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## **‘A woman’s courage’**

**By Nina Sivertsen**

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### **Introduction: Eavesdropping on the lives of others....**

‘...every human life is connected to the hard work and sacrifice of a woman’ (Anderson, 2006, p. 13). It occurred also to me that every human life is connected to a woman’s story, and it made me think of my great-grandmother, the midwife.

As an adult I listened to my grandfather who described her as: “That bird was not afraid of getting her feet wet!” He explained that often the little fjords she visited to deliver a baby did not have sufficient docks where the boats could access land, so by careful calculation when the boat hit the ebb-tide amongst the rocks at the edge of water and land, the fishermen literally threw the midwife across the boat’s gunwale and she would jump without hesitation, straight into the ice water and then waddle ashore, wringing her woollen socks, catching her *doctor’s bag* with all her equipment that the fishermen threw after her, and finally delivering a baby! According to my grandfather, she was a very determined lady. Her catchphrase was recognised by respectful fishermen and mothers: *‘If god is willing and the weather permits – this child will see the light of day by the help of my hands’*.

Elise Myreng was a sea-Sámi midwife whose life was lived at a time when the Norwegian assimilation policy, Norwegianization, was at its peak. This is a story about her – a success story, according to the Norwegian government’s assimilation policy. The policy said to relinquish her Sámi identity, and become a Norwegian. She did. She gained access to a good life; well educated, with a solid profession and a wonderful family. “Look at her now”, they said. “Without our well-meaning policy in place, she would never have amounted to the

strong midwife that she was. She would not have succeeded in life. She would have continued her life in a poverty stricken home, never amounting to anything, but to be a poor Sámi”. So they said.

Indigenous midwives’ stories and stories of Indigenous mothers’ birthing traditions have been documented in many corners of the world (Cosminsky 1976; Epoo et al. 2012; Lang & Elkin 1997; Sargent 1989; Terry & Calm-Wind 1994). The collection of Aboriginal mothering stories by Lavell-Harvard and Lavell (2006) and the Sámi birth stories gathered in the book *Eyemother* (Hanson et al. 2010) not only tell of the wisdom gained from generations, they tell of multiple ways that colonising forces have disrupted the practices and bonds of Indigenous mothering, and argue that the survival of all Aboriginal people can be attributed to the strength and resilience of Aboriginal women passing on knowledge and strength through generations in their roles as mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters. In spite of the assimilative efforts by both church and state, the historical persistence of the Aboriginal culture is attested to women’s resistance (Lavell-Harvard & Lavell 2006) illustrated by a proverb ‘a nation is not conquered until the hearts of its women are on the ground...’ (Lavell-Harvard & Lavell 2006, p. viii).

But what happens when a woman ceases to resist? What happens when her heart is on the ground? What follows conformity to the policies? Elise presumably stopped resisting and did what so many others did, both before and after her time; she did what the government said was best for her; she assimilated; erased her Sámi identity and became Norwegian. Did that make Elise less Sámi? The heart of the matter is that despite whatever identity Elise adopted, the truth is she was a Sámi. The suffering may have been widespread amongst those who were in opposition to the assimilation policies – but probably even more deeply felt, not to

mention even more traumatic, amongst those who tried most eagerly to adapt to the assimilation pressure (Minde 2005).

Most of the Indigenous midwives tales and mothering stories are written from a perspective of resistant Aboriginal women, women identifying openly with being Aboriginal (Anderson 2006; Lavell-Harvard & Lavell 2006; Simpson 2006). In fact, in the 16 stories collected by Lavell-Harvard and Lavell (2006) about Aboriginal mothering, the women were all labelled as strong Aboriginal women, resistant and as survivors. But what about the Indigenous women who adapted to the assimilation pressure? Where are their stories? Who is going to tell their stories? Will they be told with pride? Are these women's stories not told because we are not so proud of them? Perhaps they do not fit into the 'survivor' mould? Are these women seen as 'weak'? As 'traitors'? Or even 'less Indigenous'? The answer is, 'no', they should not be. Most Indigenous peoples experienced colonisation and assimilative processes in some form in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; we just have not heard yet the stories of the people who assimilated and adapted to the new, different lifestyles. However, they are no less important. They are part of Indigenous peoples' history everywhere. Elise is one of these women. She is one of the Indigenous midwives who adapted to the assimilation policy, and her story is important to tell. The expression of Elise's experience as a midwife is of importance because it provides yet another viewpoint of the 'oppressed', and Lewis (2003 as cited by Lavelle-Harvard & Lavelle 2006) drawing on the 1972 work of Freire argues that 'memories of violation and exploitation are pedagogically powerful', and Lavelle-Harvard and Lavelle (2006, p. 4) claim sharing stories 'have the potential to expose the oppressive ways in which our society is organised'.

Stories of people who assimilated is a chapter not yet told, however I argue that, these stories are an integral part of the cultural history of all Indigenous peoples and that it is necessary to



tell these stories as assimilation is a part of Indigenous history in a global context

### **Postcolonial feminist method**

In need of a method to tell Elise's story, I chose one that aligned with my beliefs and chose a postcolonial feminist lens. It provided me with the opportunity to delve into the messy and often unacknowledged area of power, privilege and oppression revealed in the story of Elise. Power, social change, gender and culture are central to the research inquiry and interpretation. The postcolonial feminist method opens up time and space to promote and interpret marginalised stories. Women's stories are valuable and need to be recorded (Gluck 1979; Gluck & Patai 1991; McCooey 2006). If we want to continue to question, challenge and change the structure of power imbalances, employing a feminist method is crucial.

However, I realised that there was a distinct separation between feminist and postcolonial feminist biography. Although resurgence has occurred in Indigenous writing, they have failed to gain space and status in public memories (Jones-Bamman 2001). Making space for Indigenous feminism, Eikjok (cited by Kuokkanen 2009) has highlighted how Indigenous women experienced a second wave of colonialism when post WWII, their central role in their communities was compared to that of the Western housewife. The assumption was that their history was the same.

In Australia, Larissa Behrendt, discusses the importance of the difference in history between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women and argues that white women were complicit in the oppression of black women. She also argues how anthropologists have ignored how Aboriginal women's and men's societies were different, but women still had an autonomous world of rituals and secret business which men were not allowed to witness or know

(Behrendt 1993). Moreton-Robinson (2000), talks about Indigenous feminism, feminist politics of difference, race, colour and identity in Australia and New Zealand. Also, Sally Morgan's (1987) story of her growing awareness of her family's Aboriginal heritage, followed by her search for an Aboriginal identity, is very relevant for the dilemma of Sámi identity today and the reclaiming of this.

Sámi Mari Boine represents a strong music persona, both in Scandinavia, but also on a world basis. Her songs are rooted in her experience of being a despised minority and she sings in a traditional folk style, using the yodelling 'yoik' voice, with a range of accompanying instruments and percussion. Although a Sámi musician, she was not always outspoken about her roots. Boine was not part of the political awakening in Sámiland in the 1970s Norway. On the contrary, her biography tells of a woman ashamed of being Sámi, and she even spoke Norwegian to her first child. This dilemma of women, feminism and Indigenousness, and how gender differs from Indigenous context compared to white feminist analysis.

Studying gender roles within Indigenous societies may offer an important method to determine the origins of society's oppressive views towards women. Feminists agree that gender discrimination against women occurs throughout all Western cultures. However, if one can examine the gender roles of Indigenous societies, one may reach a greater level of understanding concerning these roles on a global scale. In most Indigenous groups, women were not devalued until the colonisation of the group by the Europeans began (Brownlie & Korinek 2012; Gunn 1986; Miller & Chuchryk 1996; Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba 1999; United Nations 2010).

### **Reprogramming society!**

Telling Elise's story, in itself, is an extraordinary accomplishment, but it has the added purpose of contributing to changing the understanding that determines how societies define the roles of women. Campbell (2004, p. 14) highlighted that 'the only way to open up the full scope of opportunities for women, is to reprogram the way people see gender roles'. Elise's story contributes to our understanding of women. Everyday heroines are described as 'neither a mythological character nor a super-heroine from a comic book' rather; a real life heroine is a 'human being, an imperfect person with strengths and weaknesses' (Forster 2004, p. 18). We have seen Elise celebrated as a heroine by the participants in this project who emphasized her extraordinariness, and are reminded that women do amazing things, and Campbell (2004) argues that forgetting them will be a loss to all. Elise's story reveals the dilemma of Sámi identity understood through generations. We can learn from Elise's life's work to exhibit tolerance, grace and understanding of *otherness*.

People knew her as a Norwegian. She was an educated midwife who dedicated her life to her profession; a travelling midwife of the State. This project demonstrates that whilst Elise was recognised as Norwegian, nevertheless she maintained her Sámi heritage. Participants' stories show clearly that Elise occupied dual identities as Sámi *and* Norwegian simultaneously, and that it appears she did this in order to effectively continue her 'soul work' as midwife, family woman, and community advocate, in a difficult social and political climate. She continued her practice with a Norwegian identity, but clinically posit between the Norwegian and the Sámi. And although a Norwegian attitude publically, we see from the informants testimonies that she continued to convey information and knowledge about Sámi to clients, family and community members. Today I feel comfortable saying that Elise was a Sámi midwife. Not a success story in the eyes of the assimilation policy, but a success story

nonetheless; in that the government did *not* achieve to erase the Sámi in Elise. The story of Elise uncovered by this project provides a beginning documentation of Sami experiences that have been silenced from Norway's public history.

The stories told by the participants in this project reflect an unspoken, accumulated wealth of knowledge about women's birth experiences and their children delivered by Elise through generations in sea-Sámi areas along northern coastal areas of Norway. As the informants in documenting Elise's story revealed the experiences of the mothers and fathers around pregnancy and childbirth, so did the stories embody values and practices that are important to women (and men) and illustrate a northern way of life. Hanson et al. (2010) affirms today's desire to revitalize Sámi culture such as re-discovering Sámi birthing traditions. The stories remembering and surrounding Elise as a Sámi midwife are now documented for future generations to enjoy and contribute to women's history, women's health, family health and midwifery in a cultural or an Indigenous people's perspective.

### **Telling stories about courageous women and heroines**

'They planted the trees so we could enjoy the shade', said The Quiet Heroine:

*In virtually all societies, leadership is gendered masculine. This is not because women do not lead, but because the positions that define leadership have been dominated by men. When women occupy these positions they are not seen to belong there in the same way that men are seen to naturally do. Rather than revise their predispositions about women and leadership, people are more likely to find ways around the contradiction, for instance by seeing the woman leader as an anomaly. Her story may simply be forgotten, for, if women are not to be leaders, why do we need to keep their stories alive to inspire girls? (Campbell 2004, p. 13).*

It is important to give back to all of us the true story about the courage and endurance of Elise Myreng. Her story in itself is an extraordinary accomplishment, but it has a very serious

purpose. Of course her story entertains and inspires us, but more importantly such stories contribute to changing the understanding that determines how societies define the roles of women, and if we tell the stories of ‘women to defy the stereotypes, we contribute to changing the social landscape of how the world works’ (Campbell 2004, p. 14). Elise’s story is a great contribution to our understanding of women and a corrective to the standard histories. Celebrating this woman - by some referred to as a pioneer due to her strength to follow her own heart by pursuing education not normally undertaken by the women in her village in the early days of 1900s, and by some a heroine due to her contribution to society, women and life through a lifetime as a midwife - reminds us that women do amazing things, and it will be a loss if we forget them. Although times have changed, the story of Elise remains a constant; a story about the quiet heroine to the people who knew her.

*In uniting with our history, we become simultaneously connected with our power, our possibilities, and with the uniqueness and importance of our vision, this new appreciation allows us to say of the more limited view that society has of women (and of nurses and midwives): we will not bow down to it no longer (Ruth Abrams, origin unknown).*

Elise was tireless in her work as a midwife, and during her lifetime she worked with many of the people that nobody else wanted to help – poor, sick, outsiders, and people living where someone would think that no one would live - in remote and isolated places - she went there. Elise showed both warmth and firmness to people. She always confronted poor behaviour, at the same time gaining immense respect from everyone she encountered. She often took on people who no one else would touch.

I have an absolute appreciation of what she contributed toward all those people that she worked with, and towards the profession of nursing and midwifery. She engendered an immense spirit of cooperation, and this was rewarded her by her receiving the King of

Norway's Honorary Medal. We can learn from Elise's life's work, to exhibit tolerance, grace and understanding of *otherness*. She was a Sámi woman who assimilated – that is what makes her story unique and important.

### **Norway, colonisation and Norwegianization**

The story of the travelling arctic midwife, Elise, takes place in the northernmost county of Norway, Scandinavia – amongst the coastal areas and fjords. This is a vast geographical and often desolate area; also called the arctic wilderness of northern Norway, above the Arctic Circle. Lund, Brustad and Høgmo (2008) tell about the diversity of living conditions and the consequences of these on the health and rates of disease amongst people in this region. The climate in this area consists of blessed, mild summer months of June, July and August and a midnight sun that never sets. But the majority of the year is dominated by winter and the cold; complete darkness with sub-arctic temperatures of down to 40 below zero – only to again see a shaft of sunlight in late February. Sápmi stands for both the geographical area and a cultural landscape (Hanson et al. 2010), and it covers the area where Elise's lived. The Sápmi was gradually colonised by the Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Russian states. Colonisation of Sámi in Norway occurred between the years of 1600s up until 1800 (Minde 2003, 2005; Eidheim 1985, 1997; Jernsletten 1998; Niemi 1997). The Sámi are an Indigenous people who inhabit areas that stretch across these four countries. During this process of colonisation, the Sámi, the people of Sápmi, were exposed to Christianisation, oppression and harsh assimilation policies by these four governments. The Norwegian policies of colonisation were for a long time limited to the coastal areas, where Elise was born. This led to the coast Sámi people losing their native language and culture (Aikio, Aikio-Puoskari & Helander 1996; Amft 2000; Drivenes & Jernsletten 1994; Eidheim 1985, 1997; Gaski 1997a;

Jernsletten 1998; Kvernmo 1997; Minde 2003, 2004, 2005; Niemi 1997; Nymo 2007). It has also been argued that sea-Sámi people along the coastline were easier to Norwegianize because their lifestyle more closely resembled the Norwegian lifestyle with fishing and farming and it was to the coastal villages most settlers from the south came to work with the blooming fishing industry in mid 1900s, creating multi-ethnic societies. Mountain-Sámi were more distinct and closed societies, more isolated with their reindeer herding and nomadic lifestyle (Eidheim 1985; Lundby 2009; Minde 2003, 2005).

Because of the erasing of traditional life by the policy of Norwegianization, not much is known about the Sámi identity from this era (Hansen 2011; Lund, Brustad & Høgmo 2008). The rich history and culture of the Sámi population has suffered profoundly under the policy of assimilation instigated by the Norwegian state. Culture, identity and language have been lost. What is known is that this policy has had a profound impact on their health status.

Health statistics for people in northern Norway indicate that the Sámi population has the poorest health in Norway (Kvernmo 1997; Statistics Norway 2011). Access to health care is limited and based on geographical factors such as few roads and extreme difficulties with transportation, not to mention the harsh arctic climate. The embattled Sámi of northern Norway still struggle with an imported health care system run in a foreign language. When Ole Henrik Magga, formerly the head of Norway's Sámi Parliament, spoke to the International Congress on Circumpolar Health in June 2000, he stated that there are countless stories of fear and horror of experiences with this health care system; a health care system that has largely ignored Sámi language and culture, and struggles with retention of its workforce in an arctic, rural and remote climate (George 2000).

Health care in the north is largely dependent on the nurses and midwives who provide the care. The success of health personnel's work rests upon the individual, and in many cases, highly personal factors. These include, who they are, how they perceive their job, their position within the community, and their approach to Indigenous people.

### **Taking a history**

As a nurse I could not care for a patient without first obtaining a thorough health history, not to mention my ethical imperative to reflect. Likewise in order to investigate the history of Sámi - it is crucial to gain an understanding of our lives and first assess what has contributed to what we see today; the consequences of and the historical impacts on successive generations of the policy of assimilation (Taylor & Guerin 2010). History can impact on life and health, and in particular colonisation had an effect on Sámi peoples, traditionally characterised by feelings of powerlessness, inferiority and ethno-political apathy (Eidheim 1997).

Understanding the complex and at times problematic underpinnings of life in Finnmark County during, but also after, the assimilation era, is imperative to understanding Elise's story. Many Sámi learned to despise their heritage and identity as a result of the Norwegianization policies. An understanding that Sámi people often felt forced to choose between being Sámi or being Norwegian is significant in light of making sense of Elise's life and experiences.

Colonisation in Norway started with immigration from the south; taxation and destruction of natural resources were the dominant features of this early colonisation, and a sharp contrast to



the Sámi ecologically-rooted life-style (Kystmuseene 2011; Niemi 1997). The assimilation policy, also known as the Norwegianization contributed to the oppression of, and the erasing of Sámi culture, language and traditions (Minde 2005, Eidheim 1997; Sellevold 2002, 2011; Schanche 2002; Hanson et al. 2010; Kvernmo 1997, 2004). This policy was enforced by the Norwegian government for almost all of Elise's life. The assimilation policy lasted for over a century, from between 1850-1980. The policy was also referred to as *fornorskingspolitikk* by the Norwegian government– which directly translated means Norwegianisation; a policy directed towards the Sámi minority (Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2001, 2004). Over this period there were many directives and modifications to the policy:

- 1) **1850 Assimilation Policy starts**
  - a) **1850-1870 The transitional phase**
    - i) 1851 The Lapp Fund – *Finnfondet*
    - ii) 1852 Kautokeino riots
  - b) **1870-1905 The consolidation phase**
    - i) The great Finnish immigration
    - ii) The Lapp Fund increased and Norwegianisation measured tightened, from local control to stately control
    - iii) 1898 *Wexelsen Decree*: Boarding schools, abolishment of Sámi language and Sámi teachers
  - c) **1905-1950 The culmination phase**
    - i) 1915 Start of scientific research carried out on the Sámi: graves plundered and skulls and skeletal remains seized for research
    - ii) 1922-1975 *Statens Institut for Rasbiologi* – forced sterilisation of Sámi women
    - iii) 1931 The Finnmark Board - *Finnmarksnemden*
    - iv) Post WWII Modernisation
  - d) **1950-1980 The termination phase: Self-determination**
    - i) 1960s Sámi movement
    - ii) 1963 End of Wexelsen Decree
    - iii) 1964 The Sámi council (Norway)
    - iv) 1970-1980s: Revitalisation Process
      - (1) 1970s (early) Sámi Research Institute established
      - (2) 1975 WCIP
      - (3) 1979-1981 Alta Affair dispute marks the end of the assimilation policy
- 2) **1980 Assimilation Policy ends**
  - i) 1980 Sámi Rights Commission appointed
  - ii) 1980s (late) Sámi university college founded
  - iii) 1987 The Sámi Act
  - iv) 1988 Constitution amended to include Sámi people: Adoption of section 110a
  - v) 1989 Sámi parliament established
  - vi) 1990 ILO Convention No:169 ratified by Norway
  - vii) 2000 Sámi Peoples Fund – *Samefolkets Fond*

- viii) 2005 The Finnmark Act
- ix) 2007 UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

### **The assimilation policy's past and present**

*If it has taken 100 years to Norwegianize the Coast Sámi, then it will perhaps take another 100 years to make us Sámi again? (Beate Hårstad Jensen (29), Dagbladet 28 July 2001, as cited by Minde 2005, p. 6)*

The Norwegian government invested considerable money and effort in making Norwegian the universal language and culture, and the pressure on the Sámi was strongest from 1900 to 1940 (Eidheim 1985; Hansen 2011; Minde 2005; Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2004) stretched in time from 1850-1980 and illustrates the efforts made by the Norwegian state over more than 100 years to assimilate the Sámi (Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2001, 2004).

The policy was also influenced by the belief that ‘the Finnish Danger’ – *den Finske fare* – in the east required the forging of one national identity (Niemi 1997), as well as ideas around racial purity and superiority (Minde 2005; Sellevold 2011). The Norwegian Parliament created a special item in the national budget, termed *Finnfondet*, The Lapp Fund, to promote the teaching of Norwegian language and culture, and to ensure the ‘enlightenment’ of the Sámi people. This fund continued until 1920 (Minde 2005). After that, the *Wexelsen decree* in 1898 signalled the green light for this measure and prohibition of Sámi workers on ethnic grounds was accepted.

The early 1900s saw the Lapp Fund, which financed the Norwegianization measures, increased substantially. The reasons for this were still the fear of the Finnish Danger, but also

the fact that Norway's union with Sweden was dissolved and there was a strong national agitation happening. As Minde notes, new measures were introduced:

- *the building of several boarding schools around Finnmark county, aiming at isolating the pupils from their original environments*
- *the termination of courses in Sámi and Finnish at Tromsø seminar*
- *at the same time tuition scholarships for pupils with a Sámi or Kven background were abolished at the same school*
- *the authorities preferred teachers with a Norwegian background in Sámi and Kven areas, i.e. a work prohibition for Sámi and Kven in schools*
- *teaching methods designed to promote assimilation most efficiently were discussed at teachers' conventions and demonstrated by the school superintendent himself (Minde 2005, p. 14).*

In the culmination phase 'the measures previously launched were consolidated and ideologies were firmly cemented' (Eriksen & Niemi 1981 as cited by Minde 2005, p. 16). From the turn of the Century until World War II the cultural policy measures were escalated and further refined by adding new fields and means to implement the policy. An example involved the occupational inhibition - *Berufsverbot* – meaning that members of minority groups were not allowed to work or make claim to an occupation. Military surveillance of Sámi and Kven settlements was also implemented (Niemi 1997).

Between 1850 and 1940 scientists from the southern parts of Norway plundered Sámi burial grounds and churchyards in Finnmark in search of skulls for their research. The skulls and skeletal remains were brought to the anthropological department of the University of Oslo, the Schreiner Collection for the purpose of research. Interest in scientific research and racial biology was in vogue (Sellevold 2011). This is a sad phase of the history and although it occurred until the fairly recent times of the mid-1900s, today we see no more racial, genetic research without rigorous approval from the Sámi parliament and the government (Sellevold

2011).

During the late 1800s the colonial fascination with arctic peoples led to human zoos. In Germany and other places across the globe, exhibits of Sámi people next to their traditional tents, *lavvus*, weapons and taxidermised reindeer were displayed (Bancel, Blanchard & Lemaire 2000). Discriminatory and defamatory eugenics programmes exploring the genetic makeup of Sámi people alongside ethnographic photography of the Sámi was carried out (Larsen 2006). Sámi people were anatomically measured and photographed naked, Sámi graves were raided and Sámi women forcefully sterilised. All this was documented at the time by Scandinavian scientists trying to prove their noble races theories (Simma 2000). The State Institute for Racebiology – *Statens Institut for Rasbiologi* – continued their compulsory sterilisation project for Sámi women until 1975 (Museum of Dalarna 2007).

Post WWII the sea-Sámi material culture was lost when Finnmark was torched and during reconstruction, by the norms in society following the assimilation policies, it seemed more important to be Norwegian than Sámi (Lundby 2009). The reconstruction of the northern areas was a marked programme for modernisation. In Finnmark modern houses were built, and the Norwegian way of life was promoted as the way towards progress and modernity. Sámi was seen as old, ridiculous, and best left behind (Lundby 2009). Many northerners returned home after the war with mixed emotions. But not all; some chose to assimilate into the modern Norway. Many chose to reject their Sámi heritage. The census, taken in the village of Kvænangen, in 1930 and 1950 shows a dramatic decrease in Sámi inhabitants. In 1930 44% of the population were Sámi or *kvener* (Sámi from Finland). Twenty years later the number had decreased to 0.3% (Bjørklund 1985 as cited by Minde 2005, p. 9), even though the inhabitants were the same people. The post-war period was characterised by minority

problems in Norway. Many Sami did not dare apply for jobs outside their hometown. Racism along the coast of Finnmark was strong and northern Norway was compared with South Africa and the south of the United States of America for its racism (Eidheim 1985; Lundby 2009). Anthropologist Harald Eidheim revealed in 1958 that the Sámi in Finnmark were surrounded by racial prejudice.

The coastal Sámi population was strongly affected by stigmatisation and forced assimilation (Gaski 1997a; Minde 2005). The Sámi language was almost erased and replaced by Norwegian. Little of the traditional culture was left intact. During the 1960 the Sámi ethnopolitical movement started to gain ground. However, the sea-Sámi, were still seen as second-rate Sámi by some of the inland mountain Sámi people, for giving up on their culture (Gaski 1997; Minde 2005; Eidheim 1997).

The assimilation policy ended in 1980 with the occurrence of the Alta-affair when Elise was 89 years old. The conflicts between Sámi and the Nordic governments continued into the mid to late-20th century. The proposed construction of the hydropower dam in the 1960s and 1970s contained controversial propositions such as putting the village Máze and a cemetery under water. The Alta-affair resulted in the establishment of a committee to discuss Sámi cultural issues, and the Sámi Rights Committee addressing Sámi legal relations. The Sámi Right Commission proposed a democratically elected body for the Sámi, resulting in the Sámi Act of 1987. The Sámi Act stipulated the responsibilities and powers of the Norwegian Sámi Parliament, and was passed by the Parliament on 12 June 1987 and took effect on 24 February 1989 (Ministry of Justice and the Police and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development 2005).

### Elise, a woman midwife experiencing assimilation

Whilst many texts focus on the resistance, struggles and triumphs of Indigenous women to survive in the face of colonisation with the survival of all Aboriginal peoples attributed to the strength and resilience of these Aboriginal women (Lavell-Harvard & Lavell 2006), I argue that there is a chapter in Indigenous women's stories missing, namely that of Aboriginal women who did not openly resist, but assimilated and adopted lifestyles similar to that of the colonisers. This is the story of Elise. Her story is also part of Aboriginal cultural memory. Her Sámi-ness was silenced by the assimilation policy – in order to be a midwife, which she had fought long to be, she had to renounce her Sámi belonging and become Norwegian. When Watson (2001) argues that the autobiographies of Aboriginal women not only resist or rewrite dominant histories, but are also an avenue for social action, and opportunity for identification, dialogue and transformation, she is usually referring to women who resisted.

My argument is that those Aboriginal women who assimilate also provide avenue for social action, dialogue and transformation. Although it is a myth and a stereotypical assumption that one can identify Indigenous Australians for example, by looking at someone's skin colour (Eckermann et al. 2010; Taylor & Guerin 2010), Elise's story is distinct from 'black' or 'darker skinned' Indigenous peoples, because her 'whiteness' facilitated her assimilation. Assimilation translates into making similar or resembling – in many cases moving from political oppression to fitting in; a 'unidirectional process of becoming assimilated into the dominant category' (Jung 2009). Whiteness is embedded in privilege (van Riemsdijk 2010; Vassenden & Andersson 2011) and the word race posits realities of inequalities and domination and it is argued that the concept of assimilation is lacking in studies of whiteness (Jung 2009). It offers a theoretical touchstone for understanding how, for Elise, white

privilege *and* racialization intersected in the context of her midwifery practice during Norwegianization.

### **The power of assimilation**

Since the 1970s Sámi has come together with other ethnic minorities in a global cooperation founded; the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (Gaski 1993). Although Sámi draw on Indigenous scholarship and Black scholarship from outside Sámi boundaries, there is one significant difference; labelled the white Indians of Scandinavia, we are Indigenous, but not black; Sámi are white. Being of coloured ethnicity carries with it a history of prejudice from whites that is unique. Which is why Sámi is often met with suspicion, as noted by Kuokkanen in North America: 'Europe equals White and White equals the settler and colonizer – the well-known figure of 'the white man' (Kuokkanen 2006, p. 1).

In Norway the choice of identifying oneself as a Sámi is an individual one. The Sámi are fairer skinned than most other Indigenous people in the world. The Sámi do not differ very significantly from Norwegians, apart from subtle traits like facial bone structure and 'oblique' shaped eyes, yet in Norway everyone knows. This fairness and similarity to Norwegians, most likely aided in the perception of Elise's 'whiteness', but also contributed to the racialization of Sámi. Outside of Norway Sámi may not experience great prejudice, however prejudice based on culture, a conflict in spite of not because of this similarity, or lack of difference, creates, between the Sámi and the Norwegian people. One of the measurements for success with their Norwegianization process in the government's eyes was language. Amongst Sámi looks contributed to prejudice to a certain degree, but what more contributed was language. Sámi peoples' decision to adopt a Norwegian identity was illustrated of choosing to speak only the Norwegian language. Not speaking Sámi assured

everyone that the person in question really was not of Sámi descent because

*'in earlier times, non-Sámi would not even think of teaching their children the Sámi language, even if their families had been living in a Sámi area for generations. One of the things that non-Sámi bragged about was their own ignorance of the Sámi language' (Gaski 1993, p. 116).*

This was also the case for those Sámi who assimilated, such as Elise; most changed their language, hence camouflaged their 'Sámi-ness', showing just how powerful the Norwegianization policy was.

Also important to note is Alonso's argument of resistance and response; that loss of ethnicity, tradition and original substance can be lost during time - it is dependent on political power available to subordinated subjects to protect themselves from discrimination and exploitation, and reclaiming a lost identity (Alonso 1994). Elise, a Sámi woman's story, is contributing to decolonisation and a continuing transformation of the society.

Elise did not see the opportunity to stand up to the Norwegianization policy. She never reclaimed her Sámi identity, but quietly fought for women, children and continued to teach her family Sámi values. From the participants we hear how it is evident that Elise Myreng dealt with complex issues of marginalisation that we might consider contemporary yet she was negotiating, almost a hundred years ago; in the way she undertook her midwifery practice, in the way she viewed or practiced gender, and barriers arising from gender issues, and in the way she quietly stood up to the government's assimilation policies as they were trying to smother Indigeneity.

Principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness and synergy (Archibald 2008, p. 140) helped me to get to the *core* of making meaning with and



through Elise's story. Coming to know and use story work requires an intimate knowing that brings together heart, mind, body and spirit (Archibald 2008, p. 141), and it has been said that in order to know a story you must write it on your heart (Wickwire & Robinson 1989, p. 28). Stories are an important component of Indigenous knowledge systems, and are not only to be recounted and passed down, but they are also intended as tools for teaching. Elise's story is not only a documentation of a pioneer midwife of the north, but it also tells us about the context of her profession, her identity, culture and traditions in her practice. Her story teaches us how she experienced these challenges during that beginning phase of Norwegian midwifery, and contributes to bringing new knowledge about the role and status of northern life to light.

She faced a dilemma of a silenced Sámi identity, as she lived her life with an adopted Norwegian lifestyle, during the Norwegianization years and throughout her life. She said that she only did what she had to do. But my analysis can be different. It has called her a heroine and a pioneer. She broke the moulds. She did something remarkable. Secure in her identity as a midwife, she practiced ahead of time with her community oriented care and skills; practice, such as community nursing and midwifery we are only recently seeing implemented and suggested by leading health organisations such as the WHO (World Health Organization 2000a, 2000b). Although concealed, she quietly pushed the boundaries around Indigeneity and Sámi identity, by talking about things others did not at the time. She embraced Sámi knowledge and incorporated Sámi skills such as blood stopping by reading, and gladly worked with Sámi women, although no one else did at the time. No one talked about the Sámi or with the Sámi, but she did it. Although she never identified as Sámi publically, she taught her children and grandchildren Sámi values and respecting all the knowledge possessed by Sámi. That was perhaps her quiet way of embracing Sámi culture. Only today

are we seeing Indigenous knowledge appreciated and valued within health practices, and health practitioners are just barely starting to do so. From Elise's story we see the dilemma of Sámi identity understood through generations. Elise lived with a silenced Sámi identity and this project has explored why – perhaps answered by an assimilation policy at its peak during Elise's early lifetime – and the thesis have explored how she balanced life in between these two identities, both in her personal and professional lives. Her story has shown how Elise's dilemma of identity also has transcended generations and still we see some denying, or living with silenced, Sámi heritage. Perhaps Elise's story can contribute to a better understanding of today's Sámi identity issues, both outside Sámi circles, but also within.

Elise never reclaimed her Sámi background during her lifetime. Yet perhaps unknowingly, she was always an advocate for the Sámi people, Sámi women in particular. She ensured that traditional Sámi methods of midwifery were continued on and not erased completely by the process of medicalization and Norwegianization of Sámi lives. It is different today. I am one of those who is taking back something that I feel belongs to me. It has become very clear to me that I want to teach my children about whom we are and what we come from. I want my children to know that we are Sámi, so that they can feel proud and establish their own, secure identities. Discovering a Sámi family history and realizing that this Sámi background was not something you talked about, is recognizable by many. Many have used so much energy hiding a Sámi family heritage. You understand it better when you know that history, that background, why the mothers and grandmothers didn't want you burdened with that as it was a burden for many of them growing up. Still today, asking questions is not easy and denial is found most places. Denial, that for decades was like a blanket covering life in northern villages. Sámi was a word of taboo. To deny the Sámi identity was a survival strategy (Nergård 1994).

