

CONTRIBUTIONS OF SELECTED AFRICAN WOMEN TO PEACE BUILDING IN AFRICA, 1995-2015

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Abstract

Women's role in governance has, for a long time, been downplayed not only in Africa but in the world as Africa has been recording low participation of women and high political apathy in both elective and appointive positions. However, concerted efforts have been made by governments and non-governmental organisations in the recent past to increase the level of participation of African women in politics. This is in line with the declaration made at the fourth world conference on women in Beijing, China, in 1995, which advocated 30 per cent affirmative action. This percentage varies from one country to another. The under representation of women in political participation gained root due to the patriarchal practice inherent in African societies and it is a growing concern to many Africans. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to review the contributions of African women to peace building in Africa while highlighting the constraining factors. These African women were selected from the different regions in Africa: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and late Prof. Dora Akunyili of Nigeria, Luisa Dias of Mozambique, Catherine Samba-Panza of Central African Republic, Prof. Irshad Manji of Uganda and Bochra Bel Haj Hmida of Tunisia representing Western, Southern, Central, Eastern and Northern Africa respectively. The study employed qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering, which relies on primary, secondary and tertiary sources. These sources were collected through oral interviews, intensive library research, conference addresses, private documents on African women and internet data was equally utilized. The evidence from these sources indicated the roles and contributions of African women to peace building politically, economically, socially, infrastructural, health and other wise. This study recommends more participation of women in African affairs through more implementation of the Beijing conference of 1995, a change of mind-set concerning female folk, addressing some cultural and religious practices against women, encouraging girl-child education and also to create a link or network of women locally, regionally and internationally among others.

Key words: Peace, Peace building, African women, Participation, Africa

Introduction

Women are generally the primary sources of life as they play the role of procreation to ensure the perpetuation of their lineage with the family as the microcosm of the larger society. Despite this, the African woman appears to be depicted as a quasi-slave to the husband, a second class citizen, the burden bearer of the society within which she should only be seen but not heard. African women are said to be the burden bearers of the ugly effects of the socio-political and economic marginalization (Humm, 1992).

It is regrettable that African women's oppression and marginalization have existed since many centuries. This is masterminded by men in African societies with the concept of biological essentialism which restricted women's roles and destinies mainly to their reproductive roles. This grows as a strong root to patriarchy. It is said that, biological essentialism is the belief that a woman's nature is an inevitable consequence of her reproductive roles (Corrigan, 2015). On the other hand, patriarchy as an ideology or is described as a political system ruled by men in which women are given inferior social and political status including human rights (Okoye, 2003). It also refers to the social system in which power is primarily held by adult men (Okoye, 2017). This implies that patriarchy promotes male rule and privilege and also provides female subordination. Many African societies are mostly patrilineal which means that property and title are inherited by the male lineage (Muonwe, 2014).

Under international standards, both men and women have equal rights and opportunities to everything worldwide, most especially to participate fully in all aspects and at all levels of political processes. The commitment to gender equality can be traced to the 1948 United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that rights and freedoms will not be limited by a person's gender. In Africa, women constitute over half of the population but despite the major role they play with populace (UN Charter, 1948) women's role in the society are yet to be recognised. This is due to cultural stereotypes, abuse of religion, traditional practices and patriarchal societal structures in Africa.

There are some widely accepted reasons why women are important in peace building processes. Women are important because they constitute half of every community (DAW, 1946) and the task of peace building, a task which is great, must be done in partnership with both women and men. Secondly, women are the central caretakers of families in most African culture, and everyone is affected when women are oppressed and excluded from peace building process.

Women play important roles in the process of peace building, first as activists and advocates of peace, women wage conflict non-violently by pursuing democracy and human rights. Secondly, as peacekeepers and relief aid workers, women contribute to reducing direct violence. Thirdly, as mediators, trauma healing counsellors, and policy makers, women work to transform relationship and address the root of violence. Lastly, as educators and participants in the development process, women contribute to building the capacity of their communities and nations to prevent violent conflict. This is made possible as a result of socialization processes and the historical experience of unequal relations and values that women bring to the process of peace building.

The subject of women and peace building is arguably an area of research, which prior to the 21st century remained underdeveloped and unexplored in the field of conflict and peace

and in the practice of peace building processes. However, in pre-contemporary consciousness, women did leverage standard decision making that served diverse political, socio economic, and security goals. Before the internationalization of women's role in the affairs of peace building, women were already subconsciously or consciously involved in such decision-making processes (Isike & Uzodike, 2001). It contends that patriarchy and marginalization of women was quite in existence and these challenges which are unquestionably in continuity in the contemporary impede women's peace building efforts.

However, although patriarchy has strongly put African women under oppression, women themselves are also getting stronger and making radical move to address the issue of gender bias in Africa. This study sheds light on African women's contributions and achievements in all domains of human endeavours. These African women rose to prominence by putting in place some political measures that revive their countries. These positive political measures have prevented structural violence thereby building peace in Africa. Structural violence includes hunger, political repression and psychological alienation, poverty, oppression of the poor by the rich, police brutality, intimidation of the poor by people in power, oppression of women, monopolization of resources and power by some sections of the society (Galtung, 2000). Structural violence metamorphoses into war and a country experiencing such cannot be categorised as being peaceful.

Four international conferences on women have been held in Mexico in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and in Beijing in 1995. The scope of the study covers from 1995 to 2015. The study examines the African women's contributions to peace building in Africa from the 4th international conference on women in Beijing, China, in 1995. This research intends to examine to what extent the promised reforms have been implemented in Africa particularly. This research reviews African women's achievements in all domains of human endeavours (1995-2015) twenty years after the Beijing Platform for Action conference. This research primarily centres on African women and their contributions to peace building in Africa. Africa is one of the seven continents of the world and is significant in the study of women's contributions and achievements. The African woman, who is the primary focus of this research occupy the fifty three (53) countries in Africa, including African women in Diaspora.

