



SUPPRESSION OF WOMEN WITH REFERENCE TO AFRICAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Subordination of women in 21st century Africa and sustainability has not been developed and education wise they are not given enough opportunities. United Nations facts and statistics indicate that women constitute more than half the world's work. Yet women earn just one tenth of the world's property. Three fourths of women are starving, and above all represent over two thirds of non-literate adults. By examining above facts with regard to Africa's educational development further reveals that in education, economic, social and cultural transformation seen by recent changes and appointments of women to political offices in many countries across Africa, girls and women remain related to a secondary human status in relation to boys and men. Against this background this paper highlights the educational implications of the continued subordination of women to men. Women not given opportunities in all the fields to prove what they are even now in few fields of jobs women not given employment opportunity by this we can understand that still discrimination of men and women can be seen very clearly.

KEY WORDS: women subordination, cultural sustainability, political, economical and social marginalization Changes and challenges and educational development.

Africa is a deeply patriarchal society this is the part of the traditional African value system. Men used to dominate the socio – economic and political machinery and organisation. Men are regarded as natural leaders, who are superior and born to rule over women. Women are considered as the secondary human beings and they are estimators of men. The pride and dignity of women is derived from men. Like the traditional African value system, most traditional African practices are fundamentally biased against women and gender-insensitive. It is upheld as a traditional practice in many parts of Africa for girls as young as seven to be married to men old enough to be their fathers, and in some cases, grandfathers. Parents determine who marries their daughters before they are old enough to decide for themselves. In fact, in many communities, men measure their wealth and influence by the numbers of women they have and control. Very cruel system followed however, for a woman to have more than one husband. In the event of the husband's death, the woman is subjected to several gory and excruciating traditional funeral rites popularly known as widowhood.

This is a period of mourning, which lasts one, two, or more years commencing with the death of a woman's spouse. During this period, a woman is made to walk and move barefoot, haggard, unkempt, and wearing rags or black clothes. She is not allowed to wear earrings, cover her hair, or even smile. In some communities, the widow pours ashes on her body and is made to sleep with the husband's corpse for a night, or drink the water used in washing the corpse if she is suspected as is often the case of causing her husband's death. This process entails the partial or total cutting away of the external female genitalia. Traditional healers' birth attendance or elderly women usually carry out the practice. The procedure is often carried out in a septic environment with crude instruments such as knives, razor, blades and broken glasses without aesthetics or, at



best herbal medication to check bleeding and lessen pain. This crude and hazardous procedure is rounded in and surrounded by various myths, misconceptions, and superstitious nonsense.

The African societies in the world attach more value and importance only to a male child rather than female child. The traditional African value system and practices are fundamentally biased against women gender. In many parts of Africa as a tradition- a girl as young as success to be married to old men as they are to be their fathers- a girl is bought and automatically becomes the property of men. Who uses ill-treatment and dumps her when he is not even fit. Polygamy is the other regular/traditional custom prevails in African continent. Men are licensed to marry as many wives as possible. As a tradition, the eldest man in the family inherits the woman. The practice of female genital mutilation known as female circumcisions prevails in Africa. For instance the ritual is performed as a rite that, for preparing young girls for womanhood and marriage. In some parts of Nigeria it is regarded as taboo. The African customs, traditions and practices are closely related with Islamic preaching and traditions. One of the biggest threat to woman across several African societies is “no man will ever marry you”!

SUPPRESSION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

Every year we celebrate women’s day as an honour to women all around the world for their combat achievements. This celebration is held only for name sake. According to government parliaments gender equality and women’s rights committee has decided to look at the importance of education for women. In many developed countries the number of educated women across all levels has risen considerably but a large amount of underdeveloped countries suffer from lack of women in education. As a result these countries and people they are harming themselves but also the world as a whole. In Saharan African continent most of the girls receive only two years of education and do not learn to read or write.

Education for women is on the rise, but a lot of work remains by giving women proper education along with the male counterparts, we can empower them to change the world for better longer and healthier. Why concentration on women education is that literacy is one of the best indicator of women’s status in their countries. Health is another indicator and power is another indicator...Putting power in women’s hand is the biggest challenge for improving their lives in every country.

SOCIAL CULTURAL MARGANILIZATION OF WOMEN

Discrimination against women and girls is evident right from birth. The instances of socio-cultural subjugation of women abound in contemporary African societies; still there is a lot of sexual degradation and exploitation. Most of the societies especially in Africa believe that sexuality and women mean the same thing. female sexuality is received as the property of men and women have no control and right over their own sexuality. This is how women earlier become the victims of prostitution. In most of the European countries – the Nigerian girls have been trafficked and served as prostitutes. The Nigerian girls were spread out to different parts of the world as like – Italy, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, UK, Denmark etc...To sex industry as sex workers and prostitutes.