Elise's story was both her own, personal story, and a story that led to others quest for identity. I will leave it up to the reader to ponder their own backgrounds, what it means to them, and decide where they best belong. Her story is an inspiring tale of bravery and determination, illustrating the classic theme of the triumph of the human spirit in the face of adversity. May the story of Elise Myreng and the courageous path she chose inspire you, as it has me.

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**Breaking the SILENCE:**  
**Gathering and disseminating the most recommended practices around the world to prevent,  
heal, and end sexual violence in Latin America**

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*“I have the RIGHT... to heal”*

This paper describes the experience of a partnership between organizations in New York City that has developed a model of sexual violence prevention at the community level, which can provide useful lessons for similar models to be adapted in Latin America and comparable local settings.

Sexual violence is more than numbers, are names and faces. Describing the fear, shame, guilt, hopelessness and pain that all the survivors suffer deserves much more than a paper. I honor their incredible strength and courage by trying to bring awareness and attention through these few pages.

Sexual violence is a silent epidemic and also a cause and a consequence of many social problems. Sexism, racism, classism and other related societal phenomena are inextricably connected and overlapped with sexual violence in a variety of contexts. It is also a crime and *“a serious public health and human rights problem with both short- and long-term consequences on... physical, mental, and sexual and reproductive health... it is a deeply violating and painful experience for the survivor”*, according to the World Health Organization.

We need to stop this epidemic that goes from generation to generation. We have to **BREAK THE SILENCE** to start the healing process in our communities: for the survivors, for the ones that are not here any more and for the ones that sadly are coming. It is through this healing process that we can start contributing to an enduring social change.

**Key words:** sexual violence; survivors; prevention; healing; empowerment; social norms; Latin America; most recommended practices.

## **Sexual violence: a silent epidemic with names and faces**

In 2004, I counseled teenage girls survivors of sexual abuse who lived in a shelter after being abandoned by their parents or removed from their homes because of the abuse. The shelter was located in a wealthy neighborhood of Guadalajara, Mexico and the neighbors were upset and trying to get rid of the place not only because the house wasn't in a very good shape due to the few money available to sustain the girls, but also because they were low-income kids that had been sexually abused and these "weird cases" were a shame and didn't give a good image of the area.

In that moment, overwhelmed by the injustice, I realized that sexual and domestic violence are the first encounter that many children have with oppression and trauma, which is why this is a problem to eradicate if we really want to build a better world. However, sexual violence is a taboo and nobody wants to talk about it. Period. Not the government, not the media, not the teachers, not the parents... creating a continuum veil of ignorance that reinforce the same myths and stereotypes that allow these to happen and re-victimize the survivors over and over again.

One of the consequences of ignorance starts with a simple statement: nobody knows exactly what it is. Sexual violence is about power and control and its roots are founded in the patriarchal culture. Ending sexual violence, its causes and consequences requires an integral approach where everybody is involved. We need to generate not only quality and holistic care to survivors and their families, but also long-term, sustainable, people-empowering preventive strategies based on changes in social norms that perpetuate sexual violence. This of course should include governments assuming their responsibilities of ending the criminal impunity that comes from social and political tolerance to this problem.

The Rape Crisis (England and Wales), a network of independent member Rape Crisis Centres, defines sexual violence in a very accurate way as *"any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many different kinds of sexual violence, including but not restricted to: rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape within marriage / relationships, forced marriage, so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and ritual abuse. Sexual violence can be perpetrated by a complete stranger, or by someone known and even trusted, such as a friend, colleague, family member, partner or ex-partner. **Sexual violence can happen to anyone** (regardless race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, gender identity...). **No one ever deserves or asks for it to happen. 100% of the responsibility for any act of sexual violence lies with its perpetrator. There is no excuse for sexual violence – it can never be justified, it can never be explained away and there is no context in which it is valid, understandable or acceptable.**"*

In the United States about every two minutes a person is sexually assaulted. One in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18 (direct services providers estimate that the real number is one in three children). A new report "Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action" launched on January 2014 by The White House Council on Women and Girls provides an overview of the problem:

*"Women and girls are the vast majority of victims: nearly 1 in 5 women... and 1 in 71 men... have been raped during their lives. Most victims know their assailants. The vast majority (nearly 98%) of perpetrators are male. Young people are especially at risk: nearly half of female survivors were raped before they were 18, and over one-quarter of male survivors were raped before they were 10. Repeat victimization is common: over a third of women who were raped as minors were also raped as adults. Other populations are also at higher risk... including people with disabilities, the LGBT*

*community, prison inmates (of both genders)... the homeless” and undocumented immigrants. Rape is the second most expensive crime, behind only murder “...the existing research indicates that the costs are great... ranging from \$87,000 to \$240,776 per rape.”*

The United States statistics reflects the sexual violence situation around the world: few research done and data coming from sources like police reports, clinical numbers and non-governmental organization that doesn't reflect the heinous reality. Due to the stigma and victim blaming, sexual assault is one of the most under reported crimes and, even when is reported, only 3% of perpetrators end in prison. In some countries, like Mexico and other from Latin America, the numbers are similar or worst and it is even harder to obtain indicators.

Mexico is number one in sexual violence against women according to comparative research by the United Nations in 2010, with 44% of women sexually assaulted and followed by Costa Rica with 41%, Czech Republic 35% and Denmark 28%. In Nicaragua, assaulted girls under 19 years old represent 50% of registered pregnancy cases (Health Department). In Argentina, 54% of psychological therapies are related to sexual abuse or incest (Red en Lucha contra la violencia, abuso y trata). And in Bolivia, only 4% of lawsuit results with a sentence to the perpetrator (Defensoría del Pueblo).

Despite these devastating numbers there are almost no local agencies working on prevention and there are only a few saturated trying to take care of the survivors. Laws are incredible well written but due to the lack of political will they have not been translated into effective public policies. This in turn reinforces a policy context of generalized lack of consistent and reliable statistics, insufficient attention for the victims, insignificant budgets for prevention (including treatment options for rapists), and the loss of hope for survivors to gain access to justice.

*“We believe sexual violence is a problem. But it is not inevitable”*

### **“I have the RIGHT...” campaign and intervention project**

Project Envision Coalition NYC is a community-based collective, working in collaboration with the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, local service providers, business, and individual, aimed at changing the social norms that promote and perpetuate sexual violence by community mobilization for a multi-level change.

In 2007, the New York Department Of Health recognized sexual violence as a health problem and started to assign budget to focus not only in assist survivors but also on primary prevention. Although now struggling with decreasing funding, the State has a Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence Program in virtually every hospital offering great advocacy services, free group and individual therapy, and primary prevention programs. Even though the numbers are still high, like everywhere in the world, people have more chances to find resources that can help them to make that horrible experience less harmful and move forward from victim to survivor.

In 2009, the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault (NYAASA) along with eleven rape crisis programs within New York City conducted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) aimed to determining the beliefs within the South Bronx, Williamsburg, Brooklyn and the Lower East Side community about root causes of sexual violence and prevention strategies that will hopefully have an impact upon the community. Following the research, Envision started to engage community

members in healthy dialogue to explore the myths and social norms that perpetuate sexual violence, dedicating resources exclusively to stopping sexual assault on the Lower East Side before it occurs and supporting many organizations that work with survivors of sexual violence. By normalizing conversations surrounding sexual violence, Envision aims at helping communities to empower towards enduring social change. *“We believe sexual violence is a problem. But it is not inevitable. We envision a community that takes collective responsibility for ending sexual violence”*.

In August 2013, Project Envision launched its new campaign: “I have the RIGHT... to live rape free”. Since then, it has been organizing activities to engage New York City in a dialogue on the root causes of sexual violence, including awareness events, debates, distribution and display of “I have the RIGHT...” posters and post cards, community discussion and mobilization, etcetera. They have also presented an itinerant exhibit of photos of the campaign including people’s thoughts and feelings about what they have the RIGHT to do without someone choosing to rape them. Envision wants people to join the movement and let them know there are different and simple ways to help prevent sexual violence in their community.

This campaign started in the Lower East Side but now is expanding to the five boroughs of New York City and also traveled to Mexico, Colombia and Nicaragua to share experiences about sexual violence with agencies from different countries of Latin America. Envision was represented by their member and partner, *La Casa Mandarin*, an itinerant and independent agency, based in Mexico City, devoted to building a culture of peace by empowering people and communities through the program called “Comunidades libres: entra y vive” (Free Communities: come in and live). The program is holistic, sustainable and replicable, it is generated from within the community, and it aims at promoting change in those social norms and beliefs perpetuating oppression and violence in individuals, families and community. By doing so, it contributes to generate real choices for people to live the lives they value the most for themselves, which in turn also contributes to promote a positive change at the societal level.

Throughout the years, La Casa Mandarin has been working on community development projects dedicated to promote social justice, non-violence, peace building and community empowerment most of which have been focused on building a safer and equal world for women and children integrating men into the conversation for a real social change.

In 2010, La Casa Mandarin collaborated in a project with teenage survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking, and right after that it started a Sexual Violence Program in Mexico City. Nowadays, besides their advocacy work, they offer group and individual therapy for child and adult survivors and workshops in primary prevention in schools, non-profits, service providers and governmental agencies.

La Casa Mandarin and Project Envision have designed a culturally appropriate "I have the RIGHT..." campaign in Spanish: “Yo tengo DERECHO... a vivir sin violencia sexual”. They have also developed an intervention project aimed at strengthening local agencies and service providers by training their staff on sexual violence topics (train the trainers), co-facilitate workshops with their clients in primary prevention, provide resources for survivors, and support the agencies to design their own “I have the RIGHT...” campaign according to their own needs and goals, and to create community awareness and mobilization.

Nowadays, they are implementing a pilot Project at a local agency in Queens, New York with immigrant Latina women and their children, and planning to replicate it in Mexico during 2014.

## Final remarks

As I traveled, lived and worked in many different places and with all sorts of people, going from the *Mixteca* and *Maya* indigenous peoples areas in rural southern Mexico, to urban Sao Paulo in Brazil, and Spain, Denmark and New York City, I discovered that even in countries with relatively low rates of poverty there was something all those places had in common: power imbalance and violence in their many different faces. By observing the relationship between violence on one side, and poverty and inequality of opportunity on the other, I came to be convinced that, among others, fighting oppression, particularly sexual and domestic violence, might be one of the most effective ways of improving the life and wellbeing of people, specially women and girls who are particularly oppressed by the patriarchal culture we live in and the gender-based violence that makes them one of the most vulnerable population group on Earth.

As previously stated, sexual violence is a silent epidemic that happens throughout the world and “I have the RIGHT...” is an example of what can be done and accomplished through an easily replicable and effective intervention scheme that helps to empower communities from within communities.

There are a lot of positive and negative experiences around sexual violence projects that should be promoted as learning tools, and practices that should be adapted to different contexts. We need to share our research, our projects and our practices, and systematize them in order to design and disseminate robust regional –or even global—strategies to fighting and end sexual violence together. Research and proactive community-level advocacy to gather and disseminate the most recommended practices around the world to prevent, heal and end sexual violence, is certainly a way to effectively act against this silent epidemic.

I do honestly believe that a different, better world is possible through more collaborative and systematic work in this area, along with a little more solidarity and commitment to social justice.

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## **Come, Let's Break the 'Invisible'... !**

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### **ABSTRACT**

'Get what you tolerate' has been a general rule of life. The reality of women's lives remains invisible to men and women alike and this 'invisibility' persists at all levels, beginning with the family and extending to their work-place. Although geographically men and women share the same space, they live in different worlds. The mere fact that "Women hold up half the sky" does not appear to give them a position of dignity and equality. One cannot deny the fact that over the years women have made great strides in many areas with notable progress in reducing gender gaps. Yet, the afflicted world in which we live is characterized by sprawling inequalities that persist in their access to education, health care, physical and financial resources and opportunities in the political, economic, socio-cultural as well as professional spheres. With a rising urban middle class and a new generation seeking better choices, women are beginning to breach some of the clichéd **invisible barriers**- the proverbial '**glass ceiling**'.

My Research Paper seeks to analyze the concept of 'glass ceiling' and show that in today's increasingly competitive and accelerated world, the attributes that women bring to leadership are more valuable than ever.

**Key words: invisible barriers, glass ceiling**

## **Come, Let's Break the 'Invisible'... !**

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**“The great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do.” Walter Bagehot**

The term **glass ceiling** was first used by Carol Hymovitz and Timothy D. Schelldart in their article “The Glass Ceiling: Why Women can't seem to Break the Invisible Barrier That Blocks Them from the Top Job” in Wall Street Journal. A ‘glass ceiling’ is a political term used to describe the “unseen, yet unbreakable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder regardless of their qualifications or achievements.”(Wikipedia) Metaphorically the term refers to **‘invisible barriers’** (glass) through which women can see elite positions but cannot reach them.(ceiling) These barriers prevent large number of women and ethnic minorities from obtaining and securing the most powerful, prestigious and highest-grossing positions in the workforce.

*Fifteen years ago when Anu Aiyengar went for an interview to become a mergers and acquisitions (M&A) banker at a major Wall Street firm, she got a stark, disappointing message. “You have three strikes against you.” Aiyengar who was born in India, recalled the interviewer telling her, “How can I hire you?” You are the wrong gender, wrong color and wrong country. Aiyengar, now a Managing Director at Morgan Chase, is seen as the rising star within the largest U.S bank's M&A group. (REUTERS, Feb.6, 2014)*

Gender inequality holds back the growth of individuals, the development of nations and the evolution of societies to the disadvantage of both men and women. The term ‘gender’ refers to a set of qualities and behavior expected from men and women by societies. These expectations stem from the idea that certain set of qualities, behavior, characteristics, needs and roles are ‘natural’ for men, while certain others are ‘natural’ for women. However, gender is not biological; these ‘gendered’ feminine and masculine identities are constructed through the power of socialization which prepares them for social roles they are expected to



play. These social roles and expectations differ from culture to culture and at different periods of history.

‘Glass ceiling’ thus, is not an isolated occurrence, since the forces that keep women away are the same. The degree and intensity of these forces may differ by nation or by region. In emerging countries, religious, legal and economic factors are particularly discriminatory towards women. Since women do not get equal opportunities even at the grass root level, the question of glass ceiling does not even arise. For women who have these opportunities and who are able to have a career, in emerging countries such as China or India, the glass ceiling they confront is no different from that confronted by women in the western world.

There has been much research and conjecture about the challenges that women face in organizations to climb the corporate ladder. What needs to be debated here is whether the glass ceiling is a perceived concept or if there is an actual invisible barrier that women have to break through to make it big in their careers. In other words, is all the hullabaloo about the ‘glass ceiling’ a myth or a reality? The socio-cultural, legal, personal, and organizational forces that affect a woman’s rise to the upper echelons of an institution are for the most part, universal. This is not only because women are held to higher standards than men but also because they are neither made aware of, nor given opportunities that would catapult them to upper echelons. Noted Canadian feminist, Charlotte Whitton’s words aptly echoes these sentiments ‘Whatever women do, they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good.’ And, versatile author Claire Boothe Luce too observes that ‘Because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed. If I fail, no one will say, “She doesn’t have what it takes.” They will say, “Women don’t have what it takes.”’

Women could become a force to transform society provided they are politically and economically empowered. In this context, noble laureate Amartya Sen forcefully argues that continuing discrimination against women can hinder development. Empowerment can, on the other hand accelerate development. Yet, there are forces in society that keep them away from conquering heights. Although one cannot ignore the many hindrances that women place for themselves namely, lack of motivation and drive among them to pursue a career that demands their best inputs, they have always suffered from a lack of moral support from society. It is evident that women continue to live under the thumb of the men around them. They do not have freedom to make decisions about their life –be it marriage, a job or for that matter even what they wear are controlled by the male dominated society, which justifies its

actions in the name of tradition, often tinged with religious hues. Hence, it is imperative that women must challenge long entrenched patriarchal systems to fight for space and voice in the public sphere and in their private lives.

Women's role for long had been confined to the precincts of her home and family. But with a rising urban middle class and a new generation seeking better choices, they are beginning to breach these boundaries. However, they often tend to prioritize family commitments over their career and are also typecast as being overly emotional and unable to handle stressful situations. But, as Margaret Thatcher believed, "Any woman who understands the problems of running a house will be nearer to understanding the problems of running a country." (read Business) Innate qualities of nurturing, multi-tasking, managing, decision-making and high levels of adaptability are some of her enviable strengths, for, someone has rightly pointed out that 'strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will'.

Therefore, the time has come for women to move to the 'locus of control' in their careers. In order to accomplish what inspires her, a woman must, at times, be willing to take a path less travelled. She must see herself as a leader before anyone else will and she has to do her bit to build her own brand of leadership and not conform to old trends even if that means standing apart from the crowd. Women make great leaders and in today's increasingly competitive and accelerated world, the attributes that they bring to leadership are more valuable than ever. However, cracking that ceiling open once and for all will demand that they challenge both the perspectives they bring into the workplace and the actions they are willing to take to grow their leadership ability in three key areas viz. Mindset, Capacity and Courage. She must cultivate habits that build her resilience and be willing to step into difficult conversations with greater candor and boldness.

Furthermore, women are great at nurturing relationships but are often loathe to say anything that may jeopardize them. Fear of 'rocking the boat' shouldn't keep her from challenging the consensus thinking. At this juncture one cannot but fail to turn to some major boat-rocking done by Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo. While changes wrought by her in the working pattern have not been very popular, yet she made sure her 'voice' was heard!

Women should not let themselves be intimidated if they aim to work their way to the top in male dominated worlds. More often than not, women are found to be undervalued, overlooked or undermined at their workplace. The 'soft' and 'nurturing' side to their personality, as motivational speaker and best-selling author Daniel Winningham points out is

often confused with being lackadaisical. Owing mainly to gender inequalities, they have had to battle against perceived inferiority and stereotypes. Strange though it appears, women are generally 'seen' as competent or 'liked', but rarely both. Thus, if a woman wants to be taken seriously, respected widely, and valued fully, she has to be willing to stand up for herself, teach people how she expects to be treated and refuse to cower to those who seek to look down upon her.

Studies on the Psychology of Gender by Professor of Psychology at North Western University, Alice Eagly, show the differences and similarities in the leadership styles of men and women. She points out that though gender-related differences between leadership styles are small, they are nevertheless present. For instance, men take a "command and control" approach, while women tend to be more democratic and participative. Another meta-analytic generalization, according to Eagly is that women, more than men, combine feminine and masculine leadership behaviors. She can be both assertive and persuasive at the same time. She is found to be more empathetic and flexible with strong interpersonal skills that enable her to read situations accurately when compared to her male counterparts.

Dr Bernard Bass, who developed the theory of 'Transformational Leadership' points out that women are more transformational than men- they care more about developing their followers, they are better listeners and communicators, can stimulate people, are inspirational and have the ability to think "out of the box". They are rarely governed by their ego or need to compete but are more frequently governed by their need to do something creative and bring about a meaningful change. Thus, domination as a leadership style is gradually losing its popularity, and the general perception that a woman has to be a man to survive in a leadership role is rapidly changing. Rather, she is carving a way for a balanced approach - be assertive, persuasive, and a risk-taker, while being empathetic, flexible and possessing a high degree of Emotional Quotient.

Women bring something beyond their unique leadership style to the table- a difference in values and attitudes compared to their male counterparts. Numerous studies, says Eagly, show that women treasure benevolence and universalism; endorse social values that promote other's welfare; uphold socially compassionate policies and moral practices; and believe in ethical business practices that spell good things for companies. A feminine way of leading includes helping people understand the need to make the world a more compassionate place, as it is important for all to be understood, supported and valued.

However, it is not entirely fair to identify the qualities discussed so far as uniquely female. Although people are starting to wake up to the fact that women make excellent leaders, this is certainly not to diminish the skills and instincts of men in any way. Men and women are inherently different and both are capable of being excellent leaders, but until recently it had almost been a difficult task to break those ‘Invisible barriers’. Thankfully, with powerful women like the COO of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg, CEO of Pepsi Co, Indra Nooyi, and CEO at Hewlett Packard, Meg Whitman, things are beginning to look up for women in leadership roles. With times changing, gender diversity is becoming a priority for organizations, for boards and for companies. The environment has changed with lot of companies recognizing that the unique skill sets that women bring are just as important to grow as an organization. It is true that men and women display different leadership styles. While vision, passion, ambition and aggression are more male traits, women have a different kind of aggression; they can be more inclusive and detail-oriented and bring in a holistic approach, as they are said to be more persevering, compassionate and willing to share power and information.

Yet, a study of statistical data based on recent research shows that even if women may actually be better, or equally suited to hold leadership positions, only 3% of top executives among Fortune 500 companies are women. Is it because women are forced out of their careers by inhospitable workplaces, dominated by the masculine competitive model of organization? In this context, it is essential to find out ‘why can’t the sexes work together?’ The answer to this lies in the argument by two of the world’s luminaries in gender awareness, Annis and Gray who believe that gender should be embraced and not just tolerated; that biologically, men and women are designed to complement each other. Identifying and eliminating gender misconceptions, they go on to add that gender differences promote synergy and produce rewarding careers. In other words, a shared responsibility model is what is needed to change workforce data that continue to show a dearth of women at the top. From the HR to the R&D, companies need to examine what they can do to attract, develop and retain female talent along with their male counterparts. A very pro-active and balanced business environment can be built through organizational changes, particularly around flexibility. This, coupled with the inherent leadership traits that come naturally with a woman will certainly help **break those ‘invisible barriers!’** because **“A woman is like a tea bag- you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water.”—Eleanor Roosevelt.**

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**Shampa Chakravarthy, M.A., M.Phil.** has been working as a Professor of English in P. E. Society's Modern College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Ganeshkhind, Pune for the last 22 years. As the Head of the English Department, she is involved in teaching of English Literature and Language to under graduate and post-graduate students. She firmly believes that beauty of speaking a language lies in choice of diction, clarity in pronunciation and proper intonation. She has presented Papers in national and international conferences and was also invited as Resource Person. She has to her credit several publications in books, national and international journals. She has completed a Project on 'Soft Skills Training and Education' and delivered Talks on topics related to Communication Skills, Etiquette and Manners among others. She is the recipient of the Best Teacher and Favourite Professor Awards. She has a flair for learning languages and speaks many Indian languages. Her hobbies include Reading, Writing poetry, Music, Compering, Travelling and trying out different cuisines.

# **Empowering Women Administrators: Study of Women Administrators in Pune University Jurisdiction**

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## **Abstract:**

“There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women”

- Kofi Annan. Former Secretary General of United Nations

Gender discrimination has been a major obstacle in granting equal opportunity for women in higher education.

Globalization, spread of education, opportunity for political participation, enabling legal provisions and women’s movements have changed the status of women.

Now a days woman are playing a major role in higher education and administration. Creativity of women along with their energy has equipped them to take up challenges of the present world also to comprehend the complexities of the times.

Acknowledging the potential of senior women administrators in higher education such as vice chancellors, principals, deans and head of the departments etc, an investment needs to be done in developing their capabilities in terms of skill development, research competence and also for enhancing their leadership skills. This would help these women administrators personally, their institutions and in turn to the country.

The paper tries to present a socio-educational study of women administrators in higher education from University of Pune sphere.

**Key Words: women administrators, higher education, Pune University**



## **Introduction:**

In today's world of globalization roll of women in society and nation building is changing rapidly. Women are contributing equally to men in society and nation building. Now it's time to think seriously about development of women and their changing status.

During pre-independence period women were not having right to education. Many social reformers have contributed in improving the overall status of women in India.

According to human rights both men and women have given the equal opportunities and rights in social, political, educational areas, but because of some traditions men and women were treated differently and it gave rise to discrimination.

In today's world women are still facing physical, mental, social, and economic and gender discrimination at various levels like family and workplace. To improve this situation UNO was established in 1945. The objectives of UNO are: 1) to make women aware about human rights 2) to establish and maintain social order. UNO insisted that men and women should get equal rights and published the list of human rights in 1948.

On this background every Nation designed their laws and policies considering their needs and problems.

Article 4 of Indian Constitution has granted equality to men and women. Article 14 gives equal rights and protection to every citizen of India. Article 15 says that there should be no discrimination on the basis of gender. All the above mentioned rights were incorporated in fundamental rights of Indian Constitution. National and international women movements have contributed a lot in this regard.

Today we speak a lot about women empowerment. Still indian women are facing injustice, mental and physical harassment, discrimination and exploitation. We need to find out reason behind it. Since ancient times Indian Society has patriarchal social system. Because of this, women get secondary position in family and society. Women are dependent on men for their basic requirements.

Despite of their equal capabilities and skills women are not considered in various fields like education, politics, business, social work, family. They are equal to their male counterparts still they are not given an opportunity. This clearly shows gender discrimination. This should be given a serious thought.

Discussion on globalization, privatization, and gender discrimination, laws regarding women's rights and inclusion of these topics in the curriculum had major impact on social system of each country. This has also reflected on status of women. This has brought key transformation in status and roll of women in Indian Society. Right to property has given women an opportunity to lead their life with dignity.

This research paper throws light on status of women administrators from educational institutions in jurisdiction of University of Pune. This paper is based on primary as well as secondary data. Primary data is collected through questionnaires and personal interviews. The data is collected from rural as well as urban area.

### **Objectives:-**

- i. To understand the present situation of women working in administration in colleges and in the university of Pune.
- ii. To understand their social and economic problems.
- iii. To analyze their position in the present scenario.
- iv. To study the status of women in the workplace and at home in the decision making.

### **Methodology:-**

The data is collected through questionnaire and interviews. The sample size is 284 that is 15% of the universe. Sampling with equal intervals is followed. Data is analyzed manually.

### **Locale of study:-**

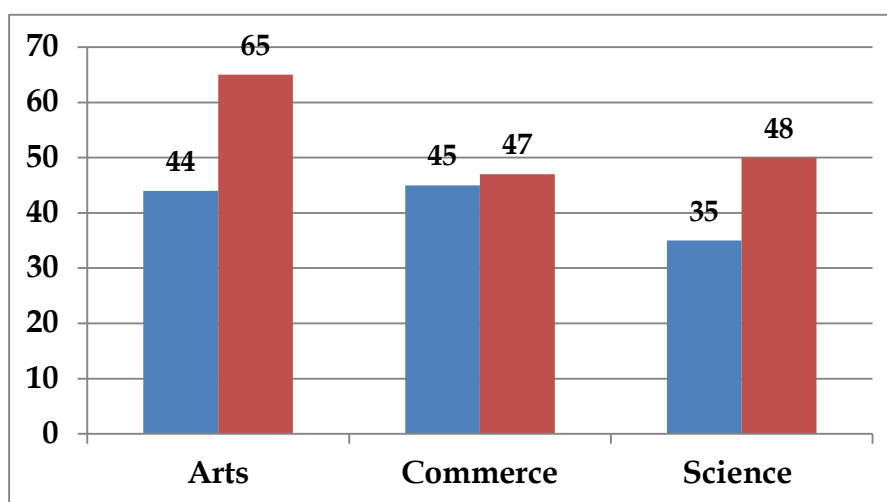
Jurisdiction of Pune University includes three districts namely Pune, Nashik and Nagar. The present research focuses on the women working in various administrative capacities such as vice-chancellor, dean, principals, vice principals and heads of the department. The data is collected from selected 52 colleges.

### **Observation and Findings:**

In this section of paper social complexities associated with Status and Role of the respondents from rural and urban area has discussed.

- **Faculty-wise distribution of women administrators in rural and urban area**

The diagram given below shows faculty wise distribution respondents working in colleges in rural and urban area



### **Social Complexities associated with Status and Role of the respondents:-**

From the structural point of view we come across different social groups and classes in a society. These social groups and classes behave according to the expectations and norms of society. These norms and expectations change according to family, caste groups, class, community and society.

The role and status of an individual are decided by family, group and society. His status in society depends on family, community, group and nature of job.

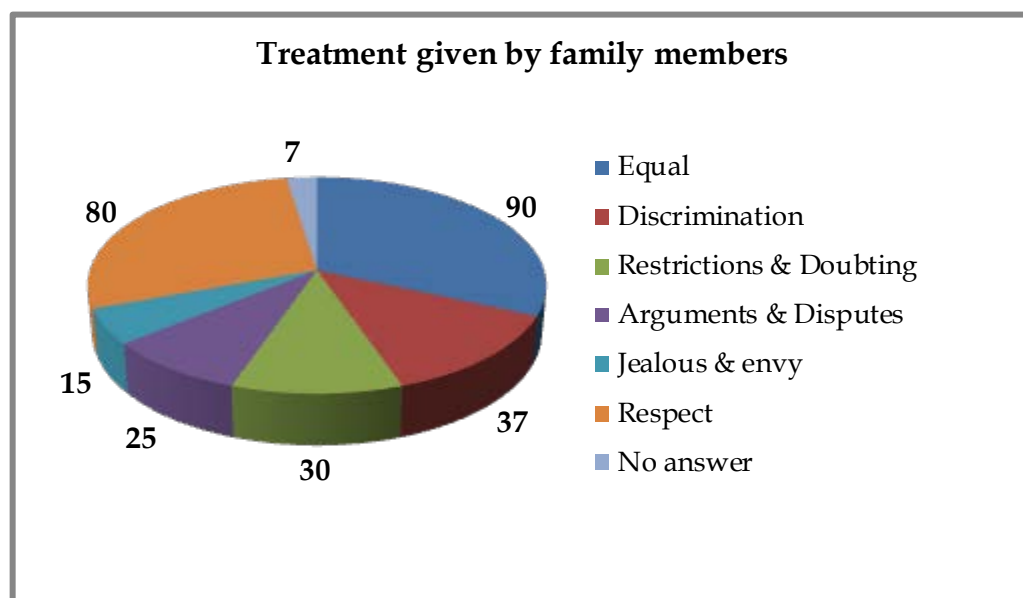
Status, role, power and authority have very close relation among each other. An individual's place in a society is determined by his social environment, traditions, customs and social law. An individual can change his status with his efforts. There is debate among some sociologists on ascribed and achieved status.

Every individual has to perform social role. Social role is nothing but fulfillment of responsibilities assigned to him by his status in society.. These are two elements of role.

- i. Expectation of society and other members of the society.
- ii. Action to fulfill the expectations of the society and its members.

In the present research paper, we have taken into account the expectations from the women administrators by family members, class and caste members, friends and society. The research paper focuses on the impact of education, development of technology urbanization and modernization, economic resources, professional status on these women Administrators. The paper also throws light on how family, society, classes influence women.

The researcher has noticed diversities in rural and urban areas. In joint families, the women administrators get support daily household work. They also get help in child rearing. But in nuclear families such women hardly get any help and they have two fronts in office and at home. So these factors are responsible for stress and tension on women Administrators.



- **Decision Making:**

Salary of women administrators differ as per their position and designations. Those women who are able to fulfill economic needs of the family get good status in the family and society, they also have a say in decision making.

- **Investments and Financial Transactions:**

In urban areas the women administrators use different facilities like ATM card, net-banking, etc. they can take the decision about investments of their money in FDs, life insurance, health insurance, shares, dividends etc. But in the rural areas women do not have the freedom to take such decision. It is observed that they invest in land, plots and gold but these decisions are taken by male members in their family. Even these properties are registered on the name male members of the family.

- **Caste, Status, Role and Power Relation:-**

The present study is based on caste as one of the indicator. It is observed that caste determines status, role and power relations. There are caste based associations and these associations are well aware of rights of their members.

- **Influence of Caste on Management of Educational Institutions:-**

It has been observed that there are certain castes and communities are influential in educational system. They prefer to appoint a person from their own religion and caste in their institution.

It is observed that there is influence of caste on various bodies like management council, academic council, Senate, board of studies. It is also observed that there is influence of specific castes in selection of deans, members of board of studies and professors.

Now a days mass media, Right to information, teacher-students associations are conscious about their rights so the policies are observed strictly.

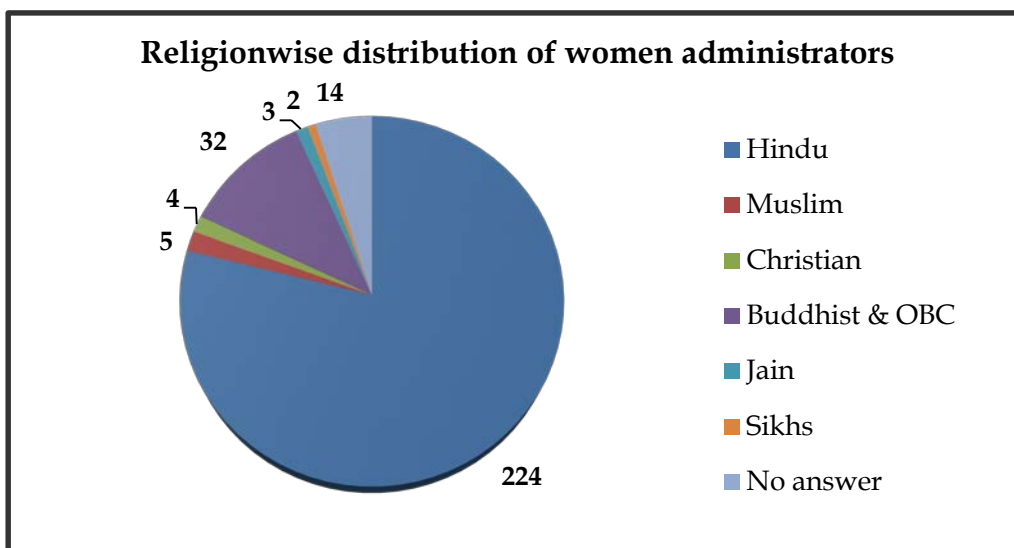
It is still observed that while making some appointments caste and gender is considered. The promotions and profitable posts are generally given to male candidates. So here also women have to face gender discrimination.