With so many cases of war all over the globe especially in Africa which has been described as a theatre of war, it has become important to entrench peace in all different countries of the world. This study seeks to examine the roles of selected African women in peace building in Africa. This study also emphasises the way African women have affected the society by proving that women can develop their country like men do and to show that being a woman does not mean being inferior. At the end, the researchers gave some examples of African women in politics, economics, socially and otherwise to illustrate African women's goal.

The Concept of Peace

The word, **peace**, is a complex and integrated phenomena as it is multi- dimensional in nature. It is generally a concept of harmony and the absence of hostility. In a behavioural sense, peace is understood to be a lack of conflict and freedom from fear and violence between heterogeneous social groups (Ibeanu, 2007). On the other hand, **Peace-building** is a

process of creating the tangible and intangible conditions to enable a conflict-habituated system to become a peace system. Peace building goes beyond problem solving or conflict management but it attempts to fix the core problems that underlie the conflict and change the pattern of interaction of the parties involved (Nicolaidis, 2012). Hence to achieve this, parties must replace the spiral of violence and destruction with a spiral of peace and development, and create an environment conducive to self-sustaining and durable peace.

Johan Galtung (2000), founder of peace studies research, postulated the two categorizations of peace as positive and negative peace. Positive peace denotes the simultaneous presence of many desirable state of mind and society such as love, harmony, justice, equity etc. hence positive peace is more difficult to achieve than its negative version. Negative peace historically denotes the absence of war and other forms of large scale violence or human conflicts. It is a condition in which no active organised violence is taking place.

Supporters of negative peace uniformly agree that a repressive society, even if it is not at war should be considered “at peace” only in a narrow sense. In addition, a nation “at peace” that tolerates outbreak of domestic violence on a wide level, despite an absence of violent conflict with other nations, is not really at peace with itself. Some theorists have argued that peace should exist only as a negative symbol that is the avoidance of war. Quincy Wright (1942) unequivocally maintained “that when peace assumes a positive state it ceases to be peace”. In this study therefore, the researchers will employ peace in its positive form which is the crux of peace building.

Theoretical Framework

The Feminist theory

The feminist theory is one of the theories in International Relations which entered the discipline in the 1980s and was propounded by Ann Judith Tickner (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2011). From the feminist perspective, the world is dichotomized into two individuals of male and female. To the feminist, there is sex- based marginalisation, subjugation against women all over the world. Generally, women are seen to be dominated by men and that domestic and international policies are always carried out by male perspectives, the feminist theory predicts that wars are most likely as a result of male character traits of violence. In contrast, women are care givers and are inherently peaceful. Feminists further argue that if the international system is handed over to women, the same way they (women) care for their babies such will relate to the world and there will be peace.

The feminist theory has affected the formation of non-government organisations (NGOs) to address the issue of gender bias. This has led to radical move on feminism. Laws have been enacted to incorporate certain percentage of women into politics. It has also increased interaction among women across national frontiers (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2011). Finally, the feminist theory has been criticised by authors who argue that not all women are peaceful (Burnet, 2008).

The work is therefore guided by the feminist theory as the theory views women as natural peace makers, as being more pacific than men, and often symbolised as paragons of morality, sacredness, goodness and tenderness. This work advocates for more participation of women in both domestic and international governance and its predictions regarding good

governance of women are also applicable with regards to these selected African women in review.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Her Peace Building Roles in Liberia

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first female president in Africa, was born on 29th October, 1938 in Monrovia. She was a Liberian economist and politician from 2006 and 2018. In 1961, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf went to the United States to study Economics and Business Administration. After obtaining a Master's degree in 1971 in Public Administration from Harvard University, she entered government service in Liberia. Johnson Sirleaf served as assistant Minister of Finance between 1972 and 1973 under President William Tolbert and Finance Minister from 1980-1985. She was known for her personal financial integrity and clashed with the two heads of state. During Doe's regime she was imprisoned twice and narrowly avoided execution. In the 1985 national election she campaigned for a seat in the senate and openly criticized the military government, which led to her arrest and a 10 year prison sentence (River, 2012). She was released after a short time and allowed to leave the country.

During 12 years of exile in Kenya and the United States, during which time Liberia went into civil war, Johnson became an influential economist for the World Bank, she also served as the vice president of the African Regional Office in Citibank, and other international financial institutions. From 1992 to 1997 she was the Assistant Director and the Assistant Secretary General of the Regional Bureau for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme (Kieh, 2018). During her time in the United Nations, she was one of the seven eminent persons designated in 1999 by the then Organisation of African Unity to investigate the Rwanda genocide, one of the five commission's chairpersons for the inter-Congolese dialogue and one of two internationals selected by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to investigate and report on the effect of conflict on women and women's role in peace building. She was the initial Chairperson of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and a visiting professor at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA)

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's peace building as president left enduring tangible and intangible legacies in Liberia. The most enduring legacies are the intangible ones: freedom of speech, right to free, universal and elementary education, equal rights for women: rights that were routinely ignored and abused during the chaotic years of the civil war (Kieh, 2018). In her first year in office, Johnson Sirleaf negotiated the lifting of international trade sanctions against Liberia and complete forgiveness of the country's crushing external debt (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). This in turn led to poverty alleviation of Liberians and increased the country's wealth. She also introduced free trade in Liberia with the lifting of international trade sanctions. Of course poverty and hunger lead to structural violence and most times war.