In the studies of Achebe (the African writer) the gender roles of men and women writers are his frequent themes in his writings particularly with reference to Igbo society in Africa, he talks about the values immensely and the individual achievement and the ownership over and the acquisition of women as a signifier of success. In the book “Things fall apart”. The Igbo society condemns violence but okonkwo’s ability to control his women is inextricably connected to his dignity. Thus women are automatically disenfranchised in terms of achieving high status related to personal achievement. Achebe used to represent the limited gendered vision of characters. He tries to demonstrate the inherent dangers of excluding women from society. According to him womanism is an afro centric concept forged out of global feminism to analyze the condition of black African women. In things fall apart okonkwo’s furious manhood over powers everything feminine in his life, including his own conscience. In the other work of Achebe “anthills of the savannah” the central female



character in the novel is Beatrice. An independent woman in the city refuses the notion that she needs a man and slowly learns about idenili a goddess. Blaming the aggression of male power Beatrice remains firm in her conviction that women should not be limited to such capacities.

ECONOMICAL MARGINALIZATION

Women, like men are able to make economic progress in any society when they have limited access to resources that could explore them to new business opportunities. Ownership of the property and the access to control of resources and the source of political power. It is only after the labouring with their husbands in the acquisition of whatever property they get. In some African societies women have been consistently deprived of their right to own property till date. The way in which African women have continuously been economically oppressed by some men in the referral of their right to gain full employment by some husbands. Some men see their wives only as reproductive machines. The contemporary economic marginalization of African women is manifested through the offering of low income jobs to women gender activities have continually lobbied for the implementation of affirmative action. One of the outrageous areas of women political suppression in modern Africa is the refutation of the moral right of daughters and widows to inheritance of immovable property it is interesting to know that women constitute the main agricultural labour force in Africa and other parts of the world. Another way in which African women have continuously been economically oppressed by some men is the refusal of their right to gainful employment by some husbands and some men see their wives only as sex objects, food gatherers and domestic servants. In some situations where the women are allowed to work, the men collect the salary from them whenever they receive their payment. All these are to render them economically powerless and dependent on the men so that the women may not have any chance of one day rising above their husbands.

POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION

The participation of all citizens in the management of public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. In African countries the political arena remains largely dominated by men and even exclusively male remain in some countries. The common belief about women in most African societies is that, they have no other societal role than serving as reproductive agents. Generally is the economic and social status of the individual that determines his or her success in the political domain. The existence of legislation generalising women's right to vote and stand for election in all African countries there have been little positive changes in the situation of women. The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society, in which they work in equality and complementarily, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences. It works as an abstract to the effective political work ability of the state. One of the most interesting and challenging things as a humanist is that in the past couple of years has been trying to persuade my people to abandon these horrible and primitive customs. I have tried to persuade them to see the need for progress and improvement in our attitudes, values and society. We must openly examine the traditions we have held and accept as sacrosanct. Many of these traditions are founded on traditional dogma, ignorance, and superstition. Today Africa is witnessing enormous and appreciable changes in the perception and status of women many African women have been consistent and courageous in their demand for justice and equality with men. They want recognition and respect for their right to marry to mates of their choice when ever and where ever they wish. They want their rights to reproductive health and integrity respected. They want the right to divorce and to own property.

In southern Nigeria, the forced marriage of women takes form in the stigmatisation of unmarried, divorced and even widowed women. While the victimisation of widowed women often takes place in the hinterlands the public spiting of unmarried women is just as prevalent in urban neighbourhoods. In many developed countries the number of educated women across all levels has risen considerably, but a large amount of underdeveloped nations suffer from a lack of women in education. As a result, these countries and



people cannot be as productive as they could be, and are not only harming themselves, but also the world as a whole. Only around 30 percent of all girls worldwide have made it to secondary education and more than 66 percent of all university students are male. In some African countries fewer than one out of 200 women attend university. In addition, over two thirds of the world's illiterate people are women. The gender gap in education in developing nations is extremely problematic. Without education, these women are powerless, and in many places governments are fully aware that education is power, and this is why they suppress women's right to education. We recognize that education is power and hope that the rest of the world can too. Education can help millions of women all around the world realise their potential and empower them to change the world for the better. It can boost their confidence in their own bodies, health and minds helping them to feel more empowered to stand up for themselves.

On average a girl who completes seven years of education will have 2.2 fewer children. A woman who completes even just basic education can reduce her chances of contracting HIV threefold. Children who are born to mothers who have at least completed secondary education are twice as likely to live past the age of five. Education for women is on the rise, but a lot of work remains. By giving women proper education and employment for self sustainability on par with that of their male counterparts, we can empower them to change the world for the better by living longer, healthier lives and contributing to the great social human capital. We celebrate the great progress that has been made over the last century, and look forward to working towards equality across the board. By not educating women and suppressing their skills and talents, it is not just them we are robbing of what they could be- it is the world. In spite of real progress in women's rights around the globe better laws, political participation education and income the bedrock problems that have dogged women for centuries remain. Even in wealthy countries there are pockets of private pain where women are among the most vulnerable.

CONCLUSION

Most African women have been politically, socially and economically oppressed, discriminated and repressed for so long that in these societies. The problem of women's subordination and consequent marginalization further can be examined under its various ramifications. All over the world the population of women is currently an exponential growth. The United States population projections put the world's population at 7.2 billion people, with women constituting more than half of this number. So, in every country almost we find some oppression in all the fields to eradicate this kind of treatment government of every country should provide some special benefits and opportunities to women to grow in their given field and it's the duty of government to see that all the fruits of employment should be given to women which is equal to men, so that they may also prove their abilities. At present scenario in few countries women are competing with men and in some other countries women are shown better than men in some fields. So, they must be given chance to prove themselves.

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