- **Class, Status and Role:**

There is very close connection between economic and social status. There are different positions in teaching like fulltime, Part time, clock hour basis (CHB), Granted, Non-granted etc. Salaries differ as per the above positions. Social status always depends on economic condition. In some organizations the salaries are given as per rules of Government of India, University Grant Commission and as per university policies, but some organizations do not follow these rules. Even though they have same job profile they are paid less salaries.

- **Religion and Woman Administrators:-**

Religion does not influence day to day work of women administrators but preference is given to same religion at the time of appointment.

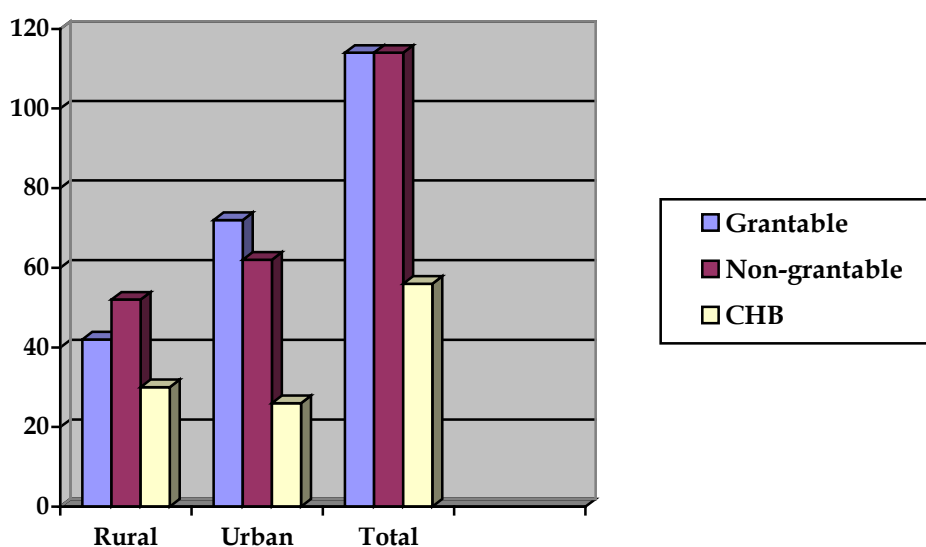


• **Income Utilization and Status:-**

Salaries differ as per type of positions. Social status always depends on economic condition. These women working in granted colleges enjoy luxuries life. They visit beauty parlors on regular basis, occasionally they go for pleasure trips even out of the country. They enjoy their life. These women are also active in research.

**Nature of Post of women administrators in rural and urban area**

Sr. No.	Status of Administrator	Rural	Urban	Total
1.	Grantable	42	72	114
2.	Non- grantable	52	62	114
3.	Clock Hour Basis	30	26	56
	<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>284</b>



- **Income, Consumption and Status:**

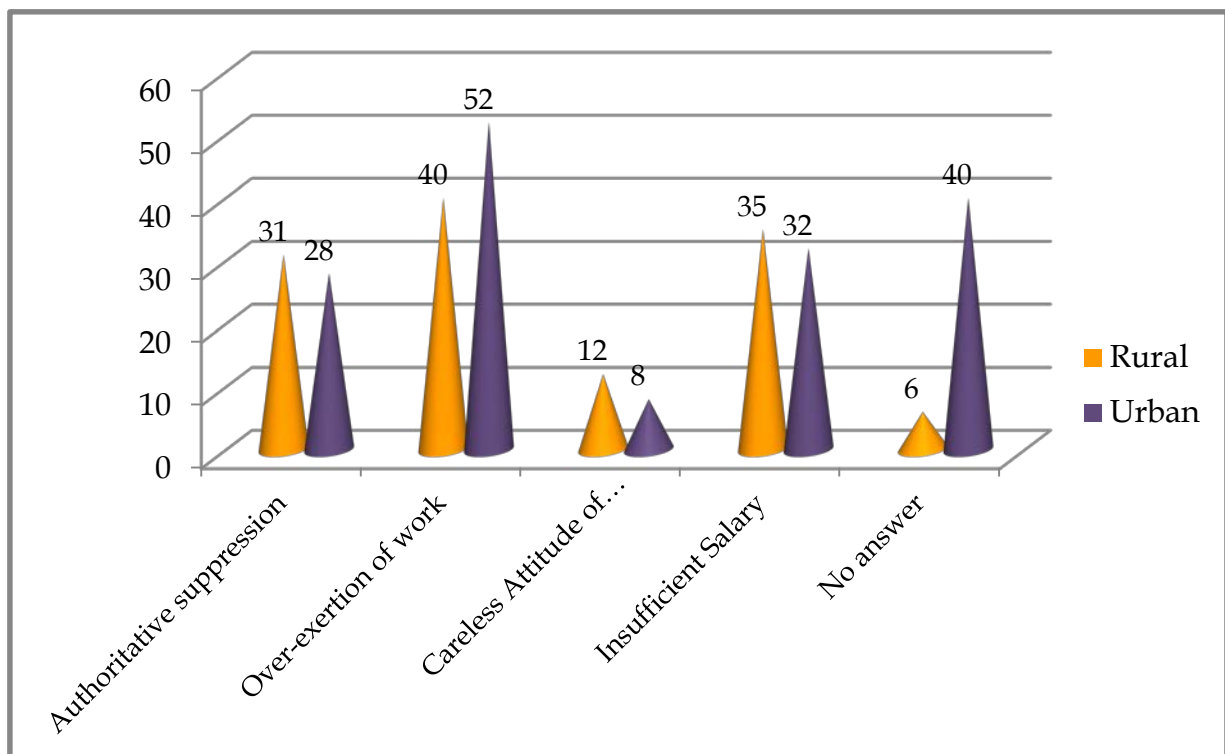
These women can afford laptop mobiles and they keep updating and changing their mobiles. Even they use tabs and digital cameras. They keep on changing interior decoration of their homes frequently. They use branded Products and clothes. They spend money on hoteling and entertainment. Because of their fixed salaries and confirm income they feel secure.

- **Factors responsible for mental and physical pressure of respondents:**

While working as an administrator women have to face different mental and physical pressures. There are different reasons behind these pressures such as authoritative suppression, overexertion of work, careless attitude of colleagues, insufficient salary etc. The table given below is self-explanatory.

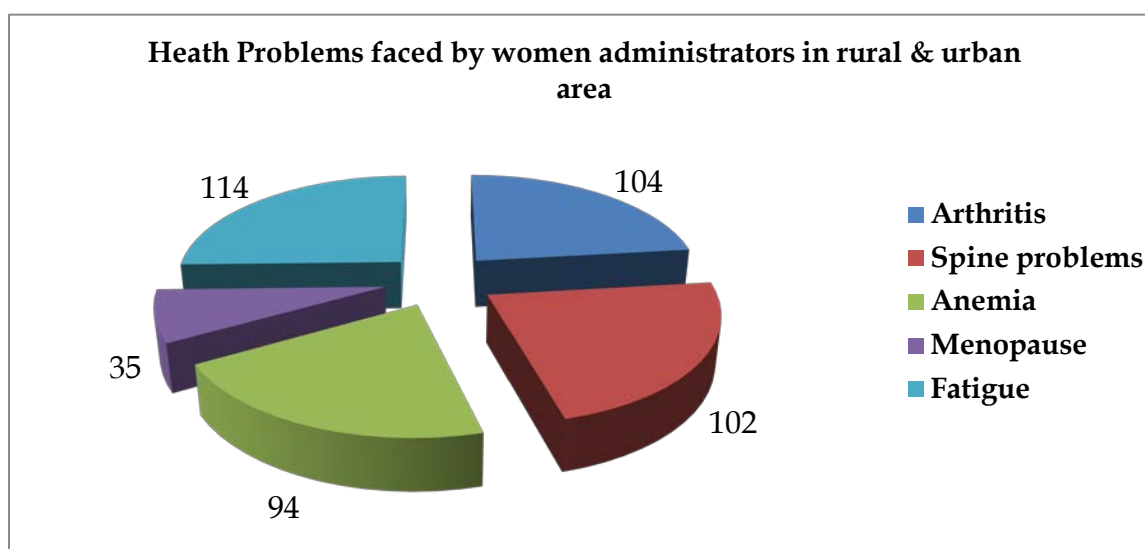
**Reasons behind mental stress**

Sr. No.	Reasons behind mental stress	Rural	Percentage	Urban	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1.	Authoritative suppression	31	10.92	28	09.86	59	20.78
2.	Over-exertion of work	40	14.08	52	18.30	92	32.39
3.	Careless Attitude of Colleagues	12	04.22	08	02.81	20	7.04
4.	Insufficient Salary	35	12.32	32	11.26	67	23.59
5.	No answer	06	02.11	40	14.08	46	16.20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>43.66</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>56.34</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>100.00</b>



These women also face many physical problems like Arthritis, problems of menopause, deficiencies, anemia, spine problem, problems due to obesity etc. Women don't get enough time for exercise as they are very busy in their household work & jobs so these factors affect their physical fitness.

Sr. No.	Health Problem	Rural	Percentage	Urban	Percentage	Total
1.	Arthritis	42	40.33	62	59.62	104
2.	Spine Problems	30	29.41	72	70.59	102
3.	Anemia	52	55.32	42	44.68	94
4.	Menopause	10	28.57	25	71.43	35
5.	Fatigue	42	36.84	72	63.16	114

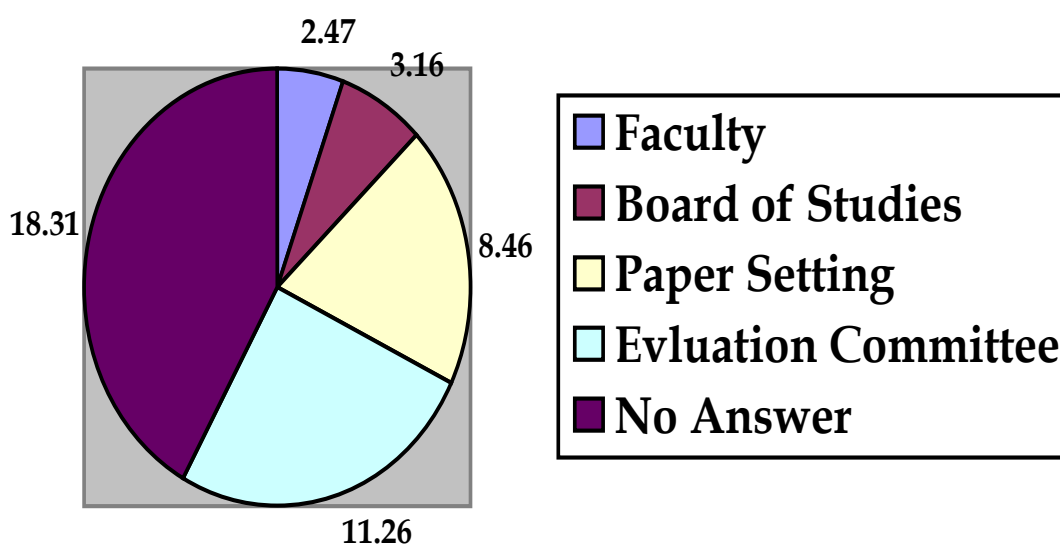


- **Membership of Various Committees at University level:**

The table given below throws light on the number of membership represented by women administrators at various committees of the university. It is observed that maximum percentage of women administrators i.e. 35.21 are there in evaluation committee followed by Paper setting committee (23.24 %). We can also observe from the data that representation of women administrators from rural area is less compared to urban area.

### Membership of Various Committees in the University

Sr. No.	Membership of Various bodies	Rural	Percentage	Urban	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1.	Faculty	7	02.47	12	04.22	19	6.69
2.	Board of Studies	9	03.16	14	04.94	23	8.10
3.	Paper Setting	24	08.46	42	14.79	66	23.24
4.	Evaluation Committee	32	11.26	68	23.94	100	35.21
5.	No answer	52	18.31	24	08.45	76	26.76
	<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>43.66</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>56.34</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>100.00</b>



#### **Conclusions:**

- 1) Till date there were 19 vice chancellors but not a single woman was appointed as a Vice Chancellor in University of Pune.
- 2) The percentage of men employees on administrative positions is higher than women. These post include registrar, NSS Program Officer, Students Welfare Officer etc.
- 3) Out of 52 traditional senior college, only seven colleges have woman principal.
- 4) Women face different challenges at home and workplace. This includes work culture, non-cooperation and dominance of male colleagues and family members.
- 5) Even though they are earning good amount of salary they do not have freedom to spend.
- 6) Women still have secondary position in decision making and family affairs.
- 7) Indian society is still male dominated and patriarchal.
- 8) Dominance of caste and religion still exists on society.



**Recommendations:**

- Awareness regarding women's rights should be increased to give them equal rights
  - Children should be given value education focused on gender equality at school and at home.
  - Women should be given opportunity of decision making at workplace and family.
  - Strict rules should be followed regarding salary.
  - Effort should be made to come out of the traditional frame of patriarchy and male dominance.
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**Administrative work experience:** 17 years

**Worked as:** National Service Scheme (NSS) Program Officer (5 years),  
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Committees:

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## **Empowering Women through literature – An Analysis of Kunzang Choden’s Fiction**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Literature as a form of art has always been an agent of change in society. Apart from mirroring reality in its minute details, it colours itself with imagination and vision of the author and the society he or she portrays. Analysing the fictional works of Kunzang Choden, the first and the only woman writer from Bhutan, one comes across the writer who is extra sensitive to the lives and individualities of her women characters struggling through the time currently witnessing social mobility and cultural change. The proposed paper attempts to highlight Kunzang’s concern to empower women through the presentation of their subjectivity coming to terms with reality while trying to find separate meanings for them. Kunzang narrates the stories of women in rural and urban Bhutan. Her women characters while grappling with the changing times carve out distinct identities for themselves. The author succeeds in producing role models in her women who are bold, independent and resourceful in the face of odds against them in society which despite its matrilineal structure is still not free from patriarchal bias and beliefs. Religion that forms the basic structure of society emboldens women further to bring a positive change in themselves.

“Arts are not the icing on the cake, but much more the yeast, and such a significant language for change.”

**Mallika Sarabhai**, Dancer and Director

## **1. Literature and its Empowering Devices**

Literature as a form of art has always been an agent of change in society. Apart from mirroring reality in its minute details, it colours itself with the imagination and vision of the author and the society he or she portrays. An aesthetic aspect which is an essential condition of a literary work combined with the political view point enables the text question the existing inequalities and disparities in a social system besides offering a set of solutions for a better future for humanity. Technically speaking, literature empowers women through such devices and measures like female characters as protagonists; women as role models; selective theme and plot; narrative voice and writer as woman etc. All these occur under one umbrella term called feminist literary criticism imbibing empowering reading and writing strategies to compensate for the ignored areas of female strength in the literary world.

The presence of female protagonists in literary works placed against various socio cultural contexts involves writing the subjectivities of women under different conflicting situations. The stories are written from the view point of female characters struggling to carve out their identity in the coercive environment of the society. In English literature we have Jane Austin, George Eliot, Bronte sisters, Doris Lessing, Virginia Woolf and many others who had been the precursors in reflecting the consciousness of women. There is no dearth of women writers in literature written in other countries and regions as well. Indian literature for instance has such names as Kamala Markandaya, Kamala das, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherji to name a few who contributed significantly in this sphere. Before these gutsy writings, the so called genuine literature could not be believed to be written by women and those who wrote had to do so under male pseudonyms –such was the bias that underrated the works and intellectual capacities of even the most deserving women writers.

Literature reflecting the feminist sensibility generally takes recourse to the depiction of role models in women characters as an antidote to their presentation as stereotypes. Such writings reject establishing the binary polarities through the narrative such as the black and white depiction of women characters as in wife and mistress; angel and whore and ideal woman and prostitute. They depict woman as she exists in real life with her strength and weakness all combined in a human frame. A patriarchal society represses the real woman under the veil of sanctioned attributes which keep her position intact as an ideal woman. A feminist writer makes her women respond naturally in the real situations which she faces in her life. Women are depicted as bold, independent capable of taking their decisions in life. Women in the modern society are educated, awakened and are also the achievers in their fields. Such role models encourage the average women to identify themselves with them and discover themselves anew.

The choice of thematic and plot structure ensures maximising the social conditions to enable them to reflect dilemmas and conflicts of the female characters. The narrative voice is another important prod through which the narrator and many times the author herself puts forth her comments on the given situation. The author sensitive to female struggle makes her voice or point of view heard either as a third person or through the dialogue or the speech of the characters while narrating the incidents in the stories without compromising with the literariness of the genre at hand.

Lastly literature by women is not the essential feature yet many feminist critics and scholars like Virginia Woolf, Elaine Showalter, Ellen Moers and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar believe that the writings about women by the women writers marks an important stage in the evolution of feminist literary tradition where distinct linguistic, biological, social and cultural experience of women described through their works ensures better authenticity and relevance for the distinct female experience than the works by male authors.

The present paper takes up the study of Kunzang Choden's novel *The Circle of Karma* and short stories titled *Tales in Colour and Other Stories* to highlight the potentiality of the texts in the above light to empower women in the present society.

## 2. The Circle of Karma

In the novel *The Circle of Karma*, Kunzag reveals the consciousness of a young woman named Tsomo, daughter of a Buddhist priest with a large family of twelve kids. As an eldest daughter, she is not only burdened by the household chores which she shares with her robust mother and brother younger to her but also by the discriminatory attitude of her family manifested in the denial of religious education to her that was available for her brothers. Even as a child, Tsomo through her analytical reasoning tries to comprehend the situation. "Being born a male already has the advantage of a better birth and now they are being helped to accumulate more merit for their next birth. How would girls accumulate more merit if they are not taught religion?" She ponders.

The process of socialisation that makes a female and a woman as per the notions of a society begins quite in the childhood period of a girl. "You are a girl. You are different.... You learn other things that make you a good woman, a good wife.... to cook, to weave...." Tsomo's father would make her fathom the general logic.

In the traditional set up of Bhutan as is true in most Asian societies the very idea of the girls' going out of their homes and travelling to different places is beyond the point. When an astrologer told Tsomo's mother that her daughter would always be ready to travel as she grows up, her mother dismissed it by saying "Where can girls travel?" A pattern of life has been laid for Tsomo much before she could decide to take decision of her life. "I am a woman and a woman should be less ambitious and more subdued", she would try to digest the situation. (P 23)

Tsomo's determination to be worth something and earn a degree of self respect goads her to walk out on the life of humiliation and obligation to the one that despite all its hardships provides her with a sense of freedom and an opportunity to discover herself. Her physical distance from her ancestral home that had required her play the role of self sacrificing mother and sister and a door mat for her former husband and her younger sister offers her enough space to negotiate with her suffering and carve out a place for herself.

After leaving the confinement of her traditional home, Tsomo makes home wherever she finds work in the company of some positive minded people. Her home is now everywhere - on the road - the road appears as a metaphor for mobility and change in the novel- that she helps in constructing as a labourer in Phuentsholing near the border with West Bengal in India that opens her country to the outside world. She makes friends and prompted by her desire to gain religious knowledge, she travels to Kalingpong in West Bengal, Himachal

Pradesh in India and Bodhgaya in Nepal and visits Buddhist centres and polish her inner being. While sharing dreams with her friends at the site, Tsomo tells them: 'I'll just keep on going with the road wherever it takes me' which is substantiated by the narratorial voice "And that was not a lie. She had to go beyond the road as that was the way to fulfilling her dreams." (P.102)The intercepting voice of the author through the third person narrator stands for the emerging dreams of the Bhutanese women in the changing times.

The theme of infidelity on the part of men and women suffering as a result abounds in the fiction of Kunzang Choden. Being in the socially advantageous position, men do not hesitate leaving their wives for the younger women they can easily find. Tsomo's first husband Wangchuk leaves her to live with her younger sister Kesang. While narrating her dream to the fellow stonecutters during the time she takes up the job of a road maker notwithstanding her swollen and ailing body, she tells them how her idea is to turn the obstacles others have put in her path into an opportunity. Tsomo's second husband Lhatu after using the money earned through her hard work deserts her to marry a younger woman fit to be his daughter. Tsomo's friend Chimme also suffers a betrayal from her boy friend who is a geylong. During the purification ceremony Chimme refuses to hire a man to substitute the missing lover as the father of her unborn child as she thinks it would be humiliating for any man to take the place of the disloyal man. She becomes the mouth piece of all women when she considers the constraint a woman's biology poses for her. She opines: "Men are really lucky... But for us women there is no way we can get away. We are accountable for everything we do."(P 43)

The author through the character of Chimme challenges the double standards of sexual morality endorsed by society which holds the females only responsible for sexual immorality. When Chimme's mother tells her any woman who makes the monk lose his celibacy goes to hell, Chimme challenges the idea of male supremacy. "He wanted to lose his celibacy. I did not cause him to lose it. If I was not there, surely there would have been another woman for him", she tells Tsomo.

The novel also brings to fore the notion of sisterhood among the distressed women. Once out of home, Tsomo meets a loyal friend in Dechan Choki who too had been a victim of molestation attempt by her step father. Here again we get to hear the narrator's voice through Tsomo's utterances as she asks Dechan to forget her bad experience of past. "Try to forget it. It is not your fault. Your only problem is being a woman. We cannot change that but we have to stay strong." (p.121)Later both the women find company with Pema Bhuti another woman from Bhutan when they come to live in the rented accommodation at Kalingpong. ....ecology Here Tsomo works in the garden and sows mustard, onions, beans, chilli and some Indian vegetables and fruits like brinjals, okra, melon and pumpkin and her friend works on the loom to make living reinforcing the strength women gain through their being in touch with earth and mother nature. This period in the life of two women proves to be fruitful as it ensures them confidence and self sufficiency.

An important aspect relating to the subordination of women in society has been highlighted in the novel which is women pitted against women and blaming each other for the trouble. Whenever a man commits adultery, women are seen blaming each other for stealing their husbands. Wangchuk's former wife blames Tsomo, Lajab's wife blames Denchen Choki and now Tsomo blames Lhatu's young mistress for the disloyalty of her husband and quite importantly in the novel it is Geylong Sherub, one of the remarkable male friends of Tomo

who cautions her against this folly of women. It happens when he saves Tsomo from injuring Lhatu's mistress. Geylong Sherub asks Tsomo to think differently and Tsomo realises her distorted thinking. "Yes women always look for the enemy within, among themselves and let men get away with a smirk on their faces, reinforcing their confidence that it is their right to do as they please because they are men". Tsomo considers. (P.269)

Tsomo's identity becomes chiselled when like a true Buddhist, she realises how women themselves are putting obstacles in each other's ways and create an environment of distrust and suspicion among themselves rather than depending on their strength of mind. Sherub advises Tsomo since her husband has left her she can do nothing to change it but she must think of what she can do about her present and the time to come. He further advises her that by injuring Lhatu's young mistress she would have done something for which she would have to regret throughout her life. As Dalai lama says:

It is to try to use our intelligence to analyse what happens in a given situation. Begin by identifying the long term and short term benefits or consequences of our negative emotions. When we become aware of their long term negative consequences, we will deliberately restrain our negative emotions. Look at the possible consequences of a strong ill-will towards others, like hatred. As soon as a strong ill will towards others develops one's peace of mind immediately vanishes. (*Many Ways to Nirvana* 52-53)

In the same context the narrative voice holds us, "Nobody is unchanging, everybody can change". ( P.279)

As per the Buddhist principle, negotiating negative emotions like fear, jealousy and violence, one can not only evade their consequences but can grow into a strong personality who does not have to depend upon attachment to seek the meaning of existence.

Towards the end of the novel, Tsomo is initiated into a nun by her lama Rinpoche who had always encouraged her to be on her own. Tsomo remembers that she had always wanted to learn religion and be like her father and brother and now she decides to take up this role gladly. "You came into this world alone, and you will depart alone," Rinpoche had told her when she went to Kalingpong to meet him after the emotional disaster caused by her faithless and a cheat husband. And Tsomo repeats his message to herself "Remember only the moments of harmony and move forward." (P.286)

Tsomo's circle of karma brings her back to Bhutan. At Thimpu she decides to put up in a separate hut. On learning about her, her sister, brother in law, her former husband and brothers, nephews and nieces come to meet her. Tsomo has already rid herself of any bitter feelings against any of her family members for her past hurt. At the same time, she gives up the temptation of staying with her family and goes for her last pilgrimage to Bhodhgya to meet Dalai Lama.

Tsomo, the female protagonist of **The Circle of Karma** thus achieves her self – identification in the face of all adverse conditions of life starting from discrimination against her in her family circle, her struggle outside home and the traumatic marital life.

### 3. Tales in Colour and Other Stories

All the stories in the book have been set against the rural background of Bhutan and all of them have women protagonists whose consciousness have been unravelled by the author with a great degree of empathy and objectivity .

In Bhutan, although women enjoy economic benefit in the form of holding control over their ancestral property, yet socially they are marginalised due to the chauvinistic attitude inherent in the society. It is not uncommon for married men to leave their wives and kids in the lurch to live with the women younger than their former wives. Extramarital relations which are not rare in Bhutanese society mar the relationships and disrupt the harmony of the society. In the story, “The Advisor”, Tsewang Lhazom is abandoned by her husband Pem Dorji for his extra marital relationship with Karma, a seventeen year old girl ‘having fair skin and healthy hair and well rounded breasts’ as the author remarks. Choden’s husband in “The Photograph” leaves her immediately after the birth of their son for a younger woman .In “A Letter and a Note”, Lhamo suffers at the hands of the immoral behaviour of her husband.

Women suffer due to the authoritative attitude of the male members. In the story, “Woman who Lost her Senses”, Keba Lamo’s mother is beaten and humiliated by a Buddhist Lama of the village Dorji Langpa for following the Bon tradition of religion. The psychological trauma borne by Keba Lamo drives her mad. The story reveals the consciousness of the suffering woman who is traumatised by the torture of another woman, her mother and has not been able to come to terms with the tragic incident of her childhood.

Women are encouraged to undertake all the farming jobs alongside men but when it comes to providing them with education and sending them out for service sector and businesses, they are shown the back seat. Yashima in “I won’t Ask mother” has to leave her school for looking after her mother, her three brothers and household when her mother is taken ill. In the story “Look at Her Belly Button”, Tsewang Doma comes from the city to her mother to help her in digging out manure from the cattle shed in the fields and we are told that this is the work usually done by women in the village as men would not like to take this ‘messy lowly job’(P.50) which again depicts gender bias and its acceptance in the society.

What is charming in Kunzang Choden’s stories is the presence of strong and independent women who despite the odds against them are able to take reins of their lives. In the story, “I won’t Ask Mother”, Yashimo takes control of her life and thinks of making up for the loss of education denied to her for being a girl and her acute family circumstances. Towards the end of the story, she decides to join the adult literacy classes and for this she is determined she won’t ask for her mother’s permission as she was used to doing earlier. Her decision provides her with a sense of purpose and she feels empowered and light spirited. The story ends with the following line:

“The powerful experience of making a decision for herself made her feel free and she hummed the tune of nursery rhyme all the way home”.(P.32)

Many of the women portrayed in the stories are single or single mothers who either have been abandoned by their husbands or live so by their choice. Tamo is an unwed single woman, mother of two boys from two different fathers who are married and live with their families. Her children were what she sought by choice. As a single mother, she really had to struggle for her survival and for that of her sons although we are told that unwed single



mothers were not uncommon in the village. Tamo suffers from a fatal disease and fights bravely till her last breath and what worries her till her end moment is “Who will water my Chilli?” in the story by the same name. Choden in the story “The Photograph” labours hard, raises her son all alone, arranges good education for him and helps making him a successful person in the city contrary to the wishes of her relatives who had wanted him to be sent to a monastery as a small boy.

The story “A Letter and a Note” begins with a letter from Lhamo’s estranged and irresponsible husband Dorji Khandu inviting her to live with him in Thimpu and ends with Lhamo’s bold decision to leave his house forever along with her sons with a note “Enough is Enough” after her patience is exhausted by his consistent immoral behaviour. For Lhamo, life had not been an easy one after her husband left her. She had to be satisfied with whatever little piece of land her elder sister had given her to till and make both ends meet for herself and her children. Yet, a hard and dignified life even though without a husband is what she chooses over the one which is loveless and degrading.

Another self respecting and strong woman is the protagonist of the story “The Advisor” Tsewang Lhazom who with her extremely positive attitude makes a space for herself in the lives of the people of her village. After being abandoned by her husband whom she had loved greatly, she puts the broken pieces together and regulates her life over the busy routine of getting up early in the morning, cooking, working on her spinning wheel, visiting others’ houses and giving them advice. So intense is her presence in the village that when she dies at the age of seventy seven, people still felt her touch and heard her nasal voice and it was believed that her soul could draw her long lost husband to visit her place after her death.

Most of Kunzang’s protagonists are not only virile and independent but are also very productive in their contribution to the environment and society. The dominant religion in Bhutan which is Buddhism has a lot to do with this kind of attitude in women and the society at large. Tsheringmo a spinster in the story “Tales in Colour” is an expert dyer of wool, who has dedicated her entire life to “brightening (people’s) lives with the vibrant colours”. When she grows old she passes her skill and secret recipes to other women like Kencho and Rinchen Dolma.

Another feature predominant in the stories as has been there in the novel is the aspect of female bonding, the notion of sisterhood and camaraderie among women which helps them in negotiating with their grief in the trying times of their lives.

Undoubtedly, globalisation and modernisation by exposing the Bhutanese women to the ideology of freedom and liberty of foreign cultures has brought about a positive change in them which is manifested in their questioning the coercing traditional values, yet the impact is not always healthy. Kunzang Choden deals with this aspect in the stories like “Mother of a Thief”; “I am Like This” and “Such Things Happen”. With the technological advancement, materialism invades the calm and innocent lives of the villagers and lures them to shallowness and selfishness. In the story, “These Things Happen”, Tashi Zangmo an ambitious young woman, one of the members of the troupe that performs before the village dignitaries makes wrong use of her liberty, gets pregnant by some visiting officer who is already married and exploits the situation at the cost of her innocent neighbour Tshering Namgyel. She falsely declares that Namgyael is the father of the child and seeks compensation from his gullible parents who have to sell their cow and land for this purpose. The story which is interspersed with lighter tones ends with the villagers identifying the real father by looking at the features of the new born child who is in the lap of Tashi Zangmo’s

mother while she herself is dancing merrily with the troupe to welcome some dignitary. Tshering Choeky is the mother in the story “Mother of Thief”, who encourages her son to steal food, money and articles from other people’s houses. Despite confirmed information of the boy being the thief, people do not report to the police for fear of creating ill will and disturbing the harmony in the community. From a small thief, the son turns into a big thug towards the end of the story when he appears in the garb of a donation seeker for installing gold pinnacle in the village temple.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Language has a remarkable capacity to change or chain humans. Literature uses language as its medium to depict social reality combined with an artistic foresight. As Thiong’ O, a Kenyan novelist said, “language carries culture and culture carries particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world”. For generation together language as a cultural legacy has been able to carry forward the stereotypes clouding the reasoning power of both men and women by making them look at reality in a particular way and limiting their roles in society. Now is the time to set this right. Writers like Kunzang Choden through their writings are serving an important cause of humanity in this regard. By making the women sharing a particular culture speak through her works unravelling their passions and emotions; desires and dreams, the writer espouses their case to be heard before the society.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND SOCIAL VIOLENCE: IMPACT ON  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND A BARRIER TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN  
NIGERIA**

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Violence against women and exploitation of the natural environment are among the persistent and pervasive global problems and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has indeed become a significant global human rights issue both at national and international levels. In spite these large growing concerns on the oppression and domination of women and nature worldwide, the rights on the elimination of such acts however, remain a contentious and often neglected issues both at national and local levels in Nigeria. This study attempts to explore the connections between the oppression of women and the environment. The study relies mainly on secondary data relating to women and environment. Data were collected from both published and unpublished sources. Using eco-feminist framework the study analyzes how violence to nature is also associated with violence to women who depend on nature for drawing sustenance for themselves, their families, and their societies. Based on this model the study observes that Nigeria is a typical patriarchic society where male superiority and dominance originated from historically rooted culture. Therefore, the challenges facing women in Nigeria today is the inability of the government to address gender disparity. It is hope that the study will evoke the consciousness of the need for the recognition and respect for women and the environment, as well as strengthens the capacity of women and girls to claim their rights and meet their basic needs, as well as engage in leadership, participation in governance, decision making and also influence public policy.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over recent decades, deepening concern on gender, the environment and sustainability has grown in importance. Violence against women is not a new problem but yet remains an issue of great concern. In recent years there has been a growing concern globally on how to create a world where women and girls in every country can live without the fear of violence. According to the United Nations Secretary- General: 'Violence against women and girls makes its hideous imprint on every continent, country and culture', as such, the 2013 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women focus on the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls is a timely opportunity to reflect on the nature and extent of violence against women and what actions policy makers can take to stop violence from happening in the first place. Therefore, governments have increasingly introduced laws to combat violence against women however, despite these efforts the implementation of laws remains a challenge. Violence against women remains a societal problem that must be addressed as a human rights issue.