An epidemic of Ebola virus disease was first reported in Liberia by the late of March 2014. Researchers generally believe that Emile Ouamoun (a two-year-old boy) who died in the village of Meliandou, was the index case of Ebola disease in Liberia (Kulah, 1999). His mother, sister and grandmother then became ill with similar symptoms and also died as the disease was thought to be malaria. A key element was the fact that the health establishment were overwhelmed, thus leading to those infected being turned away from treatment centres. This eventually led to the infection of others taking care of sick or dying patients at home. In

October, 2014, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf quarantined most Ebola affected towns and acquired medical supplies from the United States, Germany and the World Health Organization to aid the fight against the deadly disease (River, 2012). Ellen Johnson banned all rallies and gatherings in Monrovia before the senatorial election, fearing that the risk of the Ebola virus spreading may be increased. The country was officially declared free Ebola transmission in May 2015 (Kieh, 2007). Ellen Johnson's peace building roles of controlling the deadly disease of Ebola as the disease was a threat to the lives of Liberians as a result of its high risk of infection. This led to better health conditions of Liberians.

Among other infrastructure projects, her administration built over 800 miles of roads, attracting substantial foreign investment in mining, agriculture, and forestry, as well as offshore oil exploration. The thousands of miles paved roads in cities as well as the highways and the Somalia Drive to Redlight Projects and the renovation of Monrovia port. Liberia also won support from China for construction of a national university (Kieh, 2007). Ellen Johnson's construction of roads and other infrastructural facilities helped Liberians to enjoy easy road networks, access to education, employment in the mining, agricultural and forestry sectors as this prevented uprising against the government with regard to the re-occurring Liberian conflicts before her assumption as the president thereby building peace in Liberia.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's prospects of an enduring democracy were manifested by her willingness to serve her constitutional terms, the management of the transition and the fact that she has given Liberians a democracy to look forward to. She also removed the stains on the character of Liberia as one family entrenched in dictatorial rule, restored civil society, specifically multiparty democracy. The Nobel committee credited Johnson Sirleaf's contribution to securing peace in Liberia, to promoting economic and social development, and to strengthening the position of women (River, 2012). This was the most important of her peace building aspect in Liberia with regards to the political history surrounding Liberia.

It is customarily easy to judge from the outside without appreciating the nature of the country that Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administration inherited, mainly the difficulties associated with governing a failed state. The Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administration inherited a collapsed socio economic and bureaucratic fabric. It was the most difficult economic situations the country has ever endured. The country had gone through massive deaths, physical destruction, and human displacement. Liberians had sacrificed and suffered extreme physical and psychological hardships. All they wished for was to migrate nearby and other nations for refuge (Fearon & Laitin, 2003).

Education, health, infrastructure, public safety, the rule of law and other institutions were functioning as a shell of themselves. Liberia was a pariah nation, made fragile by the presence of militants from various warring factions that fought in the civil crisis. These remnants of rebel armies had gotten absorbed on how to function within a criminal economy characterised by drug smuggling, drug abuse, armed robbery, coercion, blackmail, prostitution, etc (Kulah, 1999).

The social problems created by prolonged war included pervasive unemployment, reduced marketable skills, learned helplessness among the youth, many of whom had been armed participants in the war or grossly affected by it. The demobilization and disarmament programme administered by the transitional government of Johnson Sirleaf and international partners had failed to rehabilitate the war affected youths significantly. Moreover, the

bureaucratic culture that her government inherited which was rooted in endemic corruption, and thus served as a major obstacle to good governance.

Late Prof. Dora Nkem Akunyili's Peace Building Role in Nigeria

Late Prof. Mrs Dora Nkem Akunyili was born in Makurdi in Benue state (Nigeria) on July 14, 1954, by Chief and Mrs Paul Young Edemobi. She started her Primary education at St. Patricks Primary School, Isuofia. Her success started with her passing the First School Leaving Certificate with Distinction in 1966, and the West African School Certificate (W.A.S.C.) with Grade I Distinction in 1973 (both in Nigeria), which earned her the Eastern Nigerian Government Post Primary Scholarship and the Federal Government of Nigeria Undergraduate Scholarship respectively (Agbasi, 2019).

Akunyili started her working career as a Hospital Pharmacist from 1978 to 1981, in the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), Enugu, after which she ventured into academics as a Graduate Assistant (Research Fellow) in Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Nigeria Nsukka from 1982 to 1986. In the University system, she made a steady progress from Lecturer I in 1986 until she was made Senior Lecturer in 1990. She transferred to College of Medicine, University of Nigeria Nsukka in 1992, where she was made a Consultant Pharmacologist in 1996, a position she held until 12 April 2001. Due to her love for teaching and nurturing young ones, she was also a part-time lecturer of the West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists Lagos, Nigeria from 1992–1995 (Ujumadu, 2014).

After the death of her diabetic sister, who died after taking fake insulin injection in 1988, Dora came at the forefront in the fight against drug counterfeiters. In 2001, President Olusegun Obasanjo appointed her the Director-General, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and she waged war against adulterated drug dealers starting in her own state (Oludayo & Anyaegbunam, 2015).

