.

Unfurling a politics of paradise anchored on the principles of social transformation, women empowerment, gender-sensitive industrial development and gender equality will go a long way in removing the age-long sociocultural metal trusses in the path of women while repositioning them for a more positive and greater participation in industrial development in Nigeria.

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