Similarly, the issue of the environment is increasingly becoming a focus and great concern to world leaders, environmentalists, stakeholders, and the general public. Such great concern has led to the organization of high profile conferences and summits geared towards addressing the horrifying implication of the unsustainable use of the world natural resources (Jonathan et al, 2011). From the Stockholm Conference of 1972, the Rio de Janeiro Conference of 1992, the New York Conference of 1997 and the Johannesburg Conference of 2002 e,tc. In fact since 1992 there have been greater attempt to situate the concept of sustainable development as a driving force in achieving balance between resource exploitation and development.

However, the gloomy picture of poverty, inequality, and corruption is fast been tied to natural resource extraction or non extraction or even as a result of environmental injustice. Population growth, urbanization and globalization and increasing pressure on natural resources are the driving force of environmental degradation. Since the mid-1990s, the number of natural disasters and associated fatalities worldwide has been on the rise. Natural resources are being exploited in the name of economic development, these growing degradation of resources as a result of developmental activities of man for instance the construction of dams, roads, exploration for mineral resources and mining activity e.t.c have dominated the environment. A human inference in natural environmental conditions often gives these dynamic processes catastrophic proportions, leading to disaster and irreparable damage to the natural balance of the ecosystem (Pant & Khanduri, 1998). these detrimental effects through more gradual degradation of the environment are already felt in many areas such as agriculture and food security, biodiversity and ecosystems, water resources, human health, human settlements and migration patterns, energy, transport and industry just to mention a few.

Therefore, the depletion of natural resources by environmental degradation has a significant effect on the daily life of a woman and the well being of her life. Because primarily women constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change and are the most vulnerable to these effects than men. Environmental pollution and the destruction of ecosystems are good examples of violence against the environment; they undermine indigenous peoples' control and access to their lands and resources and often compromise

women's ability to take care of their children and families due to health problems, contamination, displacement and increased violence.

In Africa poverty is a major reason and consequence of the environmental degradation. Therefore, poverty and environmental degradation have disproportionate impacts on women. Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources leads to vicious circle of poverty which in turn destroys the economic livelihood of the people and leads to social violence. Thus, it can be argued that environmental degradation and poverty are inextricably intertwined (NEPAD, 2003). The consequence of this linkage is a vicious cycle in which poverty causes the degradation of the environment, and such degradation in turn perpetuates more poverty (World Resource Institute, 2005). Based on this premise as women are dominated and controlled so too is nature, as famine oppression and abuse parallels no woman is exempt from violence and exploitation. Throughout the world, women experience violence because of their status as women, and often because they do not have the same rights or autonomy that men do. While women in many parts of the world have made advances in areas previously closed to them, in some part problem of violence against women remains pervasive.

In particular Nigeria, the violence against women is on the increase. The multiple burdens on women are particularly acute due to women's economic dependence on men, reinforced by cultural traditions and religious practices that dictate women's relationships and roles in societies as well as the relationships to resources, especially land.

## **2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The area of gender, environment and sustainable development has developed into a professional field of work. The thinking about women, environment and sustainable development has been influenced by parallel theoretical developments in the field of gender and development in general. Albeit there is a danger in labelling people's thinking and there is a myriad of diverse perspectives in the efforts made to explain and interpret the relationships between gender, environment and sustainable development, several schools of thought can be distinguished; for instance, Ecofeminism, Descriptive Approach and Feminist Environmentalism. For the purpose of this paper, ecofeminism serves as a frame work.

### **2.1 ECOFEMINISM**

Ecofeminism is the link between the domination and suppression of women and the domination and exploitation of nature. The term ecofeminism was introduced by the French feminist writer Francoise d'Eaubonne in the mid 1970s. According to d'Eaubonne, the two most immediate threats to survival, overpopulation and destruction of our resources, were as a result of patriarchal oppression. Ecofeminists insist that women are closer to nature than men and they see a connection between male domination of nature and the male domination of women (Dankleman, 2003). The Indian physicist Vandana Shiva was particularly strong on this in her publication *Staying Alive* (1988) and in later publications. She argues that paternalistic, colonial and neo-colonial forces and values have marginalized women and women's scientific knowledge, as well as nature. It is male dominated 'mal-development' which has caused major social and environmental problems. In its transformational and essentialist stances ecofeminism tend towards anti development. ecofeminism comes the contention that the assertion of control over nature and over women has been an integrated, parallel process, historically connected (Mies and Shiva, 1993). This, it is maintained due to the effects of the patriarchal societies.

As Greta Gaard (2001) indicates, ecofeminism is a movement that fosters awareness toward the everyday problems of environmental degradation and social injustice more than merely a theory about feminism and environmentalism or women and nature. Accordingly, Gaard's stance regarding environmental degradation and social injustice strengthens the claim that the way human beings treat nature reflects the way they treat each other. Ecofeminism therefore, portrays the historical exploitation and domination of women and nature, and both are seen as victims of development.

Promoting gender quality, protecting women's right is now globally accepted as a development strategy for reducing poverty levels among women and men, improving health and living standards and enhancing efficiency of public investment and protecting the environment. Therefore, the attainment of gender equality is not seen as an end in itself and a human right issue, but as prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development.

### **3.0 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIOLENCE OF NATURE AND WOMEN**

The environment is an input of human basic needs such as food, shelter, clothes and love. This implies that human, plant and animal life is entirely dependent upon the environment, and any attempt to degrade or pollute the environment results in destruction of human life. However, human influences through rapid industrialization, agriculture, deforestation and overfishing have adjusted the Earth's systems. According to Jeong (2000), just from the 1950s until today, about half of the tropical forests in the world have been cleared. This has been associated with an enormous loss of biodiversity.

Climate change associated with rising sea levels and severe weather events, as well as environmental degradation and resource depletion, can all contribute to social and economic conditions in which violence against women and girls is known to increase. Environmental degradation affects societies in all regions and people of all generations, ages, classes, genders, income groups and occupations. Women are the main consumers of household energy and products and producers of the world's staple crops, but they face multiple discriminations such as unequal access to land, credit and information. Particularly at risk are poor urban and rural women who live in densely populated coastal and low-lying areas and remote islands. Older women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, minorities and low-income women face multiple layers of discrimination which add to already existing risk factors.

[Carolyn Merchant](#) and [Vandana Shiva](#) wrote that there is a connection between dominance of women and dominance of nature. Shiva said, "The rupture within nature and between man and nature, and its associated transformation from a life-force that sustains to an exploitable resource characterizes the Cartesian view which has displaced more ecological world-views and created a development paradigm which cripples nature and woman simultaneously" (Shiva, 1998). Exploitation of women's labor as well as the abuse of natural environment are connected as they are both marginalized within the economy. Both the environment and women have been viewed as exploitable resources that are significantly undervalued. This argument supports ecofeminism in that women in developing countries rely on nature to survive, therefore, destruction of the environment results in elimination of women's method to survival. According to Jiggins, environmental degradation affects women the most, furthering the inequalities between men and women. One study showed that new developments in technology and developments in land access are denied to women, furthering their subordination and inequality.

Accordingly, Water and fuel wood are vital natural resources and their collection and use in the household is largely the responsibility of women and girls. In the rural areas of Africa and Asia women are highly dependent on natural resources such as water and fuel wood. As water supplies and other natural resources become depleted due to over exploitation, the amount of time and energy women and girls spend on household duties dramatically increases. Women have to travel long distance to collect water and fuel wood, requiring much of their valuable time.

Environmental conflicts can also result in environmental degradation that can have an impact on the health and well-being of people. Women in particular could be differently impacted than men. Therefore, women are hurt most by the exploitation of the earth because they are the most vulnerable in patriarchal society. Women are more at risk because they suffer double oppression of poverty, race, education, or nation. Among these vulnerable groups and victims of exploitation are women in developing countries. Primarily, they constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. For example, air pollution has often been linked to weakening of women's reproductive health status.

#### **4.0 GENDER AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

As indicated by both theory and evidence, the lack of progress on gender equality may be at the heart of the failure to advance on sustainable development. Consequently, sustainable development requires the full and equal participation of women at all levels, with further emphasis by Hemmati and Gardiner (2002), who say that women's rights are universal human rights and are protected by international human rights conventions. Also, it is clearly inappropriate to try and address problems, to identify the appropriate strategies, or to implement the solutions if only half of the people concerned are involved in the process. Gender equity is an essential building block in sustainable development. Sustainable development has exposed a lot of gender inequalities. According to Johnsson-Latham (2007) the term gender equality in the present context refers to a state of affairs in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities in all walks of life. It also means the presence of a gender perspective in decision-making of all kinds and giving women's interests the same consideration as men's in terms of rights and the allocation of resources. Sadly however, gender inequity remains pervasive in all countries of the world. This being both of public concern but also tied to individual behaviour. Generally, the obstacles to women's full participation in sustainable development and in public life can be grouped into three categories (Agenda 21, Chapter 24.2.c):

- Constitutional factors, including legal and administrative areas
- Cultural, social, psychological and behavioural factors
- Economic factors, including access to and ownership of resources.

Having noted this, the following three "pillars" of sustainable development can therefore not be achieved without solving the prevailing problem of gender inequity:

- **Environmental protection** requires a solid understanding of women's relationship to environmental resources, as well as their rights and roles in resource planning and management. It also calls for acknowledgement and incorporation of women's



knowledge of environmental matters, furthermore an understanding of the gender specific impacts of environmental degradation and misuse.

- **Economic well-being** demands gender-sensitive strategies. Economic well-being of any society cannot be achieved if one group is massively underprivileged compared to the other. No economy can be called healthy without utilising the contributions and skills of all members of society.
- **Social equity** is fundamentally linked to gender equity. No society can survive sustainably, or allow its members to live in dignity, if there is prejudice and discrimination of any social group (Hemmati & Gardiner 2002).

Women need to be guaranteed the right to land, to their own bodies, to sexual and reproductive health and rights, financial equality with men – and to the right to have the same say as men in decisions affecting any aspect of sustainable development. Further, the social dimension of sustainable development is a neglected area in such analyses. Often, this places women at a disadvantage, since the social dimension affects gender-based rights and social position, which are key factors in determining women's access to resources, decision-making and the like (Johnsson-Latham, 2007). Such awareness of patterns and causes means that matters can then be taken a step further to examine how men's and women's lifestyles and consumption have different effects on the environment and on sustainable development, and how gender equality benefits sustainable development.

To conclude therefore, sustainable development must extend to all aspects of women's contribution; human security whether environment, economic, social cultural or personal. Sustainable development demands that women's priorities and vision of development goals and approaches are clearly addressed, integrated and promoted especially in policies related to education, science, culture, communication and information. Thus must be based on three strategic principles:

- Universality - promotion and respect for universal freedoms and right, especially the right to education, freedom of expression and freedom from poverty.
- Diversity – ensuring the respect for cultural diversity and pluralism particularly in education. The cultural sphere and the media.
- Participation – ensuring the full participation of women in the emerging knowledge societies and their involvement in policy dialogue and implementation (UNESCO, 2002).

## 5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is a federal republic comprising thirty-six (36) states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. A country blessed with a lot of natural resources, with a population of 170 million Within the sub-Saharan region, Nigeria has to contend with the various environmental problems, particularly the encroaching desert from the north and coastal inundation (due to rising sea levels) from the south. Eleven out of the thirty-six states in the country referred to as the 'frontline states' are gradually being 'swallowed-up' by desertification, while sea level rise is slowly 'eating-away' the eight coastal states. These are states where the impact of climate change is expected to be severe because it will exacerbate the existing environmental degradation.

However, environmental degradation in Nigeria results from factors such as economic growth, population growth, urbanization, intensification of agriculture, rising energy use and transportation. It is therefore, safe to conclude that environmental changes in Nigeria are a

result of the dynamic interplay of socio-economic, institution and technological activities (Alo, 2008; Sule, 1995 quoted in Sajini, 2011).

Another important factor responsible for causing the environmental degradation in the Nigerian state is the issue of lack of political will on the part of government to enforce environmental regulations or to adopt new and proactive regulations that will safeguard the environment from degradation. As observed by Professor Onokerhoraye with regard to the enforcement of environmental regulations against oil companies in Nigeria, '[a] number of environmental laws geared towards protecting the environment exist but are poorly enforced. The economic importance of petroleum to national development is such that environmental considerations are given marginal attention'.

## 5.1 DEFORESTATION

Deforestation is a serious problem in Nigeria, which currently has one of the highest rates of forest loss (3.3 percent) in the world. Since 1990, the country has lost some 6.1 million hectares or 35.7 percent of its forest covers. Worse, Nigeria's most biodiverse ecosystems—its old-growth forests are disappearing at an even faster rate. Between 1990 and 2005, the country lost a staggering 79 percent of these forests and since 2000 Nigeria has been losing an average of 11 percent of its primary forests per year double the rate of the 1990s. These figures give Nigeria the dubious distinction of having the highest deforestation rate of natural forest on the planet.

The continuous removal or destruction of significant areas of forest cover has resulted in a highly degraded environment with attendant reduction in biodiversity. It also causes soil erosion and in marginal lands, can lead to desertification. UNEP in 2006 estimated that annual deforestation in Nigeria covers 663,000ha with an annual national deforestation rate of 0.76%. Deforestation rate in the southwest geopolitical zone is as high as 1.36% which is double the national average. Data on vegetation and land use changes between 1976 and 1995 reveals that the area covered by undisturbed forests in Nigeria decreased by 53.5% from 25,951sqkm in 1976 to just 12,114sqkm in 1991 (FORMECU, 1998)

However, the major driving factor for deforestation in Nigeria today is the rapidly growing population with attendant higher demand for agricultural land, livestock production and fuel wood. Unfortunately, these demands will continue to increase with the population if nothing drastic is done. The persistence of the age-old practice of shifting cultivation ("slash-and-burn") will also continue to drive this threat as farmers will continue to move, plundering our forests as the soil fertility in the farms decline. The dependence on fuelwood for cooking by rural dwellers and urban poor further fuels deforestation while uncontrolled and indiscriminate fire by farmers and hunters has also consumed much of our forest cover.

The use of fuel wood is more in rural area than urban constituting 92.0% of fuel wood because of its availability, cheapness, tradition and because other sources of domestic fuel are near absence. On a whole, kerosene constitutes about 54.1% of fuel for cooking in urban areas. This is not because it is available and affordable, but because wood is scarce due to high urbanization and near absence or scarcity of other sources of domestic energy. At the national level, electricity and gas used for cooking constitute only 0.7% each; kerosene, 22.9%, wood, 74.1% and coal, 1.6%. Kebbi state has the highest % of fuel wood consumption (99.2%) in the country, while Gombe has the least (92.4%) among the desert prone area. These figures are very alarming to believe

## 5.2 DESERTIFICATION

Nigeria is losing about 351, 000 km<sup>2</sup> to the desert representing 38% of its total landmass. It is also estimated that more than 30 million people in Nigeria live under the hardship of desertification . There are 19 states in Northern Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Of this number, ten (10) states are already affected by desertification. The affected states include Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, Yobe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi. These ten states, with a population of about 27 million people, account for about 38% of the country's total land area. In these areas, population pressure, resulting in overgrazing, over exploitation for fuel wood of marginal lands and aggravated drought due to global warming has accelerated the rate of desertification.

Although, the magnitude of this environmental hazard is not equal, as one moves further north, it becomes more severe [8]. Therefore, the extreme / boundary states of northern Nigeria (Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Jigawa, Borno, Katsina & Kebbi) experience severe desertification, while Bauchi, Gombe and Kano experience moderate desertification. Meanwhile, Adamawa, Taraba, Kaduna and Niger states are already witnessing the signs of desertification, while the ecological density of the guinea savanna in general is on the decline.

The high population of the region coupled with the high population increase as well as the absence of a close substitute to fuel wood account for the high rate of fuel wood consumption in the region which is contributing in no small measure to the desertification of the zone as fuel wood is needed on daily basis for cooking, roasting, bakery, black smith and for warming during harmattan.

Desertification is also affecting agriculture in the zone due to over dryness of the environment, dry spells, drought, inadequate rainfall, increasing temperature, reduction in transpiration, increasing evaporation, low soil nutrients, inadequate pasture, erosion and flooding among others. This therefore is contributing to food shortage, food insecurity, malnutrition, depletion of vegetative resources, increasing unemployment, increasing conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, shortage of both surface and underground water especially in dry season as well as the migration of birds, domestic animals, jungle animals and people in search of means of survival.

## 5.3 POLLUTION

Nigeria experiences the problems of Air, water, noise and oil pollution. About ninety-five percent of waste gases from the production fields and operation are flared. Gas flaring pollutes the air and it is common practice among companies in Nigeria especially in the Niger-Delta region which is hazardous to the ozone layer of the area and leading to climate change (IPCC, 2007).

## 5.4 OIL EXPLORATION IN THE NIGER DELTA

The Niger Delta is located in the Atlantic coast of Southern Nigeria and is the world's second largest delta with a coastline of about 450km which ends at Imo river entrance (Awosika, 1995). The region is about 20,000sq/km as it is the largest wetland in Africa and among the third largest in the world (Powell, et al., 1985; CLO, 2002; Anifowose, 2008; Chinweze and Abiola-Oloke, 2009).

The exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the Niger-Delta has resulted to a number of environmental problems for the region. Since then oil exploration and exploitation has continued resulting into what is termed environmental destruction due to neglect and less concern of the multinational companies in environmental management in the area. The environmental degradation resulting from oil and gas production in the Niger-Delta has attracted the attention of environmentalists and other experts, who look at the region within the larger context of globalization (UNDP Report, 2006). The Niger-Delta environment has suffered degradation as a result of oil and gas exploration leading to air pollution, water pollution and land degradation from oil spillage, gas flaring and canalization. The profound changes had adverse effects on the local livelihoods and social well-being of the people of Niger delta and the most affected are women and children.

## **6.0 WOMEN, ENVIRONMENTAL DRADATION, AND SOCIAL VIOLENCE: THE NIGERIAN WOMEN EXPERIENCES**

### **6.1 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide. Gender based violence which often stems from existing socio-cultural attitudes that regard women as inferior to men, take place in various forms like beating, rape, acid-throwing, trafficking, sexual coercion and harassment, as well as verbal and psychological abuse. Despite all national and international conventions, women and girls in Nigeria are still being discriminated against, marginalized and oppressed. Gender based violence against women in Nigeria occur in many areas but more of domestic (violence within the family). According to WHO (2002), about one third of all the women in Nigeria had at one time or the other been a victim of violence in its divers form. One in five has experienced physical violence. Violence is endemic in some public institutions, including the police and certain educational bodies, where an “entrenched culture of impunity” protects perpetrators of rape and other violence. These crimes are under-reported and very few cases are brought to court (UNFPA, 2012).

Violence against women in Nigeria results from biological differentiation of sexes, culture, financial insecurity and poverty, these shows that the Nigeria is a patriarchal society. For instance “If a man cannot establish his authority economically over his family members, he would tend to do so physically”. A situation where a man is unable to meet the financial needs of his family members means he has failed in his responsibility, as it is well known no man would like to be seen as a failure. In other words total dependency on a man, by the family members leads to frustration and sometimes, expresses it through the use of violence (Uwaimaye & Iseramaiye 2013).

Ndungu (2004) opined that the reproductive and productive roles of women often place them at the bottom of the ladder. They are mostly found in low paid jobs, which rob them of power to participate in decision making, within the political, social-economic and cultural sphere of life. This situation results in the over burdening of women with family and domestic responsibilities while giving them no resources or political room to improve their standard of living. In some parts of Nigeria, it is known that the input of the girl child into the family income is so high that it becomes economically unwise to allow such a child to go to school. Examples of such inputs include generating income by hawking food items, helping with the household chores and looking after the younger ones or even working as house helps to wealthier families to ease the financial burden on their own families.

Street hawking is a common form of child labour in most developing countries like Nigeria and the female child is usually involved. Most often the girl child is sent onto the street to hawk all kinds of wares because of poverty related issues and to help supplement family income. The child on the street is exposed to malnutrition, respiratory tract infection, mental illness and substance abused (Sherman,1992) and the young female hawkers are in addition particularly vulnerable to all forms of violence including sexual exploitation by men (Daniel, 1976). An earlier study on street children in Nigeria found that more than 15.4 % of female adolescent hawkers had procured abortion at least twice, had been pregnant without knowing who was responsible, had experienced rape and also contracted sexually transmitted infections (including HIV) (Osimono, 1992). A more recent study showed that 30% of the violence experienced by girls on the street is sexual in nature (Fawole, 2003). Rape is on the increase in both the North and Southern part of Nigeria. Gender-based violence is a concern and a violation of human rights more so when it occurs in the child. This problem is increasing in Nigeria due to large family size, wide spread poverty and growing unemployment.

The increasing inflation and economic down turn in Nigeria also places an extra burden on women to meet the expectations of economic contributor to the upkeep of the household. While this is accepted generally by men as a necessary action for survival of the family, most men in Nigeria would resist equating this important economic function of the woman to her right to assert some level of control on decision making in the house. Therefore, her income is always regarded as supplementary even when it provides major sustenance for the family. However, the point to make is the double invisible burden that the women bears due to the hypocritical stance of a culture that insists on trivalising her individuality and her economic contribution while also acknowledging of the necessity of such contribution. Moser makes reference to women's increasing roles in her triple role concept within her framework for gender analysis. She identifies these as reproductive, productive and community work. These roles are typical burdens that the Nigerian woman bears everyday of her life. It is the attempt to meet these demands, and assert her importance more visibility that makes women and her children more vulnerable to violence.

## **6.2 IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION**

Another suffering is added to women they are the worst victims of environmental degradation. Since the lives of women in Nigeria are totally dependent on nature, they have to carry their family through managing and using natural resources. The common forms of environmental degradation in the country include desertification, and land degradation, poor pollution of water, air and land due to improper and industrial waste, rising sea levels induced by global warming, and deforestation with its many consequences adversely affects the people and most of its impacts fell on women. All these affect human well-being especially the health and socio-economic well-being of women in particular and the world as a whole. Therefore, Nigeria, women have to depend on natural resources for their existence (e.g. food, fuel, fodder, water, medicine and income-generating activities) and on the contrary, they have to suffer more for environmental degradation.

Environmental degradation clearly endangers women as the primary users and managers of natural resources for instance drought effects on women farmers, deforestation effects on fuel wood gathering. The use of fuel wood for energy to cook, boil water, heat and light home contributes to environmental degradation. More 8% of the population of Africa still relies on fuel wood cooking and heating. Although, Nigeria is a rich country in disguise leading to high poverty rate especially in rural areas as well as unemployment. Many

Nigerians live below poverty level and as such cannot afford the cost of kerosene which is now an essential commodity and more expensive than fuel. For instance, while fuel is sold for ninety seven naira (N97: 00) only per litre; kerosene is sold for one hundred and thirty naira (N130: 00) in most filling stations in the country with a long queue. This makes most Nigerians to resort to “nature” for fuel wood, hence high rate of fuel wood consumption leading to environmental degradation.

Consequently, the depletion of natural resources such as forest has a significant effect on the daily life of the Nigerian woman. Scarcity of fuels biomass is not only critical to the lives of Nigerian woman in terms of taking up more of their time and energy but also affects the nutritional and health status of all. This emission from biomass fuel is dangerous source of air pollution in the home where women cook all year round (WHO, 1984). The rights of the Nigerian woman to live in a healthy environment and develop her potential is daily threatened by pollution, by it air or water. Indeed, women face a variety of health risk from toxic chemicals. Emissions from fuel wood smoke are responsible for a lot of health problems to the Nigerian woman like cancer, birth defects, genetic damage and instant death. In addition, with the high rate of poverty among the Nigerian women, her use of firewood causes her chronic lung and heart diseases.

Water is the most essential resources for sustenance of life. No fewer than 334 million people representing 39 percent of the population of sub-Sahara Africa lack access to clean drinking water. Similarly, about 600 million people which is approximately 70 percent region’s population, lack access to sanitation (Vanguard, 2013). Most Nigerians lack fresh drinking water; Women there still shoulder the burden of collecting water daily for both domestic and agricultural use; bathing is a luxury.

Environmental degradation resulting to climate change has already displaced millions of people, and more displacement is on the way. Virtually, every Nigerian is vulnerable to disasters, natural or man-made. Every rainy season, wind gusts arising from tropical storms claims lives and property worth million of Naira across the country. In Nigeria, following incessant rains between June and August, 2010, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced while properties running into billions of naira were destroyed. The worst affected are communities in Sokoto, Kebbi and Jigawa States in the northern part of Nigeria where the Goronyo dam in Sokoto State overflowed its banks, and in Lagos and Ogun States in the western part of Nigeria as a result of release of water from the Oyan dam by the Ogun-Oshun River Basin Development.

Subsequently, in 2012, Nigeria witnessed the worst flooding in many years, displacing thousands and leading to deaths (displaced millions from their homes and killed over 300 people) and outbreaks of diseases. The overwhelming floods were first experienced in the northern parts of the country. Many states in the south were dramatically affected, especially those in the flood prone Niger Delta. According to the **National Emergency Management Agency**, a total of 7.7 million people were affected by flooding during the period, of which 2.1 million were officially registered across the country as internally displaced persons. And the worst affected are women and children for instance In Ibaji Local Government Area of Kogi State, one of the worst hit parts of the country during the 2012 flood, though the flood has come and gone, things have not been the same for many of the victims. Women and their children stayed days on end in canoes, on ant Hills, trees and tops of storey buildings. Many of the victims went for days without food, because there was no place to cook, poor sanitation. Children and family members to the flood, some were beaten

by snakes, suffered from flood related diseases and some collapsed on seeing their source of livelihood, properties and homes destroyed (Daily trust, 2013). Sanitary pads and toiletries were not available for the women to use.

According to the Social Action briefing the flood which occurred in parts of Nigeria in 2012 is the county's worst in living memory. The rights of victims were grossly abused in some cases. In some flood camps there were no medical personnel or drug supplies of any sort. Several births were recorded amongst female inmates in these camps with absolutely no maternal or neo-maternal care provided by the government or local council. Other diseases such as pneumonia, malaria, and cough e.t.c were also spread amongst women and children with no medical attention. There were also no provision of water in most of the camps this created very poor sanitary and situation this further endangered the lives of displaced persons. Due to corrupt nature of Nigerians there were many cases where relief materials were diverted and sold in the open market.

The worst of the 2012 flood was Mrs. Maureen Lucky, a mother of three children and native of Okwuzi community in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers state. She was HIV positive and lived alone with her children, after her husband abandoned her. When the floods swept her community, her mud house collapsed under its tide. She and her children became homeless. When the state government set up camps for flooded victims in the state, Mrs Maureen along with two of her children went to the flood camp in her community, to seek shelter. She was evicted from the camp because she has HIV along with her two children. She later took shelter in an uncompleted building. With the floods receding and people returning to their homes, Mrs Lucky was left helpless with her children. Sadly, she died on November 2012 (Social Action, 2012)

Therefore, over population, poverty, bad leadership, urban growth and many other factors leads to depletion of natural resources, which in turn increased violence against women in Nigeria. There are reports of deforestation and loss of ecosystems, changes in atmospheric composition. Starvation, malnutrition, poor diet with ill health and diet-deficiency diseases; poverty coupled with inflation has resulted in low level of capital formation. Desperation to survive has elevated crime rate in a struggle over scarce resources and crowding, leading to increased violence against women and girls especially rape. The country now faces high rate of corruption, high unemployment, persistent poverty (estimated at 54.4 percent), and lack of basic medical care. According to the United States Library of Congress (2006), "The poor condition of health and health care in Nigeria is one of the factors responsible for an average life expectancy of only 47 years. In 2000 only 57 percent of the population had access to safe drinking water, and a slightly lower percentage had access to adequate sanitation." Domestic violence and discrimination against women are now widespread.

Mellor (1988) discussed the links between environmental problems and poverty. The assault on the environment in developing countries is perpetuated by poverty. In Nigeria, 80 to 90 per cent of the poor live outside cities. Half of these rural poor live on resources with the potential to increase production and income in environmentally unfriendly ways. According to UNICEF (2001) poverty has many dimensions including poor access to public services and infrastructure, unsanitary environmental surroundings, illiteracy and ignorance, poor health, insecurity, voicelessness and social exclusion as well as low levels of household income and food insecurity. These features, which are part of the social reality of the poor in Nigeria, tend to be mutually re-enforcing, trapping the poor in a vicious circle. Nigeria ranks

158th of 177 countries measured in the United Nations Human Development Index (UNDP 2008). While the share of Nigeria's population living below the poverty line has fallen from 70 percent in 1999 to 54 percent in 2005, over half the population lives on less than US\$1 per day (IMF 2007). This translates into approximately 80 million Nigerians living in poverty. Only China and India have larger populations of poor people (DFID 2004).

Nigeria's poor are more likely to live in the north and are predominantly rural, female, very young or old, and dependent on renewable natural resources for their livelihoods. Sixty-four percent of those living in rural areas are poor, compared with 35 percent in towns and cities (World Bank/ DFID 2005). Women make up greater percentage of the poor in Nigeria. Poverty among women is likely related to their under-representation in the workplace: while more than 87% of adult males participate in the labour force, the proportion among females is nearly 50% (UNFPA 2005). In the non-agricultural sector, only 21 percent of the workforce is female, while only 7 percent of members of parliament are women (World Bank 2008). Women who are employed work for longer hours on average than men, both in agricultural and non-agricultural activities (Rahman 2008). A survey of 230 women in Kaduna State found that only 42 percent of women were involved in farming decisions, with the rate in the north of the state at 26 percent (Rahman 2008). Furthermore, only 11 percent of women had access to resources such as credit, land, equipment and other agricultural inputs including fertilizer, seeds, and transport and storage facilities. Men also controlled decision making in the selling and consumption of produce. Lower rates of female literacy (relative to male literacy) may also influence women's employment options and decision making power. Poverty may reinforce established inequalities by influencing health and healthcare.

Although, women provide over 75 percent of the world's labour and yet have less than 10 percent control over world resources and assets. Gender inequalities in the social, economic, and political spheres of development further marginalize women and reinforces their disadvantaged position in the society especially in the access to and control over resources, lack of decision making power at family, community and national levels, invisibility of women's economic contributions to the growth of the society as a result of the non-recognition of women's labour in the national accounting processes. Although women make up half of the population, their formal representation in governance institutions is very limited. At the ministerial represent a paltry 0.1 percentage, 4.7 percent at the Assembly, 2.8 percent at the Senate 0.6 percent at the local councils. Also, only 60 percent (2003 figures) of school age children attend primary school with significant regional negative gender gaps for girls than boys CIDA (2005). According to UNDP currently there was still low representation of women at all levels of government in Nigeria. In the country's general election in 2011, female candidates fared poorly, with only 32 women elected to the national parliament out of 469 members, which is barely 8% representation.

Therefore, women in Nigeria have unequal access to economic opportunities - education, jobs, healthcare in additions to lack of access and control over productive resources such as land, labour, technology and capital. Despite the deprivation, women bear the burden of financial responsibility and provisioning and the production of health within households. With women's lower status, less opportunity for social advancement, little access to political power, and a symbolical culturally promoted dependent on men; women are more vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.

Gender comparative data for adult literacy reveal a wide gender gap of 74.4 percent for males as against 59.4 percent for females in 2003 figures. In formal employment sector men



fare much better than women in Nigeria. Women's employment participation in the industrial sector is 11% compared to 30 percent for men. Also in the Federal Civil Service, (the largest single employer of labour in Nigeria,) 76 percent of people on the payroll are men compared to 24 percent of women, while less than 14 percent of management level officers are women. In addition, in the medical profession (even with the recent inflow of women into the profession) men still have an upper hand. Gender statistics report that women represent less than 20 percent of workers especially at the highly skilled positions (with the exception of nursing) compared to 80 percent of men (CIDA, 2005). Such gender disparities continue to increase women's proclivity to poverty manifestations in Nigeria.