Late Prof. Dora Akunyili served as a Supervisor for Agriculture and Member of the Caretaker Committee for her Local Government, Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State from 1994 to 1996. From 1992 to 1994, Dr. Akunyili served as a member of the State's Hospitals Management Board and State Advisory Council for Women Commission both in Anambra State of Nigeria. At the zonal level, Prof. Mrs. Dora Akunyili served as the Zonal Secretary of Petroleum Special Trust Fund (P.T.F.). By this appointment, she coordinated all P. T.F projects in the five South-eastern States of Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo) (Nworah, 2015) in 1998, she was diagnosed of a growth in Nigeria and needed surgery and the PTF gave her the medical expenses, but upon arriving in the United Kingdom, she was told that she was misdiagnosed in Nigeria and that she did not need any surgery and that she would be all right with medication. Her exceptional virtues were evidenced when she returned to Nigeria and refunded the medical expenses to the agency. In the history of Nigeria, no political office holder has done such (The Guardian, 2015)

At the ministerial level, she worked as the Honourable Minister of Information and Communications, Federal Republic of Nigeria between December 2008 and December 2010. As the Honourable Minister, Prof. Akunyili anchored the re-branding Nigeria Project driven

by the slogan, Nigeria: Good People, Great Nation (Sun, 2014). The programme was conceived as an internal process to address Nigeria's negative image both at home and abroad. Prof. Dora Akunyili proved her versatility in all areas of human endeavour as she also ventured into politics when she aspired to serve her own people in Anambra State as a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Following her appointment as the Director General of NAFDAC in April 2001, Akunyili established as a top priority the eradication of counterfeit drugs and unsafe food. Before her assumption of office in NAFDAC, fake and substandard foods and drugs were sold in Nigeria without any form of regulation. She was disheartened that so many Nigerians were fighting killer diseases like malaria and tuberculosis with little more than sugar syrup and chalk tablets, cynically packaged to look like the real thing. When she assumed office, she brought in a new culture of excellence and honesty to NAFDAC and the entire Nigerian public service. As a result, the level of fake and counterfeit drugs in circulation dropped to 16.7 per cent with vast improvement in the food and other regulated sectors (This Day, 2014).

Prof. Dora Akunyili worked as the Director-General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Nigeria, from April 2001-2008. In this agency, corruption was regarded as normal way of life but she recorded outstanding successes without any indictment. Prior to her appointment, NAFDAC absolutely lacked the reputable tag of a descent institution (Ujumadu, 2014). Therefore, all manner of adulterated, fake and substandard food and drugs were dumped into Nigeria at alarming rate. According to Ujumadu (2014), over 60 per cent of drugs in circulation nationwide were adulterated. When she assumed office, she brought in a new culture of excellence and honesty to NAFDAC and the entire Nigerian public service.

Akunyili commenced her peace building in the health industry by creating awareness about fake drugs. Even in the villages they call people who are literate to read labels for them before they buy any drug or take any drug, or any food, or whatever consumables, because they know the necessity that it has a NAFDAC number. This is a number that authenticates that this drug is certified by NAFDAC. They ask people to check the NAFDAC number, check the expiry date, and the awareness was now a part of the fight. By 2001, made-in-Nigeria drugs were banned across Africa. She did not only work in the area of drug, she also worked aggressively in the area of food. Consequently, Nigeria became the first developing country to achieve universal salt iodization (This Day, 2014). This iodization is critical for childhood survival. Akunyili also worked in the area of Vitamin A fortification of food, fluoridation of toothpaste and standardization of cosmetics. She worked aggressively to stop the use of toxic bromate in bread production, among many other food issues. She also demonstrated Impartiality. In Nigeria today, where corrupt elites are being given presidential pardon (Nworah, 2015) because they have a strong relationship with sycophants in power, late Professor Dora Akunyilli behaved differently by sacking her brother-in-law who indulged in corruption in NAFDAC (Ujumadu, 2014). Previous studies show that several cases of corruption and scandal without punishment pervade the literature in Nigeria (Ujumadu, 2014). But the case of late Prof. Dora Akunyili was different. She refused to join in the act of impunity and the symbol of corrupt mentality that characterized politics and administration in Nigeria by punishing her brother-in-law.

Late Prof. Dora Akunyili succeeded in curbing bribery and corruption in the agency. Moreover, she refused to shed corrupt employees in her domain such that, she sacked 300 members of staff, out of a total of 3, 000 within six years. Even an intermediary, a trader, who the notorious fake drug dealers sent to bribe her with N500 million to relax in fighting against fake drugs was nearly imprisoned (Ujumadu, 2014). In the public sector of the Nigerian economy, a member of staff who fails to use his position to amass wealth to the detriment of the nation is often adjudged a failure who can never be rich again in life, while he who used the same to enrich himself is applauded and respected. But late Prof. Dora Akunyili never used her offices to enrich herself. Late Prof. Dora Akunyili, through her stewardship, demonstrated that Nigerians can curtail the escalation of endemic corruption prevailing in government agencies in contemporary Nigeria (Oludayo & Anyaegbunam, 2015). More often than not, the continuous underdevelopment of Nigeria has been associated with endemic corruption prevailing among the elites. This epidemic bribery and corruption in Nigeria can lead to poverty and hunger which are characteristics of structural violence which in turn can lead to war.

Her active engagement in scholarly works contributed to the body of knowledge by presenting over 600 papers in local and international conferences. Also, she published 4 books and wrote 37 scientific articles that were published in local and international journals (Nworah, 2015). It is obvious in academia that knowledge in mind is domicile in the brain of scholars. It can either be shared, documented or be allowed to decimate. Any knowledge shared with others through teaching / lecturing, advice, counselling, mentoring or documented, which could be in form of publications-articles, textbooks - impact generations. Ideas of the late Prof. Dora Akunyili are not only in prints, she physically imparted knowledge on many students for many years by lecturing and supervising undergraduate projects, MSc theses and PhD dissertations. Apart from the above, she served as an External Examiner to many postgraduate students. In academia known for examination malpractices and all sort of evil, late Prof. Dora Akunyili was one of the rare scholars committed to academic excellence.