However, the United Nations declared the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the year 2000 with the aim of reducing to the barest minimum, by 2015, global poverty and hunger; illiteracy; gender inequality; child and maternal mortality; HIV/AIDS and other world development challenges. Unfortunately, available evidence shows that most, if not all countries in Africa will not achieve the MDGs by 2015. Over a decade of preoccupation with the millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has not yielded the desired results in Africa. Illiteracy, Poverty and hunger, malaria, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and insecurity are still pervasive (Mmaduabuchi & Uche, 2013). In Nigeria, extreme poverty and hunger, lack of access to basic and quality education, gender inequality and discrimination, environmental degradation and underdevelopment are still prevalent.

## 0.7 RECOMMENDATION

Any nation that does not take the education of women seriously cannot develop as women constitute more than half of the population. Also, poverty reduction cannot be attained without social and economic equalities, sustainable development cannot be achieved without paying careful attention to gender-based disparities and differences. Therefore:

- Balancing women's human rights, the environment and Sustainable development is imperative for a healthy environment.
- Promoting respect for human rights for the achievement of sustainable development objectives including environmental protection in Nigeria, demands that government respect not only civil and political rights, but also, social, economic, cultural and environmental rights.
- Implementation of strong environmental laws and regulations
- Government should encourage higher enrollment rate for girls in school
- Ensure that women's leadership and participation in governance and decision-making is fully recognized and encouraged
- Strong policies and practices that advance and protect women's rights should be fully implemented also take actions to protect women and girls from violence and provide support if they suffer violence

- There is need for a transparent, effective and independent, executive, legislative and judicial system to achieve the sustainable development objectives including gender equality, environmental protection, tackle poverty and also ensures uncorrupt society.
- The citizen should be conscious of their rights as citizens as such offers an arena in which people can hold political leaders and public officials to account, protect themselves from exploitation by those with more power, and resolve conflicts that are individual or collective.

## 0.8 CONCLUSION

This paper argues that the issue of violation and non-implementation of women's rights and environmental destruction forms the basis for violence against women and girls and the violence against the natural environment. However, the arguments in this paper tried to show that poverty leads to environmental degradation and these affect women because they are the most vulnerable within the society. The patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society dictated by social systems and practices enables the gravitation of women and girls to violence. Systemic discrimination, subordination and invisibility of women promoted by cultural norms and practices which characterize gender relations at the household, family levels and perpetuate the perception of women as inferior. This perception increases gender inequalities, which in turn exacerbates the burden of poverty for women. Therefore, fighting poverty will ensure a healthy sustainable environment and protection of women from all sort of violence.

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## From Community Activism to Government Policy:

### The role of women's leadership

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## Background

Feminist activism has been central to the struggle for women's health and wellbeing in Australia since the 1970s. In the early days of the women's movement this struggle took place at a community level, but since that time several key changes have occurred that has led to women's leadership being an important factor in changes in the status of women and recognition of women's issues such as family violence and sexual assault as critical for the overall health and wellbeing of women and of the whole community. Key moments in this struggle were the Australian Sex Discrimination Act in 1975 and Australia's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1983.

Until the 1980s violence against women was essentially a private matter, not to be spoken about outside of the family. The women's health movement played a key role in lobbying to change this, and in the 1980s won funding from the government for women's refuges and rape crisis services. Over the next two decades these services were increasingly under pressure with the sheer volume of women requiring the services they provided. Even though work to respond to violence after it has occurred had been on-going for many decades, understanding prevention and how it works was relatively new.

Women in the community sector who had been providing these services and lobbying government for increased support stepped up their pressure on government and by the early 2000 the system was broken. Increasingly there was an understanding that violence against women and girls was a serious health problem but there was little data to provide the evidence to support systemic change. In 1996, the population-based, epidemiological UN global burden of disease study was carried out internationally.

Since the 1980s a new phenomenon has emerged in the government of some Western developed countries; the femocracy, or Femocrats. In the 1970s and 1980s demands from Australian women for equality were to some degree supported by the socially liberal governments of the time, and women were encouraged to look to the state to meet their claims (Sawer 1996), making government policy important in the safety and inclusion of women in all spheres of civic life. This relationship between women and the state in Australia not only resulted in changing the status of women, but also in some women being employed in key positions in government departments, and an increased recognition of 'women's issues' across government (Sawer, 1996). Sawer and others have described these women as 'femocrats' and have noted their success in working from within government to keep women's issues on the agenda and resourced.

Other things had been going on in the community at the same time and another key player entered the picture in the form of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth). VicHealth carried out research in 2001 to inform mental health promotion and identified

intimate partner violence as one of the key determinants of poor mental health outcomes for women. As a result, VicHealth has taken a key role in driving prevention efforts in Victoria ever since.

In 2002 the World Health Organisation released the *World Report On Violence and Health*, which brought the scope and impact of violence against women to the world stage. The report called for urgent action on prevention. In Australia in 2004 VicHealth and the state government of Victoria commissioned a study *The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the Burden of Disease Caused by Intimate Partner Violence*, which demonstrated that intimate partner violence was prevalent, serious and preventable (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2004). The study calculated that the health cost of intimate partner violence in 2002/3 had been \$A8.1B. Thus the stage was set for major changes in the community sector that responded to violence against women and for the emergence of a new, parallel prevention sector. Work began on improving the response system and on exploring the possibility of a comprehensive, whole of government prevention policy.

In 2009 the state government of Victoria in Australia introduced *A Right to Respect: Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence against Women (2010–2020)* (ARTR), a whole of government prevention plan. What might have seemed to signal a new direction was actually the culmination of the work of many people for more than a decade. The actors who contributed to this process include (among others) community activists, health professionals, academics, practitioners, government bureaucrats and politicians.

## Methodology

In 2012 Partners for Prevention, a Bangkok based UN agency working on preventing violence against women in the Asia Pacific region commissioned the author to carry out research to understand and document the processes that led to ARTR.

Twelve key informants with women (and one man) from each of the sectors identified below who had been involved in the processes that led to ARTR were interviewed. A literature review and extensive document reviews were also carried out. Late in 2012 the report titled *Preventing Violence against Women and Girls: From community activism to government policy* was released. This paper will focus on the role of women's activism and leadership in the lead up to and development of the policy in 2009.

## The Players

**The response sector:** while not all of the women who work in this sector define themselves as feminists, the sector works on feminist principles that recognises the structural and societal nature of gender inequality, and bases its work on safety, respect and equity. Women's refuges, rape and sexual assault services and women's health services are all



based on these principles. Together they form a strong and vocal lobby group. Interviews were carried out with representatives of the response sector.

**An authorizing environment:** The term authorising environment is used mainly in relation to governance. Authorising environments include formal and informal bodies which provide legitimacy and support for a particular issue or area. It may include elected officials, foundations, the media, special interest and advocacy groups, business and industry. In Victoria, VicHealth was an early leader in the field. The authorizing environment in this case was VicHealth, and representatives from VicHealth were interviewed.

**The government sector:** The overall co-ordination of government responses to the service system fell to the Office of Women's Policy (OWP), which reported to the Premier. This was staffed by a small staff made up of women who were bureaucrats who had come from the community sector in the past – these were the Femocrats who took leadership of the process that led to government policy, created connections across different departments and with the response sector. Extensive interviews and consultations took place with representatives from OWP.

## Findings: Women's Leadership

### Act One 2002 - 2009: Fixing the Broken Response System

#### *Community/government co-ordination to improve services*

By the late 1990s the system was overwhelmed. Only women escaping the most violent abuse could find refuge, and it was becoming increasingly obvious that the service system was not well enough resourced to meet the needs of those who needed it. One refuge worker explained:

We were working 24/7. We were worried that women would not be alive the next day because we had no safe accommodation for them. Men followed women to our safe houses. We had little if any support from the police. We had no systems in place to work collaboratively with them.

Two state-wide steering committees were established to consult with the response sector; one for family violence and another for sexual assault. The sexual assault and family violence committees were co-convened by Victoria Police and the state government's Office of Women's Policy, and membership included community and response sector representatives. The vast majority of participants were women, and all participants, male or female held senior positions and supported the feminist principles inherent in the response sector. Strong partnership was central to the work of these committees. For community representatives, participation in the committees built relationships, illuminated government processes and encouraged a more strategic approach in everyday practices.

### *Improved police and justice services*

In 2001, a new Chief Commissioner of Police, Christine Nixon, was appointed. It is notable that Commissioner Nixon was the first woman to head Victoria Police, and the first police commissioner to tackle the entrenched problems experienced by victims of family violence seeking police assistance. In 2002, Victoria Police released a *Violence against Women Strategy* and in 2004, new code of practice for investigating incidents of family violence which aimed to provide safety and support for victims as well as early intervention, investigation and prosecution of criminal offences. A senior officer was appointed by Nixon to introduce the new police code of practice in relation to gender based violence. This man, since retired, took an active role in promoting the code of practice to all police members, and reported directly to Commissioner Nixon. Training was conducted for all police members, and I asked him whether he had received any resistance, he responded:

Initially there was little tolerance for the code, and it was not easily accepted, but members were required to respond to all incidents of violence against women and were accountable as part of the code of practice (police informant).

In the training it was explained to members that the new code of practice had the potential to ease their workloads:

...links were made between where the vast majority of police work occurred (drugs, mental health and homelessness), and violence against women, the root cause of many of these conditions (police informant).

The code of practice became an accountability tool used in all members' performance reviews. There was an expectation that in dealing with family violence and sexual assault issues that all members would act respectfully when dealing with the public. As a result of the change process reports of incidents involving violence against women increased from 12,000 before the new code of practice, to 25,000 a year after it was implemented.

Attorney-General, Rob Hulls worked closely with Commissioner Nixon, and reviewed *Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987* to ensure it dealt appropriately with family violence. A community representative described the collaboration between these two state officials:

Christine Nixon was a game changer. As chief of police, and as a woman leading a male workforce she drove the reforms. The role of the attorney-general was also vital. They energised each other and for both of them to prioritise family violence was a positive for us. Hulls was the law reformer and Nixon the systems, cultural reformer. We experienced the benefits of two decent, capable leaders (community activist).

### *A whole of government approach*

A whole of government approach is designed to address the imbalance created by a perceived lack of integration between service providers and government departments. The approach is based on a 'joined up' approach to government developed in the UK (Van Gramberg, Teicher, & Rusailh, 2005). The approach aims to address what have been described as 'functional silos' between departments, with horizontal linkages and co-ordination in order to produce integrated service delivery and deal with 'wicked social problems' across jurisdictions and portfolios. A community representative explained that this was the first time community and government representatives had sat down together as equals to resolve systemic problems:

There were people [from government departments] who were compelled to be at the statewide steering committee because of the whole of government approach. This provided opportunities to develop relationships and for us in the community sector to understand the workings of government. It also enabled contacts to be made to help us resolve difficulties. We realised that we had not had a good understanding about how government departments worked. In the past we had often seen a decision we disagreed with as being personal, but as our understanding increased, we gained a better understanding and it helped us with our political advocacy (community activist).

These processes of horizontal and vertical information sharing performed the function of capacity building without putting formal education processes in place. This created an environment in which support was gained and participation in different departments encouraged using minimal resources.

### **Act two 2006 - 2009: Beyond service provision, setting the stage for prevention policy**

With improved co-ordination between government and the community response sectors, and the evidence about the scope, impact and costs of VAW provided by VicHealth, the stage was set for prevention. In 2007 VicHealth started to fund pilot prevention programs in the community and published a guide to support prevention *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*. VicHealth started to fund small community based pilot prevention programs.

In 2008 the Office of Women's Policy employed a policy officer to consult across government departments and externally with the community sector about developing a prevention policy. Building on the system that had worked on improving the response system, the team in OWP worked together. An interviewee explained:

The Office provided a fostering, supportive environment. New ideas were supported, and expertise would not have been enough without that support. The Office of Women's policy used a team approach; each member of the team had an important role to play and was interdependent with the others. What was really useful about the process was casting a wide net across the state and saying let's all do this together (OWP informant).

These women were consummate public servants who well understood the complexities of a whole of government response to an issue as potentially controversial and as complex as violence against women. They also understood that the policy would have implications for the operations of public servants in a number of departments, and rather than ramming through changes they recruited support for the policy. The officer responsible for the policy development explained:

We had lots of coffees with our opposite numbers in other departments, lots of talking in the year we were working on developing *A Right to Respect*.

The result was the release in 2009 of Victoria's ten year plan *A Right to Respect: Victoria's Plan to prevent violence against women (2010 – 2020)*. The plan was built around three pillars with the goal of implementing community-wide changes and a whole of community model for prevention:

1. Co-ordinated work in local government areas. Led by local government in conjunction with women's health services and engaging a wide range of community organisations and services, including family violence and sexual assault crisis services, this work would focus on introducing prevention and building skills and understanding in a wide range of existing local services. Among these would be disability services and groups; organisations for culturally and linguistically diverse populations; indigenous organisations; health services (hospitals, community health, clinics); community sporting organisations, clubs and members; primary, secondary and tertiary schools and institutes; local media agencies; local workplaces; other community agencies, and faith-based community representatives.
2. Resources to support local prevention work. Community grants programs would support events and programs in the local communities for new parents, sporting clubs, workplaces, school and education programs, and local media.
3. Building skills for prevention. Pre-, post- and in-service education and training for a wide range of people employed in the community, including community workers (youth, mental health, disability, new arrivals, indigenous), health promotion workers, maternal and child health nurses, school teachers and staff, childcare workers, local government workers, and sporting club leaders, managers and members.

The outcome of the whole of community model would include resources (such as how-to guides) to support prevention, and an integrated prevention and service system that is practical, affordable, transferrable to other settings, and results-oriented (evidenced by changes that are measurable over time). Underpinning and informing each of these pillars are ongoing research, evaluation and training to support the ongoing development of the whole of community model. None of these innovations would have been possible without the leadership of women at all levels in the community and government sectors.

### Act three 2009 - present: cycles of democracy – what happens when governments change?

The plan was launched late in 2009 and work started within government on the implementation of the *Ten Year Plan*. Funding of AUD\$14 million was allocated in the May budget in 2010. Although there was a “strong four year action plan in place but not announced or actioned”, after May 2010 the implementation of the plan stalled as the government went into election mode. In November 2010 the state of Victoria held elections, and the people of Victoria elected a new government.

After a period of settling in the new government announced in 2011 funding from the budget allocation in May 2010 by the former government, and three pilot sites in local government were funded. Despite the time and effort that led to ARTR the policy was abandoned, and new consultations were carried out by the new government. It was not until 2012 that a new policy was launched by the government, a watered down policy in terms of prevention. At the time of writing this policy the Australian Commonwealth government and all state governments have plans to prevention violence against women and work continues.

### Act four: what did we learn?

*Leadership*: While many people were involved in achieving the changes that led to *A Right to Respect*, a small group of people with stable leadership and a deep understanding of the issues, the context, and the field were necessary to ensure the development and passage of policy. The leadership that worked in this case can be defined as leading from behind.

*Importance of an authorising environment*: Any organisation or state wanting to embark on prevention must have the backing of an agency and leaders who are committed to the vision of ending violence against women. Whether it be a government or NGO agency, leadership from an organisation with the credibility and resources to commission local research to demonstrate the scope and impact of the problem is essential.

*Engage and educate*: Information sharing, formal presentations, briefings, and teachable moments were used when the opportunity arose to ensure all stakeholders, from

government ministers to community workers, were well informed. As time went by an increasing number of stakeholders became supporters.

*Evidence-based practice:* The development of a comprehensive, long-term policy that has wide support and commitment from all stakeholders must be based on sound and irrefutable evidence.

*Policy development:* The experience described in this research suggests that prevention policy is unlikely to gain traction unless the evidence is in place, work is underway to change community attitudes and norms about violence against women, and key stakeholders in the government understand and support the project.

*Plan for sustainability:* Restructuring and associated staff turnover in government departments means that corporate memory concerning violence response and prevention can be lost. To be effective, sustainability plans must be built into prevention planning and policy development. Important stakeholders such as opposition politicians, public service leaders and community agencies should share a public commitment to the elimination of violence against women. Ensure that there is cross party agreement in the development of important social policy with a view to sustainability beyond changes of government. The NGO sector has a role to play in ensuring that prevention plans survive successive administrations.

*Real change takes time:* The leaders of the change process in Victoria were located together in a small government unit. They supported each other, engaged the whole range of stakeholders and educated them to come on a decade-long journey together. Although the *Right to Respect* ten-year plan was not implemented, the project lead by this unit both stands as a model, and has lessons for others interested in undertaking a similar venture.

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# **Information Delivery through ICT to pregnant teenagers**

**Hellen Agnes Muyomba**



## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a high rate of teenage pregnancies globally reflected in the changes of the social well being of people. Uganda rates high in the Sub-Saharan region with 43% of all pregnancies being teenage pregnancies. This problem has caused high infant and maternal mortality because the pregnant teenagers lack adequate information on their health status and that of their children.

### **National Library & Beyond Access**

National Library of Uganda in partnership with Beyond Access are having a project on information delivery to pregnant teenagers.

Beyond Access is a movement of people and organizations committed to the idea that modern public libraries help drive economic and social development. It encourages dialogue, assemble communities and facilitate partnerships. It ensures that libraries have a seat at the table during discussions about social and economic development. It has facilitated so many developmental programs in public libraries especially women empowerment. We all know that Women's access to technology benefits communities and families. As more and more information moves online, it is crucial that women and girls have equal, safe and reliable access to technology training, computers and the internet. Without access, girls and women will continue to be excluded from many opportunities for social and economic leadership and that is why Beyond Access is helping public libraries around the globe to help women in this cause.

### **National Library of Uganda**

It was established by the National Library Act of 2003. It serves over a population of 1.7million people and its source of funding is from the government and development partners.

### **Major Projects at NLU**

1. Improving Children's services in public and community libraries
2. Electronic information for youth empowerment
3. Information Delivery to pregnant teenagers
4. World digital library

## **WHY PREGNANT TEENAGERS?**

Uganda's statistics for pregnant teenagers are skyrocketing and with limited facilities for them, society also stigmatizes them. These are the future mothers of the nation and if they are not catered for then we are heading for disaster. Due to their ignorance, some carry out risky abortions that lead to deaths. They need to make informed and wise decisions about their reproductive health issues. That is why we chose to work with them in libraries as the number one information points and revitalize their usefulness in society. We believe that this program helps them to become new people in their lives and society.

### **Project Objectives**

- Bring antenatal services near to those who don't visit health centers
- Basic computer training and internet
- Focus group discussions and counseling
- Revive their confidence in society
- Reduce on the maternal mortality rates due to risky abortions

### **Project Activities**

- Computer training
- Focus group discussions and counseling
- Computer and mama kits donations to our partner organizations
- Training for public and community librarians

### **Challenges**

- Some girls give birth during the training which hinders their participation
- We have a problem of power outages which has interrupted with the trainings
- Unstable Internet connectivity is also another challenge we are facing
- Lack of enough funding to sustain the program

## **Weaven's story**

Weaven says that she was raped when living with her brother in a slum around Kampala. When asked whether she could identify the rapist she told me it was at night and the man ran away. After some time, she realized she was pregnant. Weaven was later introduced to Youth for Christ Uganda when her brother she was living with could no longer support her in her condition. She was 4 months pregnant when she joined Youth for Christ. She lived there until she gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. Weaven is one of the students I picked interest in because she took her computer lessons seriously. Later when I visited the center I found her using a sewing machine and she told me that she was able to get some ideas from the internet to enhance her sewing classes. Her baby cries in the middle of our discussion and she gets her to breastfeed. The little one is very excited on seeing her mother but very ignorant of what the future holds. I wondered why Weaven is still at the center because normally after they give birth, they are sent back from where they came from but she told me that her brother she used to live left the home because he could no longer afford to pay rent and so her future is still bleak. You can listen to so many stories of this kind from these vulnerable girls and breakdown. Weaven says that in future if she can get her own sewing machine and start a small business, she will be able to rent her own place and look after her daughter. That is why libraries are coming up to play a part however small it is to help these girls get information that can help to empower them.

Public libraries in many countries are providing girls and women the opportunity to access computers and the internet and gain valuable digital skills that help them improve their lives. Girls and women should equally be included and encouraged to participate in the information society in order to propel their own development as well as that of their families and communities. These are examples of public libraries around the world that are working with women and girls to empower them.

## **Uganda**

National Library of Uganda is working with Women farmers in Nakaseke district by increasing access to agricultural information using computers, the internet and mobile phones. This service led to an establishment of a new women's group with over 60 women

farmers who meet in the evening after their work to share agricultural information and knowledge.

### **Ghana**

This service helps to reduce maternal mortality by improving pregnant women's access to vital health information. They use computers, the internet, mobile phones text messaging and radio and also hosts public events at which health workers give presentations and discuss women's concerns.

### **Ukraine**

Librarians in the small Ukrainian town of Zaporizhia noticed that many girls in the community were falling prey to drug abuse and unhealthy life choices, so they decided to launch a program to provide girls with technology training, career advice and an overall support network. As a result of the program, girls in the community now spend more time at the library using computers and the Internet than they do getting in trouble on the streets.

### **Columbia**

A Library in Bogota, Colombia offers young girls aged 5 – 18 yrs access to not only books and literacy programs but also to internet and technology training. The technology resources available to these girls help them excel in school, communicate with friends and family, and develop digital skills that will help them through the rest of their lives.

## **SOLUTIONS**

- Development agencies should partner with public libraries for all gender and ICT initiatives
- New programs should support and build upon existing infrastructure because public libraries are already in existence and are safe places in communities which are trusted by girls and women to access ICT
- Governments should ensure public libraries are equipped with quality technology, internet connections and trained staff

# **ISLAMIC STAND OF EMPOWERING WOMEN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In most societies all over the world, women stand lesser in terms of access to education, health services, employment opportunities and other amenities of life than their male counterparts. The situation worsens when the same women have a disadvantage added to their identity such as disability. Women with special needs are being stereotype abuse and prejudices in many different ways. Such attitudes happen even among Muslims all over the globe and Northern Nigeria in particular. Such attitudes led are exclusion, mistreatment and deprivation of their right to equal treatment in all spheres of life. For instance, education, job and essential services many ways or majors are being taken by the federal and state government of Nigeria to empower women but little effort done to empower women with special needs . This paper wills highlights on the Islamic stand and attitude towards women with special needs through the Qur'an verses and exemplary life of the

Prophet (SAW). This can serve as an eye opener to the northern states to reconsider women with special needs. Finally, suggestions and recommendations would be given.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their lives, community and in their society by acting on issues that they define as important. Empowerment occurs within sociological, psychological, economic and at various levels. Empowering women with disability put the spotlight on education and economy which are an essential element to sustainable development. Women empowerment has been a policy objective of the Nigerian Government. Efforts are being made in the Northern to empower women from different aspects. Women have been characterized generally, as passive, weak, naïve and dependent. But stereotypes may be more damaging to women with special needs. This is because, women with disabilities have historically been marginalized and viewed as a socially ‘invisible population’. This makes the women with disabilities to perceive abuse as a pervasive threat to their psychological and physical well-being and some of them take on empowering attitudes and behaviors that are, at least in part, a response to this threat. Many

disabled and physically impaired women are either treated very poorly or end-up begging on the street in Northern Nigeria because of discrimination. This northern part of Nigeria is where Muslim's are the dominant. Despite the fact that various means of empowering women is being conducted, the women with disabilities need to be given special priority from both the immediate family they belong, their community and at the government level. This will make them feel at ease and be part of the community they belong. The disability in them is not a barrier between them and the society. This is because with the disability they have something unique and special to offer to their society they belong.

Islam as a complete way of life did not leave any stone unturned. It has over 1400 years ago practically presented before the world an example of such a society whereby women have access to all human rights. It recognizes disabilities and physical impairments but demands that this should not be the means of discrimination, ostracism, or dismissing of people with that type of situation. In fact, Islam emphasizes on assisting people with special need, especially women because of their nature as weak which previous civilizations did not recognize and treat women with special attention. Given the fact that Islam put emphasis on women is enough to tell us that women with special needs will require more attention, consideration, care and concern over other women that are both physically and psychologically fit.

Allah creates and recreates anything he wants. He has created human beings with different races color, and with different abilities. Some are endowed with abilities and skills while lack capabilities (physical or otherwise) and this are disabled or with special needs. Bearing in mind with the fact that man's life is full of hardships and tribulation as Allah says in Qur'an: *We create man from a drop of thickened fluid to test him*" (Al-Insaan: 2). By looking at all these tribulations and afflictions as of test from Allah, people will come to know that there is a great divine wisdom behind all these tests.

It is a great fact that when almighty Allah, deprived a person of a certain ability or gift, compensates him for it, by bestowing upon the person with a better gift that will excels others. Through these special gifts, when being empowered and utilize, a great benefit from the needy to the society will be achieved.

### **THE CONCEPT OF 'SPECIAL NEEDS'.**

The term special needs refer to a diverse range of needs often caused by a medical, physical, mental or developmental condition or disability. Special needs can include cognitive difficulties, physical or sensory difficulties, emotional and behavioral difficulties, and difficulties with speech and language.

The term is being used or defined in different ways. Another definition for special needs is an umbrella term, which is commonly used to describe adults or



children who have certain types of illnesses or conditions, problems with development or learning or difficulties carrying out certain activities or actions. For some people, special needs may be a derogatory phrase as it can highlight the things a child or an adult cannot do, rather than focusing on what they can do.

All these concepts are being used for women with disability which can be said as women that are physically or mentally impaired which limits them from major activities of life. But despite the inabilities in them, have some talents and potentials to execute something in life. The authors concern here is where the women with special needs can be of great assistance to themselves and the society in general

## THE ISLAMIC STAND OF EMPOWERING WOMEN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

Islam being a flexible way of life encompasses all people either physically fit or not. This has been since the time of the Prophet (SAW). The civilized world has recently paid attention to people with special needs. Despite the fact that Northern Nigeria is a Muslim dominated area, there are still some derogation of women with special. Some or most of them end up without getting married at all or will not have access to education. The few that can be married off face some humiliation unless married to a person with same disability. Even though, this has been the

issue all over the globe on women with special need. But Islam has something special to offer to all people, especially women.

The Prophet (SAW) has a special way of treating people with special needs. It is narrated on the authority of Anas <sup>®</sup> that a woman, somewhat mentally defected, said: ‘O messenger of Allah! I have a need that I want you to meet, he (S) responded: “O mother of so and so, choose the way you like to walk in so that I may know your need and meet it”. He walked with her in some route until she had her need fulfilled (Muslim).

This is of course a proof of his forbearance, humanity and patience in answering the needs of those with special need. This also serves as a legal proof that a ruler is obligated to care for people with special needs, socially, economically and psychologically, and that the ruler should fulfill their needs and grant their requests.

Based on the above hadith of the exemplary life of the Prophet (SAW) Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz (R) asked ruler of the provinces to send him the names of all those who are blind, crippled, or with a chronic illness that prevented them from establishing Salah. So they sent him their names. He, in turn, ordered that every blind man should have an employee to guide him and look after him and that every

two chronically ill person-those with special needs-be attended by a servant to serve and care for them.

The same course was taken by the Umayyad caliph Al-Walid Ibn Abdul-Malik. The idea of the establishment of institutes or centers for the care of people with special needs was his. In A.H88 (707 CE), he ordered the establishment of a foundation specialized in looking after them. He granted a regular allowance to persons with special needs, and told them, 'Do not beg people'. Thereby, he made them sufficient enough to not beg others. In addition, he appointed employees to serve all those who were disabled, crippled or blind. (Tabari).

It is also part of the Islamic stand on disabilities that the Prophet (SAW) addressed all who have illnesses and disabilities, said: 'No Muslim is pricked with a thorn, or anything larger than that, expect that a Hasanah will be recorded for him and a sin will be erased as a reward for that'. (Bukhari and Muslim).

People with special needs, in some cases are taken as objects of Mockery, amusement, or fun. The handicapped would, therefore, find themselves stuck between two fires: the fire of exclusion and isolation on one hand, and the fire of derision and Malicious joy on the other. Accordingly, the society would turn, within itself, into an abode of estrangement, persecution, and separation. But Islam forbids ridiculing all and the afflicted in particular. Allah says in the Qur'an

*O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (letter) are better than the (former): nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the (latter are better than the former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive nicknames: III-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) offer he has believed: and those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong: (Hujural-49:11). And the Prophet (SAW) said: “Cursed is he who misleads a blind person away from his path”. There are several al-hadith of the Prophet (SAW) that mention the approach of the Prophet in dealing with people with special needs at a time the rights of those people were not recognized whatsoever by any people or regime.*

The position of people with disability in Islam has been recognized. There were some companions of the prophet who were disabled. Among them are both male and female. The main concern here is they have some disabilities in them and considering the fact that Islam gives preface to women than men will actual shows how women with disability are to be given priority. The prophet (SAW) is reported to have said “show mercy to those on earth, and Allah will show mercy to you.(Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud).

A typical example of the Islamic position of disability is the revelation of some Qur’anic verses to the prophet (SAW) over a blind person. The authors concern here is the disability not the gender. The first ten verse of surah Abasah were

revealed to the prophet(SAW) as he was busy trying to convert some Quraish chieftains in Makkah, did not respond to the blind person. After the revelation of the verses-*The prophet frowned and tuned away because there came to him the blind man(interrupting).But what would make you perceive (O, Muhammad), that perhaps he might be purified or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him...*(Abasah:1-4)

From this point on, Muhammad (s) used to greet Abdullah Ibn Umm-Maktum thus: “Welcome to him on whose account my sustainer has rebuked me.” Our Prophet(s) appointed Abdullah as one of muazzins in Medina, and even put him in charge of the city during his absence on several occasions. Though he was specifically exempted by the Quran, he also was the flag bearer of the muslim army in the battle where he perished.

Besides Ibn Maktum, there were other companions of the Prophet (s) and other very famous Muslims/Muslimahs who have suffered from physical impairments and disabilities. For Example Abdullah ibn Masud was a weak man yet he was perfect in explaining the meaning of the Quran and also Ummu Amarah Nusaiba bnt Ka’b was a famous Muslimah who defended the Prophet at the Battle of Uhud after the near rout of the Muslim army, who was wounded twelve times during that battle and who lost her arm during the Battle against the army of Musailamah.

Similarly Julaibib another companion of the Prophet was described as being deformed or revolting in appearance while many people in Medinah had made him an out cast, the Prophet, instead approached a family to give their beautiful daughter as a bride for Julaibib. Although the parent themselves showed them bias by deferring to each other, the daughter herself willingly accepted to get married to him and lived very happily together by the grace of Allah.

Among the forms of mercy toward people with special needs with the fact that Shariah takes them into consideration with regards to many of the obligatory rulings, remove the difficulties they might encounter and makes things easy for them. On the authority of Zaid ibn Thabit, the Prophet (s) dictated to him the verse that says the meaning of which “ those of the believers who sit still ...are not in equality with those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives. ( Chapter 4;95). He said, “ Ibn Ummu Makhtum came while the Prophet was dictating it to write it down and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah if I was capable of Jihad I will certainly do” He was a blind man. Zaid Ibn Thabit further more said “ Then, Allah the Almighty and Exalted be He, revealed to his Messenger, ( other than those who have a (disabling hurt)” ( An –Nisaa’ 4:95). ( Al-Bhukari)

As for relieving the burden of people with special needs, Allah the Almighty says what means ( There is no restriction on the blind, nor is there restriction on the lame, nor is there restriction on the sick. And whoever obeys Allah and his Messenger, He will cause him to enter gardens from beneath which rivers runs and whoever turns away He will torment him with a painful torment. ) ( Al-Fath 48:17)

On another occasion, the prophet (SAW) met a woman who complained that she suffered from epileptic fits. She expressed concern over her body being exposed during such episodes. The prophet offered the woman two choices. He could either pray to Allah for her healing or she endure it and access paradise. She opted to bear the condition with patience but asked the prophet to pray for her body might not be exposed to the view of strangers. This story brings out three important points. First it illustrates the value of forbearance on the part of the person with disability. Second more important it affirms the right of individuals to draw attention to their special need stand to speak out for their right as a matter of social justice. And finally, it points to the important role of advocacy and support which the wider community is expected to provide to the individual.

Nevertheless, the relief enjoyed by the handicapped under the Islamic law is distinguished by balance and moderation. A disable person should be relieved in proportion to his disability and be obligated according to his ability. Imam Qurtubi says, Verily, Allah absolved the blind from the duties that necessitate eye site, the crippled from the duties that involved walking or cannot be done with lameness, the sick from the duties canceled on account of sickness, such as fasting, the condition on pillars of Sallat, and Jihad and so forth.

Thus was the approach of the Prophet in dealing with people with special needs at a time the right of those people were not recognized what so ever by any people or regime. So, the law came and defined the comprehensive and perfect care for people with special needs. It put them on a good place within the priority of the Muslim Society. It has legislated the forgiveness of the fool and ignorant among them. It has honored their afflicted ones especially those who have certain talent useful craft or successful experiences. It has also encouraged visiting and praying

for them. It has prohibited ridiculing them. It breaks their isolation and boycott, lighting the rules for them and absolved them from their obligations.

#### EMPOWERING WOMEN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA.

Empowerment is the ability and freedom to actualize long-held dreams and ambitions in life. In Nigeria, women empowerment would mean leveling the playing field so that men do not have an advantage in fulfilling their potentials, whether in business, politics, or other social platforms. It is opening space for women to access to education, skills, and participate in decision making process on matters that affects them. Empowering women with special needs here gives them access to all things that a physically fit women have. Therefore, empowering women with special needs generally will affect the way they perceive themselves and the way they are perceived by the community. They should be able to own properties without the approval of a spouse, father or guardian; access finance for entrepreneurship without the ridiculous requirement of approval from anybody. Life for those with special needs and disabilities in northern Nigeria is difficult. Faced with severe social stigma in a region where unemployment is extremely high, these individuals are frequently reduced to begging in the streets in order to feed themselves.

As mentioned earlier, several efforts are being made to empower women in northern part of Nigeria, but special emphasis is not given to women with special needs or disabilities. All over the region, women empowerment is being conducted together with some programs on people with disabilities. For example the challenge your disability (CYD) initiative is a charity organization initiated by the wife of the Executive Governor Hajiya Hauwa Abiodun Isa Yuguda for disable persons within Bauchi metropolis. The organization orients disable persons who have



no skills and unable to go to school. They do nothing, but begging. CYD here, impart skills and equipped them with tools to start business for self- reliance and sustainability

## SUGGESTIONS.

Therefore this paper is suggesting for special arrangement for women with special needs which may include among other things the mode or methods followed by the Islamic shari'ah in handling those with special needs. Some of the states in northern have started implementing the sharia of Islam since 1999. The issues of women with disability need to be look into as a duty to be discharge off toward its citizens by the government for the protection of their image, honour and dignity.

Some of the suggestions to be given here includes among other thing that by empowering women with special needs, it reduces the rate of women with disabilities begging on the streets and being humiliated. It will also help those with special talent among them to make use of what Allah bestowed upon them. Who knows, they may even be in a position through their Gods given talents to improve and burst capacity of the physically fit ones. According to their capabilities and abilities, the disable women need separation from the physically fit in terms of empowerment. Also, the proper training or empowerment could enable them to live independently and with dignity within their respective communities. By adopting to some of the ways and methods followed by the prophet (SAW) and his companions and notable Muslim leaders, at least, the rate of women with special needs dependency on others or family members will be minimize.

## CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, the approach of the prophet (SAW) and notable Muslim leaders in dealing with special needs at such a time where nobody recognized them is an illustration of an Islamic way of handling women with special needs. Islamic law defined the comprehensive and perfect care for people ( women) with special. It put them on a god place within the priorities of the Muslim society. It legislated the forgiveness of the fool and ignorant among them. It honored their afflicted ones, especially those who have certain talents, useful craft, or successful experiences. Islam also encourages visiting and playing for them and prohibited ridiculing them. By adopting to such an Islamic approach in dealing with women with special needs in northern Nigeria, this will minimize the problem of poverty among women generally and those with special needs in particular.

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# Japanese Women Working on the Global Stage: HRM in the UN

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## Abstract

This paper provides an abridged account of five cases of Japanese women working in the UN Common System. By examining the career paths of these individuals, we can reveal international HRM trends and put forward suggestions to the Japanese government and Japanese private companies on how to better utilize and support females in the workforce. Beginning with a brief introduction to the Japanese context, the paper also provides statistics and an overview of how the United Nations, as an organization, has achieved equal opportunity in the workplace. The paper concludes by suggesting that consistency is the key to leveraging the potential of women in the workforce.

## 1. Introduction

In their 2012 report on global employment equality, the International Labour Organization (ILO) of the United Nations (UN) stated that globally, gender gaps in employment that ‘trended towards convergence from 2008 to 2007, grew again’ during the period of the financial crisis (ILO, 2012). The ILO define gender gaps as situations that ‘disadvantage women compared to men.’ A gap is positive when it exists and negative when it does not.

The ILO report also suggests that a major factor behind the disadvantage of women is that ‘women are more likely than men to exit and re-enter the labour market owing to family commitments. Career interruption for child rearing results in longer periods of unemployment’ (ILO, 2012). These interruptions are prominent all over the world, and each country needs to consider how these factors impact upon their own productivity and success.

After a tumultuous few years, in 2013, the Japanese government announced their new revitalization strategy, ‘*Japan is Back.*’ A major component of the roadmap for growth is a united effort to maximize the potential of women and foster internationally competitive talents to work towards a negative gender gap. Amid concerns over the decreasing workforce due to the declining birthrate and aging population (total population is predicted to decrease by approximately 30% in 2055 (Mitsui, et.al. 2010)), the government aims to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions to 30% by 2020 and is also striving to provide support for both men and women to achieve work-life balance (Sato and Takeishi, 2014). The

government has recognized that it is essential for the ‘power of women’-Japan’s greatest asset which had not been leveraged fully to date – to be fully utilized (Office of the Cabinet of the Japanese Government, 2013).

Yet, despite this new agenda, powerful Japanese women have been quietly developing their careers overseas for a number of years. These women, working as international civil servants, can provide an excellent example of how we should view the future of Japanese female human resources. By analyzing these women as they work as international civil servants and by carefully analyzing their career paths, we can make recommendations to ensure the success of future Japanese female leaders.

This paper is based on extensive longitudinal research on Japanese international civil servants who work in the UN. It highlights five cases of successful Japanese women, who currently work in five different UN contexts. The cases include employees who work in a specialist context; a finance context; a project management context; an administration and HR context and assistance to developing countries context. Each case study charts the women's academic background, professional experience and career progression, their professional development, their career anchors and their level of satisfaction. By exploring these five cases in this way, we can present a clear picture of Japanese female international career trajectories, their motivations and paths to leadership.

By using both the UN Common System HRM practices and Japanese female case studies as an example, we can see that consistency is key to leveraging the talents and capabilities of women in the global workforce. The paper will begin by outlining the factors in Japan that have inhibited the expansion of opportunities for women in business before presenting the cases. It will conclude by providing a list of recommendations for companies and the Japanese government to adhere to in order to improve their global HRM practices and expand opportunities for women in the workplace. It is hoped that the reader will draw inspiration from the cases of these successful, leading Japanese female role models.

## **2. Context**

### **2.1. Working Life in Japan**

In Japan, it used to be considered a ‘good life’ to be employed by a distinguished company and live a stable life at the same company until the mandatory retirement age. This security would often be accompanied with a seniority-salary system and thus, little incentive to transfer between companies and careers mid-career. The human resource department of a company transferred or promoted employees unilaterally, according to the company’s long-term organizational strategy and as a result, employees entrusted their working life to the company (Kawashima, 1995). This resulted in an extremely ‘rigid’ (Kawashima, 1995:280) system, which without doubt, was and in many cases, still is, a barrier to women working and progressing successfully in the Japanese workforce.

The recruitment of new employees in Japan generally occurs in the spring. Companies select graduating students through a series of interviews, document-based screening and aptitude-based testing. They tend not to pay attention to the department

the student graduated from or their field of specialization. They are more concerned in hiring students from top-level Japanese universities, based on their potential; the objective is to mold the student to the needs of the company (Yokoyama, 2014). Promotion panels in Japan usually judge candidates not only on their performance in their job but also on what is termed their '*hitogara*'– which loosely translates as the balance of their personality. This is the Japanese concept that believes it is important to be able to work in a harmonious manner while in a company, and that the ability to work without causing conflict to others is well respected. As such, promotion often occurs within the company, as the senior managers are more aware of the candidate's every day working style and ability to work with others. Companies rarely recruit mid-career professionals from outside the company.

Trends are changing and in recent years there are more Japanese, men and women, who wish to take greater control over their life, choose their own career path or who after working a number of years in the private sector, wish to contribute something more directly to society. There are many workers who have left large companies that guarantee high salaries to work in NGOs, NPOs, or an International Organization that contributes to the enhancement of society through technical cooperation and other relevant activities (Yokoyama, 2014).

In the age of globalization, managers of Japanese private companies are beginning to realize that in order to keep pace with changes in society, they need to become more global in their thinking, processes and policies, particularly in the way they deal with human resources. Yet, few companies actually exhibit global practices. The reality is harsh; Japan is suffering from a declining population and consequently, it cannot expect a large increase in domestic markets. Japanese companies need to adopt new human resource management principles in order to survive.

## 2.2. Japanese Women in the Workplace

Ideas concerning national and international society and the concept of diversity management, particularly the way in which it has been employed within companies, has become a pertinent topic in Japanese HRM research. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2007 showed that the number of female managers above chief level in Japan was as low as 4.9%. This reflects that female human resources are not well utilized in Japan and it will take time to increase the number of women in the workforce, despite the government's protestations that '*Japan is back*'.

The *Equal Employment Opportunity Law* that was passed in 1985, aimed to achieve a society where men and women participate in work on an equal basis. However, at companies with more than 100 employees, the percentage of female staff members at *kakaricho* (section chief level) and above in Japan is only 7.9%. This is considered to be extremely low when compared with 40% across all grades in the UN Common System. Furthermore, when female representation at the managerial level is reviewed, the situation is also far from convincing. The number of female staff members at the *bucho* level (directors and above) is only 3.1% in Japan while it stands at 28% in the UN Common System. A further survey in 2008 by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare found that the percentage of females recruited on career track (*sogo shoku*)

paths in the private sector was only 16.9% in the companies that had implemented the career-track employment management system. Additionally, only 16.7% of women in the public sector are on Japanese civil servant career track positions (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2012). The representation of women at managerial levels is still very low in Japan.

Not only are women not represented equally in the work force but there are also discrepancies in payment structures. Using detailed personnel records from a large Japanese manufacturing firm, Kato, et al. (2013) was able to identify the sources of inter-firm gender gaps. They found that after controlling for basic human capital variables, there were 19% and 28% gender pay difference among unmarried employees and married ones, respectively. Additionally, they found that on average unmarried women earn 17% less than unmarried men. Men, when they get married, enjoy a significant marriage bonus, often around 12% more than unmarried men. While women receive a marriage penalty of 6.5%. Kato's research showed that the gender pay gap widens as workers marry, which can result in a gender pay gap of 36 percent in total earnings. The following section outlines the new governmental strategy to leverage the power of women.

### **2.3. Japan is Back**

The revitalization strategy of the Japanese government is focused around three main policies and three plans – known as Prime Minister Abe's 'three-arrow' plan (Office of the Japanese Government, 2013). The three policies are concerned with an aggressive monetary policy, a new growth strategy and flexible fiscal policy. These three policies underlie the roadmap to growth. The Japanese government believes that it can unlock the potential held in the private sector, can facilitate a united effort and create new frontiers. As part of the roadmap for uniting effort, the government is seeking to maximize the potential of women, the young and the elderly, while at the same time fostering internationally competitive talents. In his comments to the World Economic Forum in Davos, January, 2014, Prime Minister Abe stated his pledge to achieve a 30% quota for females in the civil service and the creation of 200,000 childcare spots to support this goal. Prime Minister Abe said that Japan needs 'women to shine in the Japanese economy' (Abe, 2014). Yet, this claim has received criticism as Prime Minister Abe himself has employed only two female cabinet ministers, characteristic of the boards of many Japanese companies. It is not surprising that Japan ranks 101 out of 135 countries in the World Economic Forum's list of gender empowerment discrepancies (Sekiguchi, 2013). Bloomberg quoted an opposition lawmaker, Kiyomi Tsujimoto as saying in reference to Prime Minister Abe, 'he says 'Japan is back' but I think that it's actually going backwards,' arguing that there are fundamental issues that are not being dealt with appropriately. If policies are properly implemented there is great potential for growth, Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. in Tokyo in 2010 predicted that by increasing the rate of female participation in the workforce from 60% to 80%, Japan could increase their GDP by over 14% and have an additional 8 million plus workers (Misui, et.al, 2010). Japan needs to look at countries and organizations where Japanese are already working successfully, and learn from them. The UN Common System has been making great strides to achieve parity in the workplace and the following section details the steps they have taken.

## 2.4. The UN Common System as an example of global HRM

The UN Common System can and should be used as a model for global HRM. Affirmative Action Programs have been implemented in the UN Common System to promote the principle of equal rights between men and women and to increase the status of women.

There were a total of 12,677 female staff members in the professional and higher categories working in the UN Common System as of 31 December 2011. This constitutes 41% of the total workforce. The representation of female staff members is 41% throughout the UN Common System and is 39% in the UN; 50% in UNICEF; 51% in UNESCO and 43% in UNHCR. In these organizations, a considerable number of female staff members play important roles not only at the professional level but also at the higher decision-making level. However, there are some organizations where female representation is still low, such as 35% in FAO and 24% in IAEA, due to the characteristics of these organizations. Regarding the advancement of female staff members at the managerial level, their percentage in the director and higher categories is 30% in the UN Common System and this percentage has been increasing every year.

In relation to the promotion of the status of women, a *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* was adopted at the UN General Assembly in 1979 and took effect in September 1981. The purpose of the convention was to eliminate any forms of discrimination against women. In order to convince the member states to implement the policies to improve the status of women in their own countries, the UN, needed to demonstrate an increase in the number of female staff members at the UN itself as well as within the UN Common System. For example, in order to achieve parity between men and women, the UN Secretariat set up a policy to increase the percentage of female staff members to 50%. Although the female representation was 30% in 1994, it has increased to 37% in 2003 and 38% in 2008. UNICEF also established a similar affirmative action program. Thanks to its organizational efforts, female representation in UNICEF increased to 38% in 1994, 41% in 2000, 49% in 2007 and finally meeting its goal of 50% in 2009 (Table 1).

Several measures have been taken to increase the number of female staff members in each organization. For example, many organizations state in their vacancy announcements that female candidates are welcome to apply for vacant posts, specifying that female candidates will be given priority if qualifications are similar or equal to those of their male counterparts.

**Table 1: The number of female staff members in the professional and higher categories employed in the UN Common System and their percentage**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Female Staff Members</b>	<b>Total Staff Members (Male and Female)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>UN</b>	3,977	10,158	39%
<b>UNDP</b>	1,088	2,582	42%
<b>UNICEF</b>	1,418	2,845	50%
<b>WHO</b>	858	2,175	39%
<b>UNHCR</b>	663	1,544	43%
<b>WFP</b>	589	1,441	41%
<b>UNESCO</b>	479	932	51%
<b>FAO</b>	592	1,681	35%
<b>ILO</b>	464	1,035	45%
<b>IAEA</b>	284	1,160	24%
<b>Remaining 25 Organizations</b>	2,265	5,444	42%
<b>Total</b>	12,677	30,997	41%

Data as of 31 December 2011

Source: compiled from CEB/2012/HLCM/HR/16 & Yokoyama (2014).

The Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB), which is responsible for coordinating personnel related matters in the UN Common System, requests all the 31 organizations in the UN Common System to submit a yearly report that details the percentage of female staff in their respective organizations and their ongoing efforts to recruit females. The data is published in the annual report of the CEB. This encourages organizations to make serious efforts to recruit and promote female employees. In the case of the UN Secretariat, it requests every section, division and department to report the percentage of female staff and their recruitment efforts to the HR division. The compiled data on female staff members is reported to the UN General Assembly every year.

In addition, when maternity leave is over, the right to return to the previous post is fully guaranteed. Even if a substitute is deemed to have performed the role far better than the person on maternity leave, it is the regulation for the temporary staff to be removed from that post when the maternity leave is over. Besides, the staff regulations clearly state that pregnancy is a right of female staff members. Thus, organizations are legally responsible for respecting equal employment opportunities between male and female staff members. Some organizations provide day-care centers within their building, providing facilities to enable women to continue working after childbirth. Thus, it can be concluded that top management within the organizations in the UN Common System took initiatives to increase the number of female staff members. Table 2 shows the historical trend of female staff members employed in the UN Common System for the past 40 years. This table indicates that it takes considerably longer to promote the status of female staff members.



**Table 2: Historical trend of female staff members employed in the UN Common System since 1974\***

Year	Percentage		
	Total	D-1 and Above	P-1 to P-5
1974	13	2	14
1976	13	2	15
1978	14	2	15
1979	14	2	15
1980	14	3	16
1981	15	3	16
1982	16	3	18
1983	16	3	18
1984	17	3	19
1985	18	4	20
1986	19	4	21
1987	20	4	22
1988	21	5	23
1989	22	5	24
1990	23	6	25
1991	24	6	26
1992	25	7	27
1993	27	9	29
1994	28	10	30
1995	28	12	30
1996	30	13	32
1997	31	15	33
2000	33	20	35
2003	36	22	38
2004	37	24	38
2005	37	25	39
2006	38	25	39
2007	38	26	39
2008	39	28	40
2009	40	28	41
2010	40	29	42
2011	41	30	42

\* If the year is not indicated, the data was not published. The data was available from 1974 and the above table was prepared by either ICSC or CEB.  
Source: Author, (Yokoyama, 2014).

If we compare this figure to that in Japan, we can clearly see how low the percentage is in Japan.

Comparing the importance females play in roles at the workplace in the UN Common System and in Japanese private companies, it can be concluded that the UN Common System has made efforts to promote the status of women where male staff members and female staff members participate in work on an equal basis. The status of females is still very low in Japan. As was found in the research (Yokoyama, 2013), around 50% of Japanese staff members in the UN Common System, have previously worked in private companies in Japan. Therefore, it is important to highlight such differences between the private and public sectors in terms of HRM practices and to show how Japanese companies should change to support women in the workforce. The following section will explain the research methods utilized in this study.

### **3. Research**

#### **3.1. Overview**

This paper is based on research conducted in 2008, on staff members in the professional and the higher categories in International Organizations in the UN Common System (Yokoyama, 2014). International Organizations are defined as organizations that are established to promote common interests among member countries of the UN. Those member countries contribute to their funds and there are 35 organizations that are members of the UN Common System.

The international organizations included in the UN Common System apply the same regulations with regard to job classification, appointment of staff members, salary and other working conditions. If staff members hold similar duties at the same duty station, they receive the same level of salary and the same administrative treatment no matter which organization they work for. This system is generally referred to as the United Nations Common System. This paper focuses on five Japanese women who work in five different job categories, in various UN organizations.

#### **3.2. Methods**

The exploratory study was initiated in early 2000 and consisted of preliminary interviews and two further e-mail-based surveys. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed and follow-up interviews were also conducted in order to better understand the empirical results. Qualitative research interviews, which form the basis of the cases explained in this paper, were conducted in New York, Geneva, and Rome.

#### **3.3. Occupational Fields**

In the course of cross tabulation analysis, factor analysis and processing of data conducted in 2008, the author came to find some relationships between job satisfaction and occupational fields. The interview collaborators were classified into the following five occupational groups:

- Specialist Group
- Finance Specialist Group
- Program Management Coordination Group
- Administration and HR Group
- Assistance to Developing Countries Group

A full explanation of the responsibilities of the staff members in these groups can be found in Yokoyama (2014).

### 3.4. Cases

The following section will present, in a casual narrative style, five short case studies of successful Japanese women working in International Organizations. Each of the five women is working in one of the five occupational fields, allowing us to see the range of international careers Japanese women hold. The cases are given titles that were given during the original research, conducted in 2008. A comprehensive review of all cases (A through X) including these here, can be found in Yokoyama (2014). For the purposes of this paper, the following cases in Table 3 will be covered.

**Table 3: Cases and Groups**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Case</b>
Specialist	Case Q
Finance Specialist	Case S
Program Management Coordination	Case F
Administration HR	Case P
Assistance to Developing Countries	Case E

#### Case Q

<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Age</b>	45 years old (at time of interview)
<b>Birthplace</b>	Osaka, Japan
<b>Position</b>	Global Influenza Program, WHO Headquarters, Medical Officer (P-5)
<b>Location</b>	Geneva, Switzerland

Case Q is a divorced, single mother and successful medical professional working for the WHO. Having initially aspired to be an architect, she changed her career to train as a brain surgeon. Her younger brother, who passed away from a brain tumor while she was at high school, inspired this dramatic change. She wanted to save the lives of people like her brother and so worked hard to qualify in this field. However, this area of the medical profession was a heavily male-dominated environment; she struggled,

exhausted to maintain her position among her male colleagues and decided that she was more suited to helping people in other ways, and found that her aspirations were better suited to a career in the field of infectious diseases.

She decided to take a research degree and was awarded a PhD in the field of Infectious Diseases from a Japanese university. Based on this qualification, she was selected as a medical researcher at a Japanese national research institute, which is attached to the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The government often called upon such professionals to be seconded to various organizations. Case Q was called to work as a medical officer in the WHO, working on infectious diseases. As such, she soon discovered that she could use her skills more effectively in a position within the UN as opposed to working for the Japanese government. A position in her field of specialization came up and so she, along with over 650 people applied for one post. She was shortlisted, interviewed and selected for the post. Her determination for the position paid off and she was chosen to work on the SARS epidemic and other new types of infectious diseases. Her position means that she has a huge responsibility in deciding how the WHO reacts to new epidemics and she is in charge of measuring and implementing programs in the case of a global outbreak. She is called on to go to the site of the outbreak when one occurs and could be called away for an extended period of time.

When she became a formal staff member in the WHO she made a conscious decision to be assertive and to speak her opinion more in meetings and with senior managers. She also took it upon herself to seek out two mentors to help her navigate her career. In addition, she made sure to surround herself with various networks, both inside and outside the workplace. She has four main networks related to her workplace, professional researchers, people working in the field of public health, people working in other clinical fields, and people in other related professional fields. She also has networks with mothers who work in the same office, mothers whose children also attend the same international schools as her children, people in her local neighbourhood, friends who share the same interests and who are like-minded people and journalists. People in these networks help support her lifestyle as a single mother, especially when she is called out to work in an outbreak area.

Case Q believes that the art of getting along with people is more important than qualifications and career – her extensive networks and career progression is testament to this point. In her daily working life she must fight against power games and politics of her environment, but believes that a high income, being financially rewarded for this type of work is important. She is very much a practical woman, she says, ‘don’t look at the ailment, but look at the patient...work based on the actual needs of the site’ is most important. Her attitude has served her well to be a successful Japanese woman on the global stage.

## Case S

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<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Age</b>	54 years old (at time of interview)
<b>Birthplace</b>	Tokyo, Japan
<b>Position</b>	Chief Internal Auditor, Office of Internal Audit and Oversight (IAO), (D-1), ILO Headquarters
<b>Location</b>	Geneva, Switzerland

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Case S grew up as a Japanese craft worker's daughter. Her parents were conventional and her father held extremely conservative and traditional values. He did not believe that a woman needed to enter university and so he agreed for daughter to enter a vocational school to learn secretarial and basic accounting skills. Due to their weak financial background, Case S worked on a part-time basis on a factory assembly line during high school. She later realized that her experience in that position helped her to understand work place psychology.

Even though she was forced to attend vocational school, she never gave up her dream to go to university. In her late 20's after working in the private sector at a British bank, she was able to save enough money to study overseas. She moved to the USA, transferred most of her credits from the vocational school in Japan to a full-degree awarding program in the States, and achieved a degree in accounting. During her time in university she met her husband, who was also non-American, and they decided to live in their third-culture and country– the USA. Her degree enabled her to find work at a prestigious American accounting company and after working for the required amount of time, she was able to take and pass the CPA qualification. However, as both Case S and her husband were non-American, they needed to obtain a green card to continue working in the States. They worked hard for their contribution to the US to be recognized and had two children. However, over time they began to question their situation, including the overtime work they were doing on the weekends, and decided to seek alternative employment. A friend in one of Case S's networks advised her that she would not need a green card to work for the UN Common System and that maybe working in that environment would be better for her. Based on this advice, Case S decided to apply for a position in the UN Common System. The UN Common System recognized her global CPA qualification and work experience at the famous accounting firm in New York City. Consequently, she was offered a Finance Specialist position in the UNDP.

Taking such a position however, would mean changes to her family's finances and situation. She became the breadwinner of her family. Over ten years later, at forty-five years old and through another one of her networks, she was told of a vacancy announcement for an accounting position outside New York City. After consultation with her husband, she applied and was selected for the position. As it was in Geneva, Switzerland, it was difficult for her husband to also find suitable work immediately, but eventually, he was able to find work on the outskirts of Geneva and the whole family was able to live together.

This kind of experience and career progression meant that the relationship with her husband at times is very difficult – she is leading their family and her work influences

their lifestyle. A tenacious woman, she recognizes that this is a challenge and is strong in her view that women need to maintain a work life balance. Working in a place like Geneva allows one to have such a work-private life balance and now that her children have grown up, the burden has been lightened and she is achieving even more balance in her life.

## Case F

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<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Age</b>	54 years old (at time of interview)
<b>Birthplace</b>	Madrid, Spain (to Japanese parents)
<b>Position</b>	Assistant Administrator and Director (ASG), Bureau of Management, UNDP
<b>Location</b>	New York, USA

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Case F was educated in Japan and overseas and immediately entered the UN Common System after graduating and after passing the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) examination (the JPO examination is a program that is funded by the respective Government of the candidate). Her career strategy was to make full use of the UN Common System employment affirmative action programs by changing duty stations many times. Between the ages of twenty-three and thirty-three she worked in Thailand, Japan and the USA. In her mid-30s she took her first leave from the UNDP and returned to Japan to work for a consultancy firm and as an independent consultant. After working in Japan for five years, she returned to the UNDP to work in their Thai offices. She remained in the UN Common System, working in South East Asia until she was forty-five. At that time, she took another period of special leave and returned to Japan to become a professor of Global and Intercultural Studies at a Japanese university. In her early 50s she decided to return to the UN Common System and became a Director in Japan and later New York, USA. She was able to navigate between the private and public sector to achieve the life and career that she wanted. This shows how important it is to maintain links and networks with your home country while working as a global worker. She recognized that it is very important to not only maintain these home networks but to also understand the human resource management systems of that country and understand how utilizing different systems can enhance and develop ones career.

Case F is also the breadwinner her family. Between her and her husband they made a conscious decision to put her work as a priority. As such, her husband has followed his wife during her career moves. She cites her three sources of power that help her maintain her life and career, first, the need to have a belief in yourself, especially in times of difficulty. Second, you need to recognize that if you are in such a position, your life is privileged and your job is meaningful. Finally, in this position, she said you need a family and partner that are always supportive.

## Case P

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Age</b>	45 years old (at time of interview)
<b>Birthplace</b>	Tokyo
<b>Position</b>	Senior Human Resources Officer (P-4), Fundamental Principles and Rights of Work Department, (FPRW), ILO Headquarters
<b>Location</b>	Geneva, Switzerland

When Case P was a small child, she watched a television program on starvation in Ethiopia. The moment was so powerful that it served as her motivation to work in the UN Common System or for an international humanitarian organization. After her undergraduate studies in English literature at a Japanese university, she went to graduate school in the USA and majored in International Relations and Administration. During her time at graduate school she took the JPO examination to enter the UN Common System and passed. In between graduation and taking up her post she worked in the private sector for a Japanese company. When she was twenty-six years old she started her career as an international civil servant. She received three different offers of work within the UN and the ILO but the job she chose was in the field of HR as this was the first offer she received.

Case P has five networks within her workplace. Firstly, she has the network of managerial level staff. Secondly, she has representatives in field offices that she communicates with. Third, she has networks within the ILO headquarters. Forth, she has networks with other HR professionals and finally, she has networks with other NGO's and international organizations outside the UN Common System.

She states that her career anchor is to 'be idealistic, but be realistic.' She realized that her goal to support people and to work in solving humanitarian issues could be achieved both directly and indirectly. Her office-based work is indirectly helping the cause and she acknowledged you don't have to be in the field to make a difference. Her work allows her to see the results of her efforts and that provides her with much satisfaction. Currently, she is trying to spend as much time with her family as possible and is able to achieve a work-life balance. She used to feel uncomfortable working in a Japanese environment where some employees work overtime in the evening even though they have nothing to do. She said that her satisfaction level is the highest she has had since she began working.

## Case E

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Age</b>	33 years old (at time of interview)
<b>Birthplace</b>	Tokyo, Japan
<b>Position</b>	UN Secretariat, Political Affairs Officer, Best Practices Section, Department of Peacekeeping Operations
<b>Location</b>	New York, USA

While Case E was at graduate school in the UK, she took part in an internship program of the UN Secretariat. This was her impetus for working in an international organization. It was through this valuable experience that she was able to establish her first network. During the internship, a colleague became her mentor. Having a mentor at this stage in her career gave her many options and advice for the future. She returned to Japan after her graduate studies and worked for a commercial bank in Tokyo and at twenty-seven, began her career in the UN Common System. For the next four years she worked in duty stations in New York and the Sudan, returning to Tokyo in her early 30s. She quickly recognized that successful professional development would mean that she would need to change positions and locations many times in the course of developing her career.

Case E also recognized that her work experience in the private sector was important to future career success. As can be seen, she made many changes in a short time but recognized that in working in a global environment, it is important to be a ‘specialist’ in a particular field. However, she strongly felt that having many different experiences and taking many new opportunities in the early-stages of her career helped to ensure that she would achieve her career goals in the latter half of her career. She is a firm believer of keeping her options open. She places great importance on the actual work done and thinks positively about her work situation. She stresses that people need to have their own mid- and long-term career plan if they wish to work on the international stage and that for her, a decision on whether or not she changed her employment would be based on the content of the potential job; she would only change positions if the content of the work was interesting.

## 4. Discussion

From the interviews conducted by Yokoyama (2014) and by looking at the cases above, it was found that females who are in specialist positions and those in finance specialist position in particular, showed far higher levels of satisfaction in their global work environment. The following eight points highlight the key findings from this research.

First, establishing networks is very important for a female embarking on a global career. It is important for women to establish and maintain professional networks not only within their organization overseas but also with organizations and companies in their home country. These networks in the home country may prove useful if and



when the woman decides to return; they can provide in-roads to strategic career moves. They are deemed to be crucial for success in the UN Common System.

Second, the importance of networks outside the workplace should not be underestimated. Those successful women with strong social and family-related networks were highly satisfied in their jobs. Creating networks with like-minded, career-focused mothers is important, as is maintaining networks with people who share the same hobbies and interests. People in these networks can also recognize and understand a women's position if and when they have childcare or family issues to deal with while overseas.

Third, career mobility and adaptability is important if a woman wishes to enhance her career. Within the UN Common System, women who work in different positions and at different duty stations achieve much career satisfaction and feel fulfilled in their job and career progression. The ability to be flexible, move and experience different facets of the organization also helps a woman to decide her field of specialization while at the same time building a fundamental knowledge of the organization.

Having a career anchor, is also a common characteristic among Japanese women working on the world stage. These women have a strong belief in themselves and their abilities and also understand and recognize the importance of their family. By stating this as their career anchor we can see how they function and what drives them to succeed.

Fifth, all of the women interviewed could clearly articulate the initial trigger that inspired them to work in an International or Humanitarian Organization. They range from personal experience to a work experience and even watching television, but what each of these women have in common is that they experienced a turning point or critical event in their life and thinking process that made them determined to seek such a career.

Sixth, all the women studied have a supportive family network in some capacity. This does not necessarily mean that a woman needs to be married and have a supportive partner to be successful (as in Case Q), but as long as there are networks and/or relatives that provide a family support network, the woman can achieve success and achieve a work-life balance.

It is also important to recognize that work experience in one's own country can provide women with valuable experiences to take into the wider, global working contexts. Some women believe that only experience overseas counts, yet as these cases show, any experience, whether that is in a woman's home country or not, is valuable and valid.

Finally, a woman must give serious consideration to being the breadwinner of the family if they seek a successful global career. Time must be taken to discuss with her partner and family how this will affect family life and domestic tasks and how it challenges traditional gender role norms and expectations.

The above points show clear commonalities between the Japanese women who have been successful in a global working environment and can be useful as key recommendations for any Asian woman looking for a global career.

## 5. Recommendations

The following section presents concise recommendations to the Japanese government and Japanese companies. If companies can adhere to these recommendations, it will enable increasing numbers of Japanese women to work successfully on the world stage.

First, it is critical that Japan uses the UN as a role model. The UN has proved that consistent efforts to increase the parity of women in the workplace pay off and the Japanese government should follow their lead and work harder to establish similar policies and practices. The government needs to give clear guidelines to business and in order to create parity they need to make more reasonable and achievable targets. As an example, the UN Secretariat has a long-term target that 50% of staff members employed at a professional and director level should be female. In 1994, it was 30%, in 2003 it had increased to 37% and in 2008 it reached 38%. UNICEF established the same goal; the percentage of females was 38% in 1994, increasing to 41% in 2000, 49% in 2007 and finally, 50% in 2009.

Second, it is imperative to improve career education at school. Women need to be encouraged by society and through government policy and practices to take specialist-orientated courses and to receive specialist-orientated career education. Too much focus in Japan is placed on being a generalist. By changing recruitment procedures and improving careers advice at key stages in a women's education and career development, women will be able to better visualize the options they have available to them when wishing to embark on a global career.

Third, when organizations choose to make changes to achieve equal working environments or when they take steps to become more globalized, they need to take a whole-organization approach. The philosophy must pervade all aspects of the company and senior management must take clear steps to ensure that the message within the organization is consistent and clearly communicated within the organization.