Late Prof. Dora promoted professionalism in Nigeria. As an internationally renowned Pharmacist and Pharmacologist, late Prof. Dora Akunyili was a very active member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria and served in various capacities. The importance of professionalism in key areas of national economy cannot be quantified. The health sector is one of these areas, where more hands are needed in Nigeria but few ones are available. The late Prof. Dora Akunyili did not only make herself available; she served meritoriously (Udodiong, 2019).

Late Dora Akunyil's peace building role in Nigeria was evidenced in her promotion of cultural heritage, which is almost destroyed by the prevailing wave of modernity and globalization. In contemporary Nigeria, indecent dressing among young ladies and married women is an issue of concern, not only in tertiary institutions but in the society at large. It has become an insult to our collective conscience due to the fact that it is extremely difficult to differentiate most ladies and women from prostitutes through their provocative mode of dressing (Oludayo & Anyaegbunam, 2015).

The most serious challenge late Akunyili faced was that of corruption, conflict of interest, and threat of lives and properties. Before becoming Director General of NAFDAC,

the counterfeiters were paying their way to bring in whatever they wanted to bring in. They threatened her with phone calls and even her husband and they nearly kidnapped her son from school. When they got very desperate, they even shot her as two assassination attempts were made on her life (Udodiong, 2019). They vandalized NAFDAC officials and facilities, and burned NAFDAC offices across the country in the space of five or six days. Late Prof. Dora Akunyili succeeded in curbing bribery and corruption in the agency. Moreover, she refused to shed corrupt employees in her domain. She sacked 300 members of staff, out of a total of 3,000 within six years. Even an intermediary, a trader, who the notorious fake drug dealers sent to bribe her with N500 million to relax in fighting against fake drugs was nearly imprisoned (Ujumadu, 2014). In the public sector of the Nigerian economy, a member of staff who fails to use his position to amass wealth to the detriment of the nation is often adjudged a failure who can never be rich again in life, while he who used the same to enrich himself is applauded and respected. But late Prof. Dora Akunyili never used her offices to enrich herself.

The fact that most drug counterfeiters come from her state was also a very big problem and the challenge of very poor laws in Nigeria. At a stage they carried that propaganda, that she was fighting her people. She was convinced that it was not a matter of tribe or religion. It was a matter of stopping people from circulating poison in the system. The laws were very non-deterrent. When people were convicted, the penalty was between 10,000 and 500,000 Naira, or three months to five years' imprisonment (Agbasi, 2019). Another serious challenge is sophistication in drug manufacturing—clandestine drug manufacturing, such that it is difficult to tell the difference between counterfeit and genuine. These counterfeiters actually use all of their technology in making sure that the copy is perfect, even though the drug may not contain anything.

In 2013, on her 59th birthday, she became ill and was diagnosed of cancer in United States, alas, she had cancer, the diagnosis of 1998 in Nigeria was right. She died in an Indian hospital on 7 June 2014 after a battle with uterine cancer. Her funeral took place on 27 and 28 August, and was attended by many dignitaries from within Nigeria and beyond, including President Goodluck Jonathan (2010 to 2015), the then Nigerian President, and a former Nigerian military ruler General Yakubu Gowon. Akunyili was laid to rest at Agulu in Anambra state (This Day, 2014).

Luisa Diogo's Peace Building Roles in Mozambique

Luisa Dias Diogo was born on April 11, 1958, in the Mágoè district in Tete province in the Central inland area of Mozambique. Until she was 12 years old, Diogo attended the Dona Maria Primary School in Tete City. Then she went to Tete Commercial School for two years before entering the Maputo Commercial Institute for high school. She was attending high school in 1975 when Mozambique became an independent state. Luisa Dias Diogo came of age in a time of liberating revolution and devastating civil war in the African nation of Mozambique. Though she saw her homeland ravaged by war, natural disasters, governmental corruption, disease, and bitter poverty, Diogo did not become hopeless or resigned. Instead, she studied economics and went to work in the government's Ministry of Planning and Finance, where she could have a direct influence on her country's economy. Diogo's hard work, resourcefulness, and hard-headed business sense enabled her to advance rapidly in the

ministry, as she introduced many creative economic programmes to help relieve poverty and improve conditions in the newly-independent nation. She became not only Mozambique's first female Minister of Finance, but, in 2004, at the age of 45, was appointed the country's first female Prime Minister.

Diogo studied Economics in Maputo's Eduardo Mondlane University and had a Master's degree in Financial Economics from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in 1992. After completing her Masters in 1992, she worked for the World Bank as a programme officer in Mozambique. In 1993, after ably managing Mozambique's budget for several years, Diogo left her work in the government to take a job with the World Bank, an international financial institution with ties to the United Nations. Officially titled the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank provides grants, loans, and financial advice to developing nations.

In 1999, Diogo was promoted to Minister of Finance, tackling poverty, encouraging gender equality and economic growth, were milestone in her peace building roles in Mozambique. In July 2004, Mrs. Diogo officially launched an HIV/AIDS Emergency Programme, focused on educating citizens about AIDS prevention, providing income for people infected with HIV/AIDS, and giving assistance to people living with AIDS (Hazvinei, 2017). In 2012, Diogo was appointed by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to the high level panel on global sustainability, which was co-chaired by presidents Tarja Halonen of Finland and Jacob Zuma of South Africa. In the same year she became the chairperson of Barclays Bank in Mozambique (Eedes, 2014)

Diogo brought considerable change in her once war-torn country. Mozambique's economy slowly recovered under Diogo's visionary reforms. To help launch this new programme of economic development Diogo sought financial aid from World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the individual wealthy nations, such as the United Kingdom. She also secured numerous grants from international finance institutions (Emerson, 2014). She worked hard to obtain the aid in forms of grants rather than loans, hoping to stop the cycle of increasing debt in Mozambique. Under Diogo's administration, living conditions in Mozambique steadily improved as there were better standards of living in Mozambique during Diogo's leadership. The county's economic chaotic economy has stabilized (Emerson, 2014). The contacts she had made while working with the World Bank helped her in raising the money her country needed, and with the funds she raised, she began making improvements in agriculture, health and telecommunications. In 2004, she was named Africa's Finance Minister of the year and became the Prime Minister. She was also committed to improving education, literacy and health care and actively recruited more teachers and health workers (Hazvinei, 2017)

The apex of her peace building roles was witnessed in setting up citizen's consulting group called "poverty observatory" to oversee her government's progress. Diogo peace building role as the Prime Minister of Mozambique was demonstrated through her dedication to gender equality and women's empowerment which has been critical in addressing hunger, poverty and the global gender gap and the launching of "Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians" (MUNIPA) (Eedes, 2004). The MUNIPA network aims to strengthen advocacy and lobbying activities so that policies and legislations are adopted favourable to gender equality and women's empowerment. Her central objective was to fight against

“absolute poverty” as it is an index of uprising and war. She loudly declared “Democracy in Mozambique is irreversible” (Emerson, 2014).

Luisa Diogo of Mozambique was confronted with other serious challenges in addition to the political problems in Mozambique. Mozambique is an African society deeply affected by the extremes of weather that are common in south-eastern Africa. During the early years of independence, Mozambique suffered severe damage from floods, which destroyed food crops, leaving much of the population in extreme poverty. The same was the case during Diogo’s rule in Mozambique. After the civil war, the country’s infrastructure: roads, bridges, power and communication systems had been demolished. Seventy per cent of the education system and sixty per cent of the health system had been destroyed during the conflict and the nation faced a dire shortage of food and medical supplies.

The new terror that became a daily life in Mozambique during the 1980s and afterwards as doctors discovered a deadly virus called AIDS, which was sweeping the African continent south of the Sahara Desert. The spread of HIV/AIDS in Mozambique was the most challenging in Diogo’s government as it was reported that five hundred citizens were infected of the virus on a daily basis.

Catherine Panza’s Peace Building Roles in Central African Republic

President Catherine Samba-Panza came to the presidential office on January, 2014. Her rise to power came after the former president, Michel Djotodia, was forced to step down amidst international pressure. Djotodia himself had only been in office since 2013 when the north-eastern Seleka rebel alliance, which he led ousted President Franisois Bozize. The on-going clashes hamper efforts to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate fighters. The conflict was also being complicated by the fragmentation and proliferation of militias that are motivated not only by antagonism towards rival groups but also by criminality and lawlessness.

With the state imploding and no president in place, the international community scrambled to set up a semblance of government. In January 2014, a transitional government was created, headed by Catherine Samba-Panza. It had no functioning police, army or judicial officials and was forced to rely on international peace keepers for security. Its main function was to pave a way for elections. Samba-Panza, the country’s first woman president, faced so many problems. As a result of insecurity, she prioritized addressing security, humanitarian and economic concerns.

Catherine Panza peace building roles were fore mostly established in her victory speech, the mother of the nation called on “my children” to lay down their arms and declared: “From today, I am the president of all Central Africans”. Her call for national dialog was another milestone of her peace building in Central African Republic (Marrison, 2017). The government of Samba-Panza began consultations to broadly engage the civil society, armed rebels and politicians in order to address the issues of continuing violence (Lunda, 2018).

The Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation was held in May 2015, to set a framework for Central African Republic transition: laying out plans for disarmament, demobilisations and reintegration (DDR), election timelines, transitional justice, and economic development (Marrison, 2017). Samba-Panza’s approach to peace-building in Central African Republic was as well to create inclusive government and processes,

incorporating representatives from all major ethnic and religious groups and primary militant groups. She stated that, “Violence has been inscribed on the mind and in the hearts of our people for so long,” and that it is necessary to “disarm the hearts and disarm the minds” for national cohesion (Lombard, 2016).

Samba knowing well that one of the factors prolonging conflicts in Africa is the availability of small arms, Catherine Samba-Panza’s peace therefore ordered for disarmament through voluntary means or use of force as it would be dangerous to go to elections without an active disarmament programme in place. This was a crux of her peace building role in order to end the circle of conflicts in Central African Republic. Samba’s interim government also employed United Nations peace keepers, the French, European and international troops had the mandate to disarm the guerrilla group and pledged to strengthen the mission’s mandate and increase humanitarian funding. Catherine Samba-Panza focused on long-term and inclusive development and peace-building. This means that women must be at the heart of rebuilding processes, including expanding healthcare infrastructure, helping displaced communities return to their places of origin (Marrison, 2017). Above all, Samba’s outstanding contribution to peace building in her time of presidential office was the peaceful elections held between December 2015 and February 2016 as she kept her commitments, particularly not to run again for president (Lunda, 2018).

The Central African Republic interim government led by Catherine Samba-Panza faced the challenge of organising elections within the next few months of her administration. The renewed fighting in Bangui led to the postponement of elections that had been scheduled in October, 2014. But the government was under international pressure to conduct election before its mandate expiration on 31st December, 2014. On the other hand, however, the renewed fighting highlighted the on-going insecurity in the country, a situation that is only likely to be further tested by the holding of elections.