Fourth, as part of the whole-organization approach, companies need to redesign their company policy and staff policy documents. Companies need to create staff regulations that explicitly state the rules in relation to women in the workplace. For example, the UN Common System states in their regulations that having a child is a women's right (Staff Rules and regulations of the UN Secretariat general bulletin (SD/SGB/2011/1) p.47 Rule 6.3 Maternity and Paternity leave (a)). In Japan it is still difficult for women to return after childbirth to a formal staff position in their company and this is a problem with the system in Japan as a whole. In the UN, in order to support women who wish to continue in their post, they are entitled to sixteen weeks maternity leave (taken before and after birth) and 100% of their salary is guaranteed. Women are even granted 2.5 days annual paid leave during their maternity leave and if female staff members combine accumulated leave and

maternity leave they can take several months of paid leave. Japanese companies need to respect women in this way, to maintain their resources effectively in the long run. Such information must be clearly documented in all contractual documents and policy documents within a company; it must be in writing and held accountable in law.

Fifth, Japanese companies need to be more transparent. They should be encouraged to submit regular reports to the government outlining whether or not they have achieved their targets. They should also publish detailed yearly reports that highlight what they have been doing to encourage women in the workplace and how they have globalized the policies and practices of their institution.

Finally, both the Japanese government and Japanese organizations need to acknowledge that it takes time to achieve parity in the workplace. It has taken the UN Common System over thirty-five years to achieve such goals. Stating quick-fix solutions and empty promises is not enough to achieve equality equivalent to that found in companies and governments that recognize the importance of global human resource management practices. More strategic planning is needed - more transparency is essential and advice should be taken from global HRM specialists at every stage of the planning and implementation process.

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper has shown that consistency is key to developing the careers of successful Japanese women on the world stage. The Japanese government needs to make consistent efforts, over a long period of time, to meet targets - if there are no targets and if they are not reviewed consistently every year, goals will not be achieved. Japan may be said to be 'back' but in reality, this cannot be achieved so quickly.

Women must be allowed to achieve consistency in their upward career progression and this can be facilitated through appropriate policies that support their advancement even if they take maternity leave. With 62% of Japanese women quitting their employment after giving birth to their first child, (Japan Institute of Workers' Evolution, 2011) this consistency is lost. Without consistency, women's advancement will not be realized.

Consistency in messages communicated in career education is also essential. Young women in Japan need to be informed that research shows that specialized education and work experience is important outside Japan.

Since 2010, some pioneering companies such as Mitsui & Co. and Fast Retailing (UNIQLO) are starting to introduce universal HRM practices, regardless of race and gender, but this new approach should become consistent among all Japanese companies. These types of companies should be held as cases for analysis and recognized as role models.

The trends show that Japan is moving in the right direction, but consistency of message and consistent, long-term efforts are essential if women are to succeed in global careers.

As Sheryl Sandberg argued in her acclaimed book, *Lean In*, in the future we will not be making distinctions between female leaders and male leaders, there will just be leaders; in Japan, through consistency, we hope that there will no longer be female and male employees, just employees.

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## Law and Practice in International Human Rights Cases of Gender Violence in South Asia: Contextual Human Rights in Practice

Prof. Dr. Tamara Relis<sup>1</sup>

Keywords: human rights, conflict resolution, mediation, courts, victims, lawyers

*This paper attempts to make sense of contextual examples of both 'successes and failures of legally transplanted human rights paradigms through the perspectives of professional actors and parties involved in the processing of human rights cases of violence against women in South Asia. In particular, the paper seeks to analyze how, if at all, victims of violence as well as legal professional actors (females and males) in a developing world context perceive and incorporate international human rights ideas into their worlds, which are strongly infused with 'tradition', 'culture' and 'religion', and whose tenets often conflict with those of universalist international human rights principles and laws.*

*The paper draws on data from a new book on human rights and legal pluralism in South Asia, entitled, *The Purchase of Human Rights: Standards and Legal Pluralism in the Global South* (Oxford University Press, 2015 forthcoming). The manuscript is grounded in interpretive theory and is based on the discourse of legal and lay actors involved in state courts (civil and criminal as well as court-linked mediations known as 'lok adalats') and non-state justice mechanisms (NGOs, panchayats and nari adalats). The dataset is in seven languages and covers eight states of India. It includes 400 participant observations, interviews and questionnaires with victims (74), accused (46), family members (30), lawyers (90), judges (32)*

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This article draws on preliminary analysis of empirical research conducted in eight states of India during 2005-2009 subsequent to funding through British Academy Award PDF/2006/64 and two postdoctoral research fellowship awards at the London School of Economics Department of Law and Columbia University Law School: Economic Social Research Council Award PTA-026-27-0979. I would like to thank profusely my eight teams of research assistants throughout India. Their names are unfortunately too many to list, but without them this research would not have been possible. Parts of this article were presented at the American Law & Society Annual Meeting, Honolulu (2012), the International Symposium on Victimology, Mito, Japan (2009), the IVR World Congress of Philosophy of Law, Beijing (2009), Cornell Law School (2010), and the UNDP (2010).

*and non-State justice arbitrators/mediators (48) known as “panches”. The data was collected through a London School of Economics postdoctoral fellowship, funded by the British Academy.*

*Relatively little scholarship bases its analyses on the discourse of the subjects of international human rights law and particularly those actually involved in human rights violations cases in the developing world in the context of legal pluralism. The paper highlights local activists’ discourse grounded in global, theoretical, and policy-oriented models of equal rights. Yet, at the same time, it elucidates masked inequalities at grassroots levels that are perpetuated through the seamless social realities of actors involved in human rights violation cases. Utilizing contextual analysis, the paper highlights the surrounding social realities of victims of human rights abuses involving serious violence against women. These social realities include networks of family, kin, community and religion. These networks include social norms, exert influence and affect actors’ understandings, attitudes, and conduct in relation to human rights issues. Thus, talk of justice experiences and disappointments with particular justice systems is infused with discourse focused ‘tradition’, ‘culture’ and ‘religion’—whose tenets often conflict with those of universalist international human rights principles and laws. Yet, international human rights law and scholarship have not been adequately infused with these realities.*

*The data highlight the importance of the particularities of actors’ lived realities when considering the practice of human rights on the ground. Such particularities cannot be minimized or ‘overcome’ when considering the aims of international human rights norm diffusion theory as well as law and development projects. Consequently, the paper reinforces the arguments for a change in the international human rights framework to incorporate a culturally plural universalism in human rights. These arguments need to be implemented more on a practical level in terms of international human rights legitimacy and representativeness at grassroots levels.*

## **Introduction**

The success or failure of legal transplants has been discussed in various contexts including law and development studies as well as comparative law studies.<sup>2</sup> The success of a legal transplanted rule has been defined as ‘using the legal rule in the same way as used in the home country, subject to adaptations to local conditions’. Failure has been defined as ‘when the imported is ignored by relevant actors in the host country, or the application or enforcement of the rule leads to unintended consequences.’<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Jorge Costa & Paula Cardinal, eds) (2009) *Once Country, Two Systems, Three Legal Orders : Perspectives of Evolution*

<sup>3</sup> Kanda and Milhaupt 2003, p.887

This paper attempts to make sense of contextual examples of both ‘successes and failures of legally transplanted human rights paradigms through legal actors and parties perspectives involved in the processing of human rights cases of violence against women in South Asia. In particular, the paper seeks analyze how, if at all, victims of violence as well as legal actors in a developing world context perceive and incorporate international human rights ideas into their worlds, which are strongly infused with ‘tradition’, ‘culture’ and ‘religion’, and whose tenets often conflict with those of universalist international human rights principles and laws.

This paper draws on data from a forthcoming book on human rights in South Asia, entitled, *THE PURCHASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: STANDARDS AND LEGAL PLURALISM IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). The manuscript is grounded in interpretive theory and is based on the discourse of legal and lay actors involved in state courts (civil and criminal as well as court-linked mediations known as ‘lok adalats’) and non-state justice processing (NGOs, panchayats and nari adalats) of human rights violation cases of serious violence against women in India. The dataset is in seven languages and covers eight states. It includes 400 participant observations, interviews and questionnaires with victims (74), accused (46), family members (30), lawyers (90), judges (32) and non-State justice arbitrators/mediators (48) known as “panches”.

In this paper, the social contexts of victims’ of violence have been analyzed in an effort to understand some of the discontinuities regularly found within the dataset between victims’ desires for and perceptions of ‘justice’ as compared with principles of international human rights law including concepts of equality, autonomy and choice.<sup>4</sup>

Victims’ discourse included talk of their normative social structures, contexts and interactions involving family, kin, community (including caste) and/or religion as well as their experiences of education, poverty and/or illiteracy. This illuminated their strong self-identification as part of their ‘groups’. Significantly, the data suggest that victims’ self-identification influenced critical issues relating to both their situations as victims of human rights violations as well as their attitudes, decisions and conduct relating to the processing of their cases.

This paper examines three issues relating to victims’ preliminary perceptions of ‘justice’ within the context of human rights norms. These included, (1) What court or other justice process they approached to obtain the ‘justice’ they sought, (2) Their aims and agendas in the processing of their cases in various state and non-state justice systems they approached, and (3) Whom victims wanted as participants and audience members at their case hearings. In non-state justice processes such as the mahila panchayat and nari adalat ‘women’s arbitration/mediation courts’ covered in the research, ‘justice’ was more often a community affair, with neighbors and friends actually partaking in hearings, and not simply attending as ‘members of the audience’. Lastly, the paper examines the understanding and meanings ascribed to case

<sup>4</sup> See generally, Tamara Relis, *Human Rights and Southern Realities*, 33(2) HUMAN RIGHTS QUARTERLY 509-551 (University of Cincinnati College of Law, May, 2011



resolution comparing predominantly male lawyers with female community mediators and leaders.

Relatively little scholarship grounds its analyses on the discourse of the subjects of international human rights law and particularly those actually involved in human rights violations cases in the global South in the context of legal pluralism. Grounded in interpretive theory, the paper highlights some of the contextual social realities of victims of human rights abuses involving serious violence against women. In so doing, it further illustrates how human rights understandings, subjectivities, desires for, and perceptions of “justice” in the Indian landscape—and probably in many traditional societies in developing contexts—are bound up intricately within social and cultural structures including networks of family, kin, and community.<sup>5</sup> This enculturation within particular societies is complicated by factors of poverty, illiteracy, and development.<sup>6</sup>

Victims’ networks of family, kin, community and religion are deeply embedded within local traditional, cultural and/or religious norms whose tenets often conflict with those of universalist international human rights principles and laws.<sup>7</sup> Yet, I argue here that these networks exert influence and affect actors’ understandings, attitudes and conduct in relation to human rights issues. Indeed, psychological research indicates that individuals are greatly influenced by their social situations, whether they are aware of it or not.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding their importance to international human rights norm diffusion, acceptance and internalization, human rights law and scholarship have not been adequately infused/imbued with these realities.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> On enculturation within particular societies, see Eva Brems, *Enemies or Allies? Feminism and Cultural Relativism As Dissident Voices in Human Rights Discourse*, 19 *HuM. RtS. Q.* 136, 156 (1997). Eva Brems, *Enemies or Allies? Feminism and Cultural Relativism As Dissident Voices in Human Rights Discourse*, 19 *HuM. RtS. Q.* 136, 142, 145 (1997).

<sup>6</sup> See Relis, n2 at 539. Poverty, as defined by the poor, includes not only being materially or resource poor, but also dependent, feeling helpless, humiliated by state and non-state actors, and acutely vulnerable. Poverty further includes being ill-informed and lacking in social connections, thus disempowered. See generally Deepa naRayan et al., *voiceS of tHe pooR: can anyone HeaR uS?* (2000); Deepa naRayan et al., *voiceS of tHe pooR: cRying out foR cHange* (2000). In May 2001, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) defined poverty as “a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.” *Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Report of the Twenty-fifth Sessions*, U.N. ESCOR, Comm. on Econ., Soc. & Cult. Rts., 25th Sess., ¶ 8, U.N. Doc. E/C.12/2001/10 (2001), cited in MaRgueRite gaRling, supra, note 5, at 1–2. By subjectivity, I am referring to a person’s feelings, beliefs, and desires relating to human rights, shaped by the concepts of autonomy, equality and choice.

<sup>7</sup> While it is acknowledged that the term ‘culture’ is a contested one, not being something static, but instead loose, heterogeneous and constantly evolving CITE MERRY. I use the term ‘culture’ here loosely to mean...DEFINE

<sup>8</sup> See Lee D. Ross, *The Intuitive Psychologist and His Shortcomings: Distortions in the Attribution Process*, in *aDvanceS in expeRiMental Social pSyChology*: vol.10, 173 (Leonard Berkowitz ed., 1977). See also Dan T. Gilbert & Patrick S. Malone, *The Correspondence Bias*, 117 *pSyChol. bull.* 21, 21–38 (1995), cited in Woods, supra note 2, at 56; cRiStina supra note XX at p. XXX See also Woods, supra note 4, at 58, 70. Also noted in **Relis, n2 at 511-12**

<sup>9</sup> In advocating a new approach to international human rights to include findings from behavioral studies, Woods highlights the fact that the human rights academic and practice literature has been focused on state behavior. Consequently, what is lacking is an empirically-based documented exposition of the ways in which social situations are influenced by and/or give meaning to human rights laws, shape and regulate conduct related to human rights and how such situations can be altered.

For many in traditional societies the extended family and immediate community provide social security while stressing responsibilities and collective duties for members. They socialize and impart values, simultaneously controlling and disciplining their members including arbitrating and mediating conflict.<sup>10</sup> The associated norms within these social conditions perform a regulatory function that constrains individuals' behavior through community enforcement.<sup>11</sup> Understanding and taking greater account of the dynamics of these overlapping normative, rule-encompassing social fields is a necessary prerequisite to theorizing and resolving issues relating to the practice of human rights. These social fields range from state or customary law to socio-legal spaces including community, family, or other groups in which individuals are constituted and socialized.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, in terms of local actors' epistemologies, what people know, how their knowledge is acquired, and how their knowledge and social situations affect their beliefs and actions relating to human rights require further investigation.<sup>13</sup> Contextualized, interpretive accounts from those embroiled in human rights cases are critical to obtain a comprehensive picture of the workings of international human rights on the ground and to enable a more nuanced understanding of Southern actors' needs, epistemologies, and micro-realities.<sup>14</sup> To address this gap, the data here highlight the importance and influence of the particularities of actors' lived micro-realities in terms of human rights. Such particularities cannot be minimized or easily 'overcome' when considering the aims of the international human rights regime or of law and development projects. These data further provide some context to the debates on universalism versus cultural relativism, as well as those on human rights permeation and practice.

### Gaps in the Theoretical Debates

In terms of the theoretical debates, norm diffusion theory in the international relations and sociolegal literatures and vernacularization theory in the law and anthropology literature both relate to the permeation of international human rights laws and norms to grassroots levels. However, neither include in their analyses the lived contextual realities of individuals who are the subjects of international human rights.<sup>15</sup>

Norm diffusion theory attempts to explain the internalization of international human rights principles domestically to state institutions, state actors, and ultimately to the

*See, e.g.,* Andrew k. Woods, *A Behavioral Approach to Human Rights*, 51 *HaRv. int'l I.J.* at 73–74 (2010).

<sup>10</sup> gaRling, *supra* note 5, at 51.

<sup>11</sup> *See* Lawrence Lessig, *The New Chicago School*, 27 *J. legal StuD.* 661, 662, 677 (1998). *See also* Woods, *supra* note 4, at 54, 76; Cristina biccHieRi, *tHe gRaMMaR of Society: tHe natuRe aND DynaMicS of Social noRMS* 3 (2005), *cited in* Woods, *supra* note 4, at 54, 57.

<sup>12</sup> *See* Relis, note 2 at p.513-14

<sup>13</sup> *See, e.g.* Woods, *supra* note 4, at 51, 51–52, 55–56, 71, 73, 78–79, 95, 98.

<sup>14</sup> Relis, note 2 at p.511-12

<sup>15</sup> Relis, note 2 at 524. *See* Thomas Risse & kathryn Sikkink, *The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practices: Introduction, in tHe poWeR of HuMan RigHtS: inteRnational noRMS aND DoMeStic cHange* 1–5, 7–8, 11, 33 (Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, & kathryn Sikkink eds., 1999); *see also* MaRgaRet e. keck & katHRyn Sikkink, *activiStS beyonD boRDeRS: aDvocacy netWoRkS in inteRnational politicS* (1998); kathryn Sikkink, *Human Rights, Prin- cipleD Issue- Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America*, 47 *int'l oRg.* 411 (1993); Sally e. MeRRy, *HuMan RigHtS aND genDeR violence: tRanSlating inteRnational laW into local JuStice* (2006).

polity at large. More recent research on social norms indicates that norms affect behavior and can result in compliance without people having to internalize them.<sup>16</sup> However, the international norm diffusion literature concentrates primarily on the interaction between transnational social movement activists and governments. The literature does not examine the boundaries between global ideas and those of local groups, and in particular does not focus on local individuals' perceptions of international human rights norms in developing world contexts.<sup>17</sup>

Vernacularization theory in the law and anthropology literature expands on norm diffusion theory relating to the permeation of human rights, taking it one level down. Sally Merry illustrates how transnational activists and national elites (e.g., human rights lawyers, social activists, academics, and community and NGO leaders) disseminate and translate international human rights ideas, legal categories and norms into local terms to deal with particular issues such as gender violence. These ideas and norms are then situated within local contexts, cultures, and values including structures of power and meaning. The aim is to make these ideas and norms part of local legal and grassroots consciousness. Merry argues that this incorporation enables human rights to be effective, as this process fosters the gradual emergence of a local rights consciousness among grassroots groups. However, Merry notes that it is unclear whether these translations and the dissemination of international human rights ideas actually achieve their emancipatory aims, particularly as they relate to increasing human rights subjectivities for victims of violence and others.<sup>18</sup> Merry's work is predominantly about how human rights are translated into the vernacular. This differs from the focus of the present study.

To address this gap, this paper provides new research data into Southern actors' human rights perspectives, including interpretive accounts of their contextual realities. Such knowledge is critical in order to innovatively engage the controversies in international human rights theory and practice and to assist human rights organizations and advocates to become more valuable to the poor and the oppressed. As such, they will be better able to effect realizable change for the subjects of human rights in the global South.<sup>19</sup>

## Human Rights in Indian Contexts

I have argued and shown elsewhere that notwithstanding state enactments of laws in line with international human rights obligations, as well as the dissemination of

<sup>16</sup> See Cristina Bicchieri, *The Grammar of Society: The Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms* 3 (2005), cited in Woods, *supra* note 4, at 54, 57. *See also* Woods, *supra* note 4, at 54, 75.

<sup>17</sup> See Relis, note 2 at 525-6. This was a critique of Harold Hongju Koh relating to Goodman and Jinks' theory, noting that the authors were yet to explain "internalization on the ground," in terms of real social acceptance of international human rights principles. *See* Harold H. Koh, *Internalization Through Socialization*, 54 *Duke L.J.* 975, 981-82 (2005).

<sup>18</sup> *See* Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*, *supra* note 6, at 222. Merry, *Transnational Human Rights*, *supra* note 23, at 38, 42. *See also* Sally Engle Merry, *Constructing a Global Law: Violence Against Women and the Human Rights System*, 28 *Law & Soc. Inquiry* 941, 973 (2003); Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*, *supra* note 23, at 1, 134. Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*, *supra* note 23, at 3, 134. *See* Merry, *Transnational Human Rights*, *supra* note 23, at 38, 42, 49; Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*, *supra* note 23, at 379.

<sup>19</sup> Relis, note 2, at p516; The latter need has been noted by the International Council on Human Rights. Marguerite Garling, *Int'l Council on Human Rights Policy, Enhancing Access to Human Rights* 1 (2004), at 3.

human rights concepts by transnational activists and domestic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who work to make them meaningful within particular societies, many victims of violence within the dataset showed little if any human rights “emancipation.” This was underscored in their discourse on their motivations and agendas in approaching formal courts and quasi-legal justice regimes.<sup>20</sup>

In India, domestic enactments of law, specifically the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (PWDVA), are in line with international human rights obligations. Further, developments relating to human rights in the higher courts, and the dissemination of human rights concepts such as “equality” and “autonomy” by transnational activists and the domestic NGO’s covered in the study were evident. These NGOs, which process gender violence cases, vernacularized human rights principles and worked to make them meaningful in local contexts. Nevertheless, much of the discourse of victims of violence on their motivations and objectives in formal courts and quasi-legal justice mechanisms suggested little, if any, human rights “emancipation.”<sup>21</sup> When comparing victims’ perceptions of and aims for “justice” in local contexts with global visions of universal human rights enshrined in the normative language of international human rights laws such as CEDAW and the ICCPR, serious discontinuities existed.<sup>22</sup>

Poorer, lesser-educated victims of violence who had undergone quasi- legal case processing in mahila panchayats (“women’s courts”) under the auspices of these local NGOs, stated that they had either never heard of human rights or if they had (through hearing of them in the women’s courts), lacked a basic understanding of their meaning. This trend was notwithstanding the fact that the mahila panchayat’s paralegals and panches (arbitrators/ mediators) were trained in and employed international human rights principles in case processing, visited numerous villages providing inhabitants with information on human rights, displayed human rights scenarios on the walls of their institutions and distributed human rights information leaflets in local languages to parties.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Relis, note 2, at p.512

<sup>21</sup> Women’s rights as human rights were articulated in the Vienna Accord 1994 and reinforced at the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women 1995. In India, cases involving violence against women processed in the formal justice system are generally filed in the lower courts under section 498A of the Indian Penal Code for “cruelty,” section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act 1955 (for restitution of conjugal rights), and/or under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (‘PWDVA’). The PWDVA regards gender violence in the domestic sphere as a human rights issue relating to the right of a woman to lead a dignified existence. As such, the PWDVA assists India in fulfilling its international commitments under CEDAW, the main UN convention on violence against women. Having ratified CEDAW in 1993, India is obliged to incorporate it into its domestic legislation. Thus, the PWDVA symbolizes India’s commitment to CEDAW and its acceptance of the recognition of women’s rights as human rights. See Chowdhury, A. Chowdhury, *Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005: Balancing Gender Equations*, 27 DelHi l. Rev. 98, at 100, 114-15 (2005);

<sup>22</sup> Relis n2 at 535

<sup>23</sup> The non-state ‘women’s courts’ covered in the study are the *mahila panchayats* in the north of India, in and around Delhi and in the state of Uttar Pradesh, as well as the *Nari Adalats* in Bangalore and rural Bijapur, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere in the south of India. Both conduct near identical arbitration/mediation proceedings weekly or regularly for gender violence cases that are similar to those that go through the formal court system. These include cases of food deprivation as a form of punishment (known as “starvation cases”), physical and mental torture, and rape. The women’s courts are run by domestic NGOs Action India and Mahila Samakya, respectively. Both organizations receive funding and training from transnational human rights organizations and others including the

Those more educated viewed human rights to be positive, but primarily of use on an inspirational level. More educated victims (college and above) generally appeared relatively more independent in their decisions of whether or not to approach a justice system, which justice system to engage, and what to seek there. They more often went through the formal court system and were more broadly aware of international human rights concepts and the fact that they also pertained to women. However, they too were unaware of specifics including how these principles applied to their cases. Of course, in analyzing the permeation of international human rights in various cultural contexts unfamiliarity with the term “human rights” need not be important in itself.

There were other differences found between victims of different socio-economic groups. Those in better financial and educational situations were less willing to accept perceived inequities, whereas those in lesser educated and lower socioeconomic groups regularly repeated that notwithstanding any violence, their husbands “were their gods.” Consequently, disempowerment appeared to be internalized on various levels.<sup>24</sup>

However, interestingly, the discourse of both groups of victims generally indicated that fundamental human rights principles such as equality and autonomy were of little relevance to their life situations and indeed perceived as such. Moreover, the discourse of victims in both groups regularly included little or no reference to anything resembling a subjectivity that included the fundamental human rights principles of equality and autonomy. When questioned, victims were frequently of the view that these concepts were of little relevance to their life situations and case realities; and though something positive, human rights ideas were only of use on an inspirational level and not a practical level in terms of their own case realities and life situations.

UN, Oxfam, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, USAID, Global Rights, and the Dutch government through the Indo-Dutch Program. Consistent with norm diffusion theory, the paralegals and arbitrators in the women’s courts receive regular training firmly rooted in international human rights laws and principles by various transnational actors, international entities and those from Western countries linked to this funding. This knowledge is then translated into their case processing approaches as well as into local language informative leaflets for parties and posters on the walls of their courts. The *mahila panchayats* are advertised to the public as an easy to reach and low cost (or free), time-saving mechanism by which women can access justice in view of India’s formal court systems being notoriously backlogged and corrupt. The *mahila panchayats* focus is generally on poor sectors of society and marginalized populations who live in slum-like resettlement colonies on city outskirts. Likewise, the *nari adalats* are mostly successful with poorer sectors of society. Interview with Gouri Chowdhury, Action India Director, New Delhi (18 July 2006 & 10 Aug. 2006); Interview with Naseem, Action India Senior Manager, New Delhi (18 July 2006 & 25 July 2006); Interview with Arti Paralegal, New Delhi (19 July 2006); Interview with Dr. Neela Mukerjee, U.N. Dev. Programme, New Delhi (21 July 2006); Interview with Veena Poonacha, SNTD, Mumbai (31 July 2006); MeRRy, Human Rights and Gender violence, *supra* note 23, at 46–47, 142, 156–57; Merry, *Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism*, *supra* note 23, at 38; international center for Research on Women and the Center for Development and Population Activities, *Domestic Violence in India* volS. 1–5 (1999–2002) at 15, 32–65, 99, available at <http://www.icrw.org/publications/domestic-violence-india-part-1>; Veena Poonacha & Divya Pandey, *Responses to Domestic Violence: Government and Non-Government Action in Karnataka and Gujarat*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 12 Feb. 2000, at 566.

<sup>24</sup> Relis, note 2 at 539

## **Ideologies of Justice Viewed Within Social Contexts: State versus Non-State Justice Court Processing of Human Rights cases**

Differences between state and non-state justice courts and mediations have been analyzed in depth in the literature on legal pluralism.<sup>25</sup> On the basis that a culturally plural universalism in human rights is an acceptable aim, I have argued that there exists an important need for a new integrated analytical framework. This framework must be grounded not only in the perspectives of Southern actors or those oppressed, but must simultaneously imbed their epistemologies within the realities of human rights case processing in the legally pluralistic global South. This involves not only formal courts but also quasi-legal non-state justice systems processing human rights cases. Understanding local case processing nuances is important in analyzing the acceptance and application of international human rights at grassroots levels.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, throughout much of the developing world, large numbers of criminal and civil cases, including those involving human rights violations, are not taken to formal justice systems for various reasons. These reasons include lack of knowledge of courts, rights or how to formulate claims, illiteracy, problems of access including physical distance and lack of resources, and fear or lack of trust in the formal justice system.<sup>27</sup> The poor and marginalized as well as others may also reject official institutions for historical and cultural reasons.<sup>28</sup> Formal courts may seem intimidating, alien, and frightening. Additionally, many formal justice systems include structural impediments to the full realization of human rights. These impediments consist of uneven resource allocation, criminality, patronage and nepotism, ignorance and ineptitude, and various biases including those of class, caste, ethnicity, and gender.<sup>29</sup>

In the context of India it has been argued that issues of social stratification coupled with geographic isolation result in the formal legal system frequently being accessible only to the middle and upper classes. Even those who are aware of legal remedies are usually disinclined to pursue them. There are also issues of police corruption and fear of social repercussions, which impede access to formal justice systems.<sup>30</sup> Thus, although human rights law makes the state the main mechanism for social protection,

<sup>25</sup> Palmer and Roberts, *DISPUTE PROCESSES*, 2005, p.

<sup>26</sup> Relis, n2 at p.414-16

<sup>27</sup> Call for Research Papers, UNDP Regional Centre Bangkok: Engaging State Institutions to Enable Non-State Justice Systems to Provide Access to Justice—the Formal/Informal Interface (2010), available at <http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/whatsnew/documents/20100610-ResearchPaper.pdf>. These have been discussed as overlapping and mutually reinforcing sources of disempowerment, which may deny rural people access to courts. Poverty also prevents people from accessing their rights. See gaRling, *supra* note 11, at 1–2; see also p.n. SankaRan, paRticipatoRy JuStice anD HuMan RiGHtS pRotection in little DeMocRacieS: a pilot StuDY 10, 30–31 (2003); Shah, *supra* note 5 at 221, 224–25, 228; Robert S. Moog, *The Politics of Lok Adalats in Varanasi District*, 25 *laW & Soc’y Rev.* 545, 549–51, 563–64 (1991); Marc Galanter & Jayanth k. krishnan, “Bread for the Poor”: Access to Justice and the Rights of the Needy in India, 55 *HaStingS I.J.* 789, 807, 827, 833 (2004); Veronica Magar, *Empowerment Approaches to Gender-Based Violence: Women’s Courts in Delhi Slums*, 26 *WoMen’S StuD. int’l f.* 509, 510 (2003); Interview with Dr. Neela Mukherjee, UNDP, in New Delhi, India (21 July 2006); Interview with Veena Punacha, SNTD, in Pune, India (31 July 2006); A. Chowdhury, *Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005: Balancing Gender Equations*, 27 *DelHi l. Rev.* 98, 98 (2005); karine Bates, Paper Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association: Legal Consciousness and Informal Transmission of Legal knowledge in India (28 May 2010).

<sup>28</sup> gaRling, *supra* note 5, at 2, 7.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.* at 13, 54.

<sup>30</sup> Shah, *supra* note 5 at 221, 224–25, 228

the poor and marginalized are often ambivalent toward state institutions, with many viewing the law as a vehicle for powerful interests. Consequently, they often choose to place their trust in informal and customary processes, which may be perceived as accessible, familiar, low-risk, and culturally comfortable. Hence, many cases involving human rights are settled through quasi-legal, non-state mechanisms of conflict resolution in various forms.<sup>31</sup>

The reliance on quasi-legal, non-state mechanisms in human rights cases is also insufficiently examined in the international human rights literature, including both reviewed books. As Erika Techera notes, “International law plays an important part in establishing norms and standards that inform national law and policy. However, it has failed to effectively address many of the specific needs of legally pluralist nations.”<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the nexus between international human rights and legal pluralism is in need of far greater examination in the legal literature. Although human rights permeation and legal pluralism are interrelated, their relationship is complex. Thus, one might argue that to be accepted in a pluralistic environment, human rights norms might need to be expressed in another idiom.<sup>33</sup>

### **Participants and audiences as part of ‘the justice process’**

What court or other non-state justice process victims underwent as well as their aims in case processing appeared to largely correlate with their socioeconomic groups, whether they were in urban or rural locations, and the consequent ‘justice’ they sought.

Yet, in terms of views on who should and did partake in their case hearings, the following interview excerpts from victims of violence highlight a recurrent theme in the bulk of victims’ interviews regardless of education, geography or socioeconomic grouping. Throughout, views of ‘justice’ in this sense appeared to be somewhat removed from a vision of individual human rights protected by the State, and instead they were presented more as part of family and community living.

P11 Devika. bangalore family court-Devika, aged between 18-29, but had worked earlier as a teacher and had a bachelors degree. Her father was a doctor. She had been subject to physical ill treatment by her husband and sister in law...for two years. She described her husband as being ‘quite possessive and very suspicious...over anything, even if I go out for market. Even when I go to my parent’s place he expects I ask permission... and of course baby aggravated the situation more after I delivered... because they always were expecting a boy child.’”

<sup>31</sup> See sources cited *supra* note 25.

<sup>32</sup> Erika Techera, *Strengthening International Law to Address the Needs of Legally Pluralist Nations* (Macquarie University–Macquarie Law School, Australia, Working Paper No. 2010–02, 2010), available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1545528>

<sup>33</sup> Email from karen knop, University of Toronto School of Law (20 Mar. 2011) (on file with author). Some interesting works include, Abdullahi An-Na’im, *Protecting Human Rights in Plural Legal Systems in Africa: A Comparative Overview*, in *univeRSal HuMan RigHtS*, local ReMeDieS 39–64 (Abdullahi An-Na’im ed., 1999); Paul Schiff Berman, *Global Legal Pluralism*, 80 S. cal. l. Rev. 1155 (2007); Paul Berman, *The New Legal Pluralism*, 5 ann. Rev. l. & Soc. Sci. 225 (2009); see also Techera, *supra* note 30.

When asked, WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE JUSTICE PROCESS HEARING? ONLY THE WOMAN OR THE MAN WHO ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED? She responded, 'No, the entire family, which met with injustice, can attend.'