Samba-Panza administration struggled to keep law and order. Much of the conflict has been inter-communal and coded along religious terms, with Christian communities pitted against Muslim. However, Samba-Panza claimed that the bouts of violence were a deliberate attempt to derail the elections. Samba-Panza faced challenges to her presidency on various forms - including from the rebels and the militia. The relentless militias were not the only challenge to the transitional or interim government as Central Africans have occasionally protested at the interim regime’s continuation, and some rebel-backed political parties accused the government of trying to hold on to power.

Another challenge that stirred the face of Catherine Samba-Panza’s administration was the absence of trained army or police force to guarantee the country’s peace and development. This made it difficult to enforce law and order in Central African Republic as a national army is essential for the sovereignty of any state. Despite the United Nations strong mandate, the warring groups have managed to rearm themselves because of their neighbouring countries such as Sudan and South Sudan, are also experiencing conflict. This bolsters the illegal arms trade. Finally, political and financial constraints were other factors militating against the transitional government of Catherine Samba (Lombard, 2016).

Professor Irshad Manji's Peace Building Roles in Uganda

Irshad Manji was born in the year 1968 in Uganda. Manji graduated from University of British Columbia with an Honours Degree. Being an excellent student, she won the 'Governor General's Silver Medal, for top humanities graduate, in the year 1990. After graduating from the university, she started working as a Legislative Aide in the Canadian Parliament. Manji also worked as Press Secretary in the Ontario Government and Speechwriter for the Leader of the New Democratic Party. In 1992, at the age of 24, she became National Affairs Editoralist for 'The Ottawa Citizen'. In the late 1990s, she produced and hosted QT: Queer Television for City TV, based in Toronto. In the show, she also laid special emphasis on the lives of gay people in the Islamic world. She has written many articles and has even addressed audiences like United Nations Press Corps. Irshad is a Canada-based Muslim author, who is also a feminist, educator, journalist and activist, an advocate of a reformist interpretation of Islam. She is a well-known critic of traditional mainstream Islam. Manji is troubled by how Islam is practiced today and by the Arab influence on Islam that took away women's individuality and introduced the concept of group honour. Irshad Manji is known for being a critic of radical Islam as well as the orthodox interpretations of the Qur'an. The author believes in more liberal views in Islam and advocated the revival of *ijtihad* i.e, critical thinking in Islamic tradition. In fact, she has also founded an international charitable organisation known as Project Ijtihad, the organization aims at creating a network of Muslims who believe in a liberal reform of Islam. In 1997, she released her first book 'Risking Utopia: On the Edge of a New Democracy' and later "The Trouble with Islam Today. In her book, Manji, calls herself a "Muslim Refusenik": Someone who refuses to "join an army of robots in the name of God" (Manji, 2005). In her 2001 book, "Allah, Liberty and Love", Manji also calls herself a Muslim pluralist, she writes about the occupations of both Israeli soldiers and Arab oligarchs, asserting that each occupation needs to be fought non-violently (Manji, 2006).

Manji is currently director of the Moral Courage Project at New York University. The goal of this programme is to teach young leaders to challenge political correctness, intellectual conformity and self-censorship (Manji, 2003). She is also founder and president of Project Ijtihad, a charitable organization promoting a "tradition of critical thinking, debate and dissent" in Islam (Manji, 2019).

Manji's peace building roles have been majorly on the Islamic world; the traditional doctrine of Islam and their treatment on women. In her book, "The Trouble with Islam Today", Manji has taken an advocacy role on the inferior treatment of women in Islam so as to improve the lives of women for future generations, advocate for peace in Israel and the Arab world. In her book, "Allah, liberty and love", Manji paved a path for Muslim and non-Muslims to transcend the fears that stop so many from living with honesty to God, the fear of offending others in a multi-cultural world as well as the fear of questioning Islamic communities. She showed how to reconcile faith with freedom and thus discover the Allah of Liberty and love. She wrote the book, "Don't Label Me" in the year 2019.

Her challenge started in her early years in Madarassa (Islamic religious school) where she was expelled for asking too much questions yet she did not give up. Most of her books have been banned in most Islamic communities as she is being known for being a critic of

radical Islam as well as the orthodox interpretation of the Qur'an. Her books have aroused criticism from both Islamic and non-Islamic worlds.

Bochra Bel Haj Hmida's Peace Building Roles in Tunisia

Bochra Bel Haj Hmida is a Tunisian lawyer and activist. Bochra Belhaj Hmida was born in Zaghouan Tunisia. She holds a graduate degree in Law. She is the co-founder and former president of the Tunisian Association of Democratic women (L' Association tunisienne des femmes démocrates (AFTD)) from 2004 to 2008. She began her political engagement at the end of the 1970's. In 1989, she created AFTD over which she presided between 1994 and 1998. She is a vocal proponent of the code of personal status (CSP), a set of progressive laws that granted the women the right to education, suffrage, as well as divorce and prohibited forced marriage and polygamy. The Association of Democratic Women of Tunisia (ATFD) was officially founded on the 6th of August 1989 (Hjima 2018). It is an independent feminist organisation and an autonomous activist women's organisation based in Tunisia that is dedicated to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the transformation of patriarchal attitudes, the defence of women's acquired rights, the participation of women in all aspects of political and civil rights and criticises Muslim influence on society, a lack of democracy and violations of women's right. It defends women's rights and aims at achieving equality among genders. Its actions focus on the eradication of violence against women and on the promotion of women's sexual, economic, social and cultural rights. It judges the development of women's rights in Tunisia according to international standards like the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979).

The ATFD also works with other Tunisian and international organization both governmental and non-governmental, to increase awareness of domestic violence and provides services to a larger sector of the population. In 2004 the association was one of initiators behind the initiative of sexual harassment law in Tunisia. The organisation also played an important role in the Tunisian Revolution in 2011. They fought to have election lists that keep gender quotas in mind for the Constituent Assembly of Tunisia. They also lobbied to have gender equality to put into all new laws. In 2008, the association won the prize for human rights of the Republic of France (Prix Simone de Beauvoir pour la liberté des femmes) (Hjima, 2018). The main objectives of the organisation are: the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the development of Tunisian Legislation that promotes gender equality, women's active participation in public sphere and politics, women's labour rights, focused on women who lost their employment due to trade union militancy or for reasons of sexual harassment (Hjima, 2018). The organization has fought against domestic violence and sexual harassment, fought for women's right to equal inheritance, sexual rights and rights related to motherhood (Tunisian Human Right, 2011).

African Women and Peace- Building: An Analysis

From these analyses above, it is pertinent to note that these selected women have contributed greatly to peace building in Africa. Politically, these African women have made impacts as presidents, heads of state, prime ministers, ministers of finance and other significant positions. Ellen Johnson's provisions of infrastructural facilities, restoring and consolidating democracy in Liberia, Luisa Diogo's setting up of "poverty Observatory" to checkmate her

government in Mozambique, this to a large extent regulated her government in Mozambique and prevented uprising that may lead to war. Catherine Panza's call for national dialogue, ensured that each ethnic groups were represented and issues concerning the deep rooted conflict in Central African Republic was peacefully settled. The inclusion of women in Bangui Forum and her order of disarmament voluntarily or by means of force demonstrated in Mozambique highlighted women's peace building roles in Africa as the oppression and exclusion of women can lead to structural violence. Economically, African women have made huge success in Africa. They have introduced economic policies that have salvaged Africa from poverty thereby building peace. These economic policies include: Luisa Diogo's sourcing financial aids in forms of grants from World Bank, IMF and other financial institutions, and Ellen Johnson's lifting of international sanctions against Liberians crushing external debt. Of course recycling debt of a country leads to poverty and human as these are features of structural violence

Socially, Irshad Manji of Uganda and Bochra Bel Haj Hmida of Tunisia have played advocacy roles on issues concerning women in Africa. They employed their intellectual prowess to challenge the status quo of relegation of women to the background in African societies. They have advocated for transformation of patriarchal norms, liberal practice of Islamic religion, promotion of gender equality in Africa, elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, women's active participation in politics nationally and internationally etc as this will lead to peace in Africa. On the other hand, Ellen Johnson's implementation of equal rights for women, freedom of speech, right to free universal and elementary education are reckoned with. This is because oppression of women can lead to structural violence which can also lead to war. Health-wise, Ellen Johnson's eradication of Ebola in Liberia, Luisa Diogo's fight against HIV/AIDS virus in Mozambique and Akunyili's fight against adulterated drugs in Nigeria are milestones of their peace building roles in health in Africa knowing fully well that when health is absent, wealth becomes useless.

Finally, despite the hurdles these selected African women faced, they made impacts in their various country's governance in Africa where they have been actively involved and are worthy of emulation as they were determined to make a difference. The place of education cannot be over-emphasised in the lives of these African women, they were greatly informed through education. Education is therefore essential in the lives of prospective African Women Leaders. Economic power was also vital as evidenced among these female African leaders, they were not just educated, they were also economically buoyant and these helped them greatly in the achievements of their selfless service in their various countries.

Conclusion

Four international conferences on women have been held –Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi, Egypt (1985) and Beijing, China (1995) - as such African women had reasons to expect change following a much- heralded global conference that set ambiguous targets to transform the lives of women across the world. African women like their counterparts everywhere are taking stock of progress and asking to what extent promised reforms have been implemented. They are also examining why progress has been limited in many countries and are seeking ways to overcome the obstacle.

The United Nations Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women has emphasised the move on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979). In Africa, women have made significant strides in the political arena over the past few years. The African Union took a major step by promoting gender parity in its top decision-making positions.

However, women in some countries have moved into positions of political influence. In South Africa and Mozambique, for example, women hold 30 per cent of the seat in parliament. In some countries, the presence of women in parliament has made a difference in the adoption of gender sensitive policies because of pressure from women, some countries now have affirmative active policies such as quotas, to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. In South Africa, women Parliamentarians succeeded in pressuring various pieces of legislation such as those legalizing abortion, countering domestic violence and ensuring child support. In Uganda, women parliamentarian helped to adopt legislation in making rape a capital offence. In 2003 following a long delay, Mozambique passed a family law considered pivotal for the emancipation of women in that country.

More than two decades after Beijing, China's Women Conference this review called attention to many areas where women's equality is still not a reality: continuing high rates of violence against women in all parts Africa, gender inequality in employment, lack of sexual and reproductive health rights and a lack of equal access under the law of the land and property.

Recommendations

- In Africa, many factors impede the participation of women. One initial step to address these myriads of factors is to address harmful cultural and religious practices against women; inheritance, forced marriage, widowhood practices etc.
- Furthermore, there is a great need for girl child education in Africa as this will enable African women to know their rights, release them from the shackles of political apathy and help them to contribute their quota to their various societies.
- There should be a more implementing law on the participation of women in all levels of government in African countries and internationally.
- Finally, there should be a link or network of women locally, regionally and internationally of incumbent and formal female heads of state/government as well as other prominent women leaders and other sphere of human endeavours to enable them share their experiences and encourage other women; such as United Nations women and council of women world leaders (an international Network of Current and former women Presidents and Prime Ministers whose mission is to mobilize the high-level women leaders globally for collective action on issues of critical importance to women and equitable development.

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