**p12-Manjula.bangalore high court-WHOM DO YOU THINK SHOULD ATTEND THESE TRIALS... ONLY THE HUSBAND AND WIFE OR DO YOU THINK THE OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS SHOULD ALSO COME? No....I think family members are very important....**

**WHAT ABOUT OTHERS FROM OUTSIDE FAMILY COMING...Doesn't make a difference to me.....I mean, initially.....I was very... ..hesitant and little shy and awkward.....but as the days go by..... I just ignored them.....IN YOUR CASE, WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE TRIAL...his family, my family, and my friends were there...**

**P14.Rukmavaa.rural bijaipur.nari adalat -WHO ACCOMPANIED YOU TO THE NARI ADALATH? Initially, it was...*a neighbor*... and for two-three times now...my mother has accompanied me...HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THEM COMING WITH YOU? It is a good thing...We thought the people from our village will scold us. But..everyone acted as if... in their opinion it's okay to go to nari adalath.**

**WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD ATTEND MEDIATIONS LIKE NARI ADALATH? FOR INSTANCE, ONLY THE MAN AND THE WOMAN WHO ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTE OR THEIR RESPECTIVE FAMILIES ALSO OR OTHER NEIGHBOURS AND FRIENDS? If they are asked by the madams to take a few neighbours and friends..then they should take them along...*if the man wants to bring some people along...so be it.***

**P37.Savita.rape case.bijaipur.sessions court -WHO ACCOMPANIED YOU TO THE COURT? My mother, my father, there is one man called Kanthu IS HE A PERSON FROM YOUR VILLAGE? yes...he belongs to our caste...outside family relations. WHY WAS IT DECIDED TO TAKE THEM ALONG? as a moral support...and since even my parents don't know much about court and these legal matters, it was good for us that he came along...I'm scared even to talk to here...going to the court alone is a far fetched thing**

**P75.Chhoti.delhi.mahila panchayat**

**WHO ELSE ACCOMPANIED YOU? It was one of my neighbors who came with me, who guided me about this place that at some place such mahila panchayat is being conducted. Like the same way it happens in our village Whatever your husband is troubling you, go and tell them ...they would set right everything. That is why I came here, ...AND FAMILY MEMBERS SHOULD ALSO COME SHOW THEIR PRESENCE? Yes.. YOUR NIEBHOURS SHOULD ALSO COME? yes. SO THAT TRUTH SHALL COME FORWARD. Yes, people from my niebhourhood can also come...**

**IF IN CASE YOU DON'T GET JUSTICE HERE THEN WOULD YOU GO TO THE HIGHER LEVEL(COURTS)? no, I cant. IF YOUR HUSBAND DOESN'T BEHAVE PROPERLY OR DOESN'T COME HERE AND ALSO AFTER THIS HE CONTINUES BEATING YOU, EVEN THEN YOU WONT GO IN UPPER**



## COURTS?

No, not even then. WHY IS IT SO? because, as it happens in our system (caste), after having done this a girl loses all respect in the society, it is not considered proper in our people. It is better if the matter gets resolved within the family itself or before the head of the clan, and better to find a solution therein. We don't need to go to courts or to an advocate for anything of such sort.

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK IS IT BETTER TO CONDUCT PROCEEDINGS IN PRIVATE OR IN PUBLIC? it should be before everyone. WHY? So that everybody could get to know that chhoti has said this thing, everyone would tax their brain for others problems which may turn out to be fruitful for me as it would be better if decision is taken by the choice of the majority where everyone could put up their opinion that may be helpful to my case as this can't be possible in private proceedings, so private proceedings are surely at disadvantage in this aspect.

P85.delhi.Santosh.mahila panchayat

Initially I used to get scared of my husband that he would beat me. But now my body has accustomed to be beaten up...SO YOU WANT TO DISCUSS YOUR ISSUES IN FRONT OF YOUR FAMILY....Yes, everyone should come to know what kind of a husband he is so that he gets embarrassed and changes for better. Everybody should come to know about the ill-treatment given to me by him.

WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED YOU? I have a brother, he had come along, my father had also come, and my mother does not keep well but she had come once. The neighborhood lady always comes with me.

ACCORDING TO YOU SHOULD YOU COME HERE ALONE OR IS IT BETTER THAT THE LADY SHOULD COME ALONG? If someone comes along I feel a sense of support. I can not move out of my house alone, my husband beats me, and I can not come all by myself. If some accomplished person accompanies then there is a feeling of supportiveness. The world is so cruel, you would not believe that one day my husband sent men with a knife, and had prevented me from coming here. But since the neighborhood lady is educated, she handled the situation; she took me to the police. Hence I want someone to accompany me otherwise I would not be able to reach up to this place, so much of violence has been done to me.

...In private my husband would not be scared. It is necessary to make him understand in front of all (ie others in the community), when his self-respect is endangered, he would not listen otherwise.

**P30.Shobha.bijaipur.nari adalat**

THE PROBLEM IS GENERALLY BETWEEN THE HUSBAND AND WIFE...DO YOU THINK ONLY THE MAN AND THE WOMAN SHOULD ATTEND THE MEDIATION OR THE FAMILY MEMBERS MUST ALSO ATTEND AND ANY OTHERS SHOULD ALSO ATTEND? Shobha : Everyone has to attend.. MAY I KNOW WHY DO YOU THINK SO? That's how it is...Everyone should be there.

### **Victims' aims and agendas for justice**

As with perceptions of 'justice' in terms of who should participate at their case hearings, victims discourse on their aims and objectives for the processing of their regularly highlighted the experience of human rights violations as being one of family and/or community. Here too views of 'justice' in this sense appeared to be somewhat removed from a vision of individual human rights protected by the State, and instead were presented more as part of family and community living.

Many victims of violence from higher educational or socioeconomic groups sought divorce and to 'move on' from their situations of violence. Still, case aims often included desires for reparations to their natal families as well as to themselves. In comparison, the bulk of victims from lower socioeconomic and educational groups enlisted quasi-legal justice systems as a means of obtaining compromise agreements with their abusers in order to peacefully return to or remain in their places of abuse. These were commonly the joint family homes of their spouses. Victims' desires were colored not only by their economic situations, but also by their not wanting to harm the honor of their families of origin. Indeed, although this may in some ways be harmful to women, it is well-established that the bulk of individuals in most non-Western cultures define themselves as members of larger groups or communities, not as autonomous entities.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, concepts such as individual rights can be perceived as alien or problematic. Interestingly, victims' comprehensions of human rights and stated motivations for and perceptions of "justice" regularly corresponded with those of their family members who also participated in the hearings and were interviewed separately.<sup>35</sup>

P14.rukmavaa.bijaipur.nari adalat WHAT HELP DID YOU SEEK WHEN YOU WENT TO NARI ADALTH INITIALLY? To settle my life by getting me back to my husband's place...and if he says he doesn't want me then.. see to it that he returns all that we gave him during marriage...DO YOU WISH TO RETURN TO YOUR MATRIMONIAL HOME? yes..of course WHY DO YOU FEEL SO? what will I do here...people will bad mouth me...they will ridicule my family...Look how they have left her daughter...and stuff like that..

...My wish is that I have to go and live with my husband...initially, I absolutely didn't feel like going bac...madam told me if he is that cruel then you can procure financial assistance form him and get married again..but I said no..

### **P30.Shobha.bijaipur.nari adalat**

WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING.. IS IT LIKE ITS BETTER FOR YOU IF YOU GET

<sup>34</sup> Claude Ake, *The African Context of Human Rights*, 34 aFR. toDay 5 (1987). See also Josiah A.M. Cobbah, *African Values and the Human Rights Debate*, 9 HuM. RtS. Q. 309 (1987); Radhika Coomaraswamy, *To Bellow Like a Cow: Women, Ethnicity, and the Discourse of Rights*, in HuMan RigHtS of WoMen: national anD inteRnational peRSpectiveS 39, 39 (Rebecca J. Cook ed., 1994); Eva Brems, *Enemies or Allies? Feminism and Cultural Relativism As Dissident Voices in Human Rights Discourse*, 19 HuM. RtS. Q. 136, 142, 145 (1997).

<sup>35</sup> Relis, n2 at 513

A SHARE OF PROPERTY OR WHAT? These people say they will get me and my husband back together...and if they (husband and others) say they will take me ..then I will have to go..

DOES THAT MEAN THAT YOU WANNA GET BACK TO YOUR HUSBAND?...If the madams ensure they won't treat me like before then..I will go..SO... YOU WANT TO GET BACK TO YOUR MARRIAGE...THAT'S HOW YOU WANT NARI ADALATH TO HELP YOU? yes...

WHAT KIND OF HELP DO YOU EXPECT FROM NARI ADALATH? LIKE...YOU WANT THE ILL TREATMENT TO BE STOPPED OR YOU WANT THE DEFENDANTS TO BE PUNISHED OR ANY KIND OF FINANCIAL COMPENSATION...? P: Now...whatever they decide...whatever the other party says..

**p.86.delhi.Joti.mahila panchayat** (who had been made a prisoner in her mother-in-law's small shack) WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR GOING TO THE MAHILA PANCHAYAT? I had gone there so that my home is saved and my family is returned to me. WHEN YOU WENT THERE, WHAT DID YOU WANT SHOULD HAPPEN? I wanted that I should get my home, my husband back.

**P75.Chhoti.delhi.mahila panchayat**

I also want what everyone wants from his or her marital life), ...I just want that by anyhow my husband would accept a compromise devised by the panch between me and him.

SO YOU DON'T WANT DIVORCE? no, where would I go carrying two children with me? This is the only reason, this is city not the village were I have my mother, father, sister and my whole family (house). Here I have no support of anyone besides my husband himself. I just want that my case should get decided peacefully agreeable to my husband so that I could also live peacefully...I want that I should keep working and stay in the house with my daughter.

**P85.delhi.Santosh.mahila panchayat**

They made me do a lot of household work, I slogged day and night, and they did not give me food to eat. I thought we do not have enough money in our house hence I sometimes I eat dry food (whatever undernourished food was available) and sometimes I do not eat, that does not matter. But I can not tolerate the bringing of other woman in front of me and...So much of lie, and so much of beating....And he keeps beating me all the time. Am I a cow or a buffalo that they keep beating me? ...I can not tolerate this any more... getting beaten up from husband that too a husband who does not give me food and the in-laws also beat up[started crying]

IF HE STOPS ALL THIS THEN ARE YOU READY TO GO(LIVE WITH) TO HIM? Yes, why not, I wish that we have a family and our family grows, everything becomes normal, why would not I want this? An Indian woman would always want that, we have been bought up in our house and family with this thinking that only the husband's house is our house. But it is like this and now all is in the hands of the

Almighty.....I will forget every thing, it is the duty of every wife to stay with her husband in one house.[cries]

IF YOU DO NOT GET A PROPER VERDICT HERE, AND IF YOU GO TO ADALAT THEN, WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM THERE, A DIVORCE OR DO YOU WANT YOUR HUSBAND TO IMPROVE, WHAT DO YOU DESIRE?

SANTOSH : [crying] Why would I want a divorce, how can I stay at my parent's place, If I was unmarried, then I can stay at my parent's place. I would want my house and family to grow, my parents in law behave well with me, and I can serve them well., take care of them. Just that they should not inflict violence on me, he should not drink alcohol, behave well. My marriage was done here, I wanted to stay in this house.

### **p12-Manjula.bangalore high court**

I want his apology in front of my family and a couple of community people, so they get to know exactly what kind of a man he is.

Of course, not all victims of violence including those from lower socioeconomic groups desired to return to their places of abuse—even when faced with hardship in the alternative. The severity of violence appeared to be one factor.

### **P37.Savita.rape.bijaipur.sessions court**

I wanted to separate....to fulfill my wishes of getting a divorce as soon as possible  
WHAT HELP WERE YOU SEEKING WHEN YOU MADE THE COMPLAINT?  
LIKE WHAT DID YOU SEEK AS JUSTICE? we wanted him (the father-in-law who had raped her) to be punished and give me divorce...

DO YOU WISH TO GO BACK TO THE MATRIMONIAL HOME?

No...not at all... I don't trust them..it's good that I took a divorce...had I not done so... they will definitely kill me if I'm with them since I made him go to jail...I don't trust them...they will kill me and say she died by herself...you never know when they will kill me...

SO..FOR YOU IT WAS GOOD THAT HE WAS PUNISHED? yes..it was good that he was punished...WHY DO YOU FEEL SO? That man....spoil my sheela...he must be punished.

Still, a recurrent theme amongst victims of violence throughout the dataset, covering eight states of India related to their predominant subjectivities as family and community group members, whose conceptions and desires for 'justice' often appeared at odds with those of individual subjects of human rights protections.

### **Lawyers & Judge Mediators**

Many lawyer advocates and lower court judges processing violence against women cases in the court-linked lok adalat mediations—where large numbers of these cases

are heard—did not feel that international human rights principles including those articulated in CEDAW were directly relevant to their cases. Thus neither the language nor the principles of international human rights such as equality or autonomy were utilized in case processing. Instead, mainly local customs and traditions were used in case resolution—something directly opposed to the universalist perspective of international human rights law.

### **Panches – Women Mediators - Community Leaders**

In contrast and somewhat paradoxically, the non-lawyer arbitrators/mediators in the quasi-legal non-state justice mechanisms studied—who were not formally legally trained and many of whom had poor literacy skills—appeared far more geared towards resolving cases utilizing principles of international human rights law (and CEDAW in particular) as opposed to simply following local tradition or custom.<sup>36</sup> For example, the following are interview excerpts from panches (non-State quasi-legal arbitrators/mediators):

This may be a result of various factors. First, there is no mandatory continuing legal education in India for lawyers. Thus, those advocates who began practice prior to India's ratification of CEDAW (in 1993) or other international legal documents, might be less aware of various international laws possibly affecting their cases. Second, the quasi-legal justice mediations and arbitrations covered in the research took place under the auspices of various local NGOs. Consistent with norm diffusion theory, these NGO's received funding and consequently regular training in international human rights laws and principles by various international NGOs and transnational actors and entities from Western countries, e.g. USAID, and the Dutch government through their Indo-Dutch program.<sup>37</sup> However, evidence throughout the dataset also indicated that additional factors involving the social contexts and situations within which legal and quasi-legal actors were enculturated additionally had an effect on their attitudes and conduct.

### **CONCLUSION**

This data lend support to arguments that grassroots compliance with legal, international and other norms often evinces sociopolitical actualities to a far greater extent than the legal status of those norms. Social contexts at grassroots levels frequently entail systems of control and have normative influence.<sup>38</sup> State enforcement of human rights-related laws may have little local normative purchase.<sup>39</sup> Thus, legal rules that are incompatible with community norms or local customs may have little effect on the ground unless they are imposed by force.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, the incorporation of human rights into domestic legislation, often held up by governments

<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, in articulating their mission, Action India—who run the mahila panchayats—state 'We believe that women's rights are human rights.' Interview with Gouri Chowdhury, Action India Director (July 18, 2006 & Aug. 10, 2006). See too <http://actionindiaworld.org/pages/about-us/mission.php> (last visited Aug.10.2010)

<sup>37</sup> See Tamara Relis, Human Rights & Violence Against Women in India: Paradoxes in Formal Courts vs. Informal Justice Mechanisms, Presentation at the American Law & Society Conference in Berlin, (July 2007) and the Annual Conference on South Asia, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison (Oct. 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Woods, *supra* note 2 at 107, 111.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.* at 98.

<sup>40</sup> Merry, *Legal Pluralism*, *supra* note 102 at 889; *The New Legal Pluralism*, *supra* note 29 at 232.

as a measure of their respect for human rights, does not by itself ensure access to those rights.

On the basis of these and other similar findings from the dataset, I argue that human rights comprehensions and subjectivities as well as the desires and perceptions of ‘justice’ of female victims of violence in the Indian landscape, and probably in much of the global South, are bound up intricately within local social and cultural structures including networks of family, kin and community.<sup>41</sup> This enculturation within particular societies is further complicated by issues of poverty, illiteracy, and development. For instance, there were differences found between victims of different educational and socioeconomic groups. Those in better financial and educational situations were less willing to accept perceived inequities. Whereas those in lesser educated and lower socioeconomic groups regularly repeated that notwithstanding any violence, their husbands ‘were their gods’. Consequently, disempowerment appeared to be internalized on various levels.<sup>42</sup>

In offering thickly contextual perspectives of law, needs and rights bound up within social and cultural structures, the excerpts provided here offer a modest example of some of the micro-realities affecting international human rights practice on the ground in the global South. The data further underscore the importance of understanding the dynamics of overlapping normative social fields in which individuals are constituted and socialized. These social fields consist of rules as well as various means of inducing compliance. They range from State or customary law to sociolegal spaces including community, family or other groups. Depth knowledge of these social fields furthers our understanding of how international human rights law does or can affect individuals’ conduct.<sup>43</sup>

Thus comprehending local actors’ attitudes on human rights principles and norms, and what influences them provides important substance necessary to theorize and resolve issues relating to the practice of human rights. Such knowledge provides broader scope for understanding why, notwithstanding the many successes of the international human rights regime, human rights still have difficulty in being perceived as relevant in the daily lives of many.

<sup>41</sup> On enculturation within particular societies, see Brems, *supra* note 19 at 156.

<sup>42</sup> This resonates with Ghai’s argument that individuals’ perceptions of rights are affected by their socioeconomic position in society. See Ghai, *supra* note 40 at 113.

<sup>43</sup> Woods, *supra* note 2 at 74.

**RESEARCH PRESENTATION FOR APAC 5<sup>TH</sup> WLCE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE 2014**

**Title of Research** : Leading Authentically: The Key to Driving Women Leaders Forward? An Asian Perspective

**Proposed Paper Submission** : Work-in-Progress

**Proposed Method of Presentation** : Poster presentation

**Abstract** : Contemporary organisational needs have created new expectations and demands of leadership, moving away from the traditionally masculine-centric focus on dominance and control, to collaboration and development – previously attributed to feminine traits. Correspondingly, the interests in attracting and developing women into leadership roles have increased. Much attention has been given to understanding gender differences in leadership styles, barriers for women in leadership roles, and effectiveness of women leadership. Nonetheless, most studies have been either Western-centric or gender neutral, with limited knowledge on the cultural influence on expectations of both leadership and gender roles, particularly from the personal experiences of Asian women leaders. This qualitative phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of Asian women leaders to deepen the understanding of how they perceive leadership and gender roles, and its influence on their leadership behaviours. Findings of this study are also envisaged to offer insights into the possible influence of authentic leadership behaviours on the role incongruity experienced by Asian women leaders. Data will be collected through phenomenological interviews, observations and literature review, and analysed through inductive and comparative analysis. Potential implications of this study include new ideas to facilitate leadership development programs catered to generating authentic and effective Asian women leaders.

**Organisation and Researchers** : **Human Dynamic**  
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# Leaving Informal Economy through a Vocational Training: The Case of Immigrant Women from Central Africa in French-Speaking Belgium

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## Abstract

This article summarizes the results of a research conducted in the French-speaking community of Belgium with migrant women from Central Africa. They all participated in a vocational training, organized by an associative educative centre, in order to integrate the sector of geriatric care. Our study shows that training provides them many benefits. On the psychosocial hand, it helps to break the isolation of women, increase their sense of pride and self-confidence. In economic terms, it provides them skills that are perfectly consistent with the requirements of the labour market. Globally, their access in the formal economy, empowered by this training, is very positively experienced.

**Keywords:** immigrant women, professional insertion, vocational training, empowerment, formal economy access.

## 1. Introduction

Many African women leave their country and migrate to Europe. Their migration project often focuses on finding economic alternatives in order to cope with the financial problems of their family (Institut National des Statistiques, 2006). But, many of them are not prepared to the European way of life and to the difficulties they will have to face with when they will try to find a job. They often have an idyllic vision of what life will be like once they arrive. However, it is a veritable obstacle course that awaits them.

Despite the Belgian legislation that protects from all discriminations, female migrant workers continue to suffer from recruitment discriminations, based on gender or ethnicity, and have to face difficulties while integrating the labor market (work permit, non-recognition of their diplomas, lack of qualification, cultural adjustment, linguistic difficulties ...). They are often confined in the informal sector. They are usually occupied in activities requiring less professional skills and qualifications that they really have. They don't benefit from any social security, or legal protection (Gatugu, 2000; Moninga-Gbogbu, 2002; Demarez et al., 2004).

In an attempt to leave the informal economic network, and to increase their chances of socio-professional integration, they often decide to join an associative organization (Merckling, 2012). There, they can receive a vocational training and get a diploma that will allows them to find a job within the sector of the elderly care that is characterized by a shortage of candidates. They will also find the opportunity to build a new social network that will break their isolation and support their social integration. From a psychological point of view, do all



these elements definitely contribute to the empowerment of these women and to the development of their self-esteem? This is what we wanted to find out in our research.

## **2. The research**

### **2.1. The context of the research**

In order to conduct this research, we decided to work with « Le collectif des femmes », an associative education centre, situated in Louvain-la-Neuve, in the French-speaking Community of Belgium. This association provides an important social work with migrant women and offers them a vocational training in order to integrate the sector of geriatric care. The public attending the activities of this association, located in an university town, is varied: students, students' wives, refugee claimants,... All are vulnerable because their basic subsistence needs are not encountered or because they are involved in illegal domestic activities. Housing difficulties and problems linked with child custody are also very crucial.

### **2.2. Research questions**

Our research questions were: does the vocational training really facilitate their entry into the formal economy? What kind of benefits does the training provide? What difficulties do women meet when they try to find their new job?

### **2.3. Instrumentation**

In order to investigate our research questions, three tools were used: an anamnestic questionnaire, a semi-directive interview and the Coopersmith self-esteem inventory.

#### **2.3.1. The anamnestic questionnaire**

The anamnestic questionnaire gave us the opportunity to collect informations about individual life course. These informations are generally completed by some identifying data (age, studies, familial situation, ...). In our research, the questionnaire was centered on the subjects' status when they arrived in Belgium, their level of education and their socio-professional integration process. The anamnestic questionnaire authorized us to offer a description of the sample's characteristics.

#### **2.3.2. The semi-directive interview**

In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer generally has a framework of themes to be explored. This is why he generally has a prepared interview guide. Interview guide help the researcher to focus on the selected topics without constraining them to a particular format. The advantage of this type of interview lies in the respect of the interpersonal dimension of communication. According to Walker, it can encourage the subject to relate, in its own words, experiences and attitudes related to the research problem.

Our interview guide was centered on topics related to the migration process, to the socio-professional integration process and to the barriers to employment.

### 2.3.3. The Coopersmith self-esteem inventory

The Coopersmith self-esteem inventory is a 50-item measure of attitudes toward oneself. For each item, participants answer whether the statement provided is “like me” or “not like me”. This brief self-report questionnaire has no time limit, but assessment usually takes fifteen minutes.

Five subscales yield scores for self-esteem in relation to general, social, familial and professional self. The scores from these subscales are combined for a general self-esteem score. The scale is accompanied by an eight-item lie scale to assess defensiveness.

In the field of psychology, self-esteem is considered as an important component to good mental health and stability.

## 2.4. The sample

Our sample is composed of 10 migrant women coming from Central Africa (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi). All of them received the specific training from the association in order to integrate the sector of geriatric care.

## 2.5. Data analysis

### 2.5.1. Anamnesis informations

Subjects	Age	Country	Marital status	Status on arrival	Children	Level of education	Work in Africa	Work in Belgium
S1	33	DRC	married	student wife	3	secondary education	x	x
S2	34	DRC	married	student wife	1	secondary education		
S3	40	Burundi	married	student wife	3	higher education	x	x
S4	39	DRC	married	temporary stay	5	secondary education		x
S5	36	Rwanda	as a couple	temporary stay	2	secondary education	x	x
S6	35	DRC	married	temporary stay	1	higher education	x	x
S7	34	DRC	married	temporary stay	3	secondary education		x
S8	31	Rwanda	married	student wife	2	inf. secondary education		
S9	30	Burundi	married	refugee claimant	1	inf. secondary education		x
S10	39	DRC	married	student wife	3	secondary education	x	x

*Table 1: sample characteristics*

The average age of the women of our sample is 35.1 year-old (min: 30 and max: 40); six are native to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, two are coming from the Rwanda and two from the Burundi. Nine are legally married and one is in a relationship with a Belgian. All of them have children; some of these children were already born before the migration process and some were born in Belgium. Five women came in Belgium in order to join their husband who was studying in Belgium; four of them got their visa for a temporary stay and one is a refugee claimant. All of them were educated in Africa. Half of them had worked in Africa before migrating and eight are now working in Belgium after their training.

## 2.5.2. The semi-directive interview

### *The migration process*

Two initial contexts can be found to explain the decision to migrate. For six women of our sample, migrating was a voluntary decision and a migration project was present. Indeed, five of these women have decided to go to Belgium in order to join their husbands who were students at the University; the sixth one came in Belgium because she wanted to join a Belgian sociologist met while he was conducting a field trip to Rwanda. The other four women fled from various difficult circumstances in their country of origin. Three of them talked about emergency situations and the last one evokes health problems locally not curable.

Subjects	Age	Country	Marital status	Migration project	Return
S1	33	DRC	married	voluntary	yes/no
S2	34	DRC	married	voluntary	no
S3	40	Burundi	married	voluntary	no
S4	39	DRC	married	not voluntary	yes
S5	36	Rwanda	as a couple	voluntary	yes
S6	35	DRC	married	not voluntary	yes
S7	34	DRC	married	not voluntary	no
S8	31	Rwanda	married	voluntary	yes
S9	30	Burundi	married	not voluntary	no
S10	39	DRC	married	voluntary	no

*Table 2: migration project and desire to return*

Five women wished to settle definitively in Belgium. Only three of them had a voluntary migration project: they came in Belgium to join their husbands who were students. They first wanted to go back to Africa when their educational course would have been completed. But now, they don't want to go back anymore because the political or economic situation in their country of origin is not stable and comfortable as that in Belgium. Moreover, their children who were born in Belgium have now got the Belgian nationality and won't accept to abandon their current way of life.

On the other side, it is easy to understand that the subject 9 (refugee claimant) doesn't want to return to her country of origin. This applies too to subject 7 who still has serious health problems.

The other subjects who plan to go back in their country of origin, decided to wait for an amelioration of its political or economic situation.

### ***The socio-professional integration process***

When the migration is not voluntary, women seem to get more involved in a socio-professional integration process. They want to quickly find economical alternatives in order to cope with their financial difficulties. By participating to a qualifying training, they want to acquire a better status in their host country.

Inversely, women who came in Belgium to join their husbands who were students undertook steps in order to find a real work only a few years after their arrival. This is linked with the Belgian law that didn't authorize them to obtain a work permit because of their marital status of foreign student wives. Sometimes, they however appreciated this situation because it allowed them to quietly raise their children.

Women who had a higher education level in Africa seem to accept the necessity of participating to a vocational training again seem confident and remain modest. Their initial diploma is not valid in Belgium and the vocational training is consistent with their cultural values (taking care of the elderly). Moreover, it will allow them to find a good job.

The other women are more extroverts; they emphasize the positive size of their professional life but they strew their speeches with numerous complaints. Globally, the less educated women acknowledge that they have more difficulties to understand and to study the subjects taught during the training.

### ***The attitude of the family***

Most of the families support the women's professional process. Only two women (S9 and S5) don't receive support from their families. The first one is actually alone in Belgium and the second one is the companion of the Belgian citizen who doesn't understand why his wife wants to work and does not share her project! These two women however completed the training and found a job.

### ***The vocational training***

Six women heard about the training by a friend, two were informed by their husband and two found it by chance. For all of them, the first goal was to find a job in the formal economy and this was achieved for eight of them. Their second goal was to integrate themselves in the Belgian society. Only one seems to achieve through a rewarding job (see table 3 above). Two have not yet receive their work permit (S2 and S8) and are feeling bad about this. The third one says that she is poorly adapted to the European mentality.

Sujets	Informations about the training	Goal 1	Goal 1 achieved	Goal 2	Goal 2 achieved	Job in the formal economy	Job in the informal economy
1	by chance	find a job	x	-		x	x
2	friend	find a job		social integration			x
3	friend	find a job	x	-		x	x
4	husband	find a job	x	social integration	x	x	
5	friend	find a job	x	-		x	
6	husband	find a job	x	social integration		x	x
7	friend	find a job	x	-		x	
8	friend	find a job		social integration			x
9	friend	find a job	x	-		x	x
10	by chance	find a job	x	-		x	x

*Table 3: vocational training and job*

From time to time, eight of them still work in the informal economy because their official salary is not enough to meet their financial needs.

### ***Barriers to getting a job***

Eight women have faced racial discrimination during their professional process. That confirms the data of the literature. But, they finally overcame these events because they didn't want to create problems and because they wanted to keep their work. In fact, when we talked with these women, we understood that those discriminatory attitudes were essentially present inside the rest homes because of the behavior of some elderly people. So, women often downplay this situation in explaining that elderly people had lived most of their life during the colonial period, so they have not always evolved toward greater sympathy with black people.

The second barrier is clearly the difficulty of obtaining a work permit because it requires very long administrative procedures.

### **2.5.3. The Coopersmith self-esteem inventory**

All the women show a very high professional self-esteem score, except S7 who presents just an average result (see table 4 above). These values confirm that the vocational training had a positive impact on the image they have on themselves. Getting a diploma is very important for these African women, even for the two who have not find a job yet. They are very proud to have completed their formation. Our study shows that training provides them many benefits. On the psychosocial hand for example, it helps to break the isolation of women, increase their sense of pride and self-confidence. The benefit of a high self-esteem on emotional well-being is well-known. It is important too for the personal involvement into action.

Subjects	General S.E. score	Social S.E. score	Familial S.E. score	Professional S.E. score	Total score	Lie score
1	21/26	7/8	6/8	7/8	41/50	5/8
2	25/26	8/8	4/8	8/8	45/50	6/8
3	16/26	6/8	6/8	6/8	34/50	3/8
4	20/26	5/8	6/8	8/8	39/50	5/8
5	20/26	8/8	7/8	5/8	40/50	2/8
6	20/26	7/8	6/8	7/8	40/50	7/8
7	20/26	7/8	6/8	4/8	37/50	4/8
8	18/26	6/8	6/8	6/8	36/50	3/8
9	15/26	5/8	3/8	6/8	29/50	5/8
10	20/26	6/8	6/8	7/8	38/50	7/8

*Table 4: Coopersmith self-esteem inventory - results*

Familial self-esteem scores are also very high, except for S9 who is living alone in Belgium. She is actually waiting for her refugee status and hopes that her diploma will help her during the administrative formalities that she has begun to achieve a family reunification. S2 got just an average score; this can be explained by the fact that she has to entrust her baby to a nursery in order to participate to the training.

Six subjects got a relatively high score to the lie scale; this could indicate a defensive attitude toward the testing or an important will to give a good image of herself. For these women trying to recover their lives, it's probably the will, a little bit excessive, that should be seen.

### **3. Conclusion**

Our results show that the socio-professional process of these women is largely influenced par the migration context (voluntary and not) and by their initial level of education in their country of origin.

The training meets the requirements of the labor market and opens the door to the formal economic sector. From a social point of view, the training is also a way to break isolation. Their self-esteem is significantly improved and they are very proud of their diploma.

Their professional integration is very positive even if they have to cope from time to time with discrimination, especially with some residents of the rest homes. The profession is appreciated because the work is linked with their cultural values.

In connection with our questions of research, we can conclude that participating to this kind of vocational training really facilitates the access to a real job in the formal economy. Indeed, only two women didn't find a job (they are also the only ones without work permit). Before, they were all working in the informal economy in order to meet their financial needs. Today, they are still episodically working in this sector but only in order to ameliorate the income of their formal work. The training is innovative; it provides them skills that are perfectly consistent with the requirements of the labor market and offers a real springboard to the women. The psycho-social impact is also very interesting: their self-esteem is clearly ameliorated.

Access to training is very important because it allows women to progress in their personal development and in their socio-professional integration.

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**Multiple Modernities in Contemporary India: A Change and  
Continuation in Gender Roles**

**Ambika Kohli**



## **Abstract**

The phenomenon of multiple modernities is evident within the contemporary Indian society. Where both modern and some aspects of traditional values are fractured and interwoven in a complex web of interaction that is leading to reproduction and transformations of social structures in a novel manner. In this paper, I will discuss changes and continuation of gender roles with specific reference to women's education in India.

Women's education remains a central key for women's empowerment; to alter the traditional misogynist social structure. In India state-run programmes advocate women's education and its importance for women's development. This paper is a part of my developing thesis and draws on the interviews carried out during my field work. I will explain how in India among the urban middle class female education is given a great emphasis. My participants insisted on the importance of female education for their daughters' independence and safe future. Simultaneously, the adoption of women's education model is also used to accommodate the traditional patriarchal needs, for example finding a suitable educated marriage alliance for the daughter or performance of social gender roles efficiently. Thus, reproduction and transformation of social structures is evident in a novel manner where both ideas of women's emancipation and subordination exist concurrently.

**Keywords: multiple modernities, modernity, female education, India, gender roles women's empowerment.**

## Introduction

Women's empowerment emerged as a revolutionary concept in the lexicon of the southern feminists during the 1980s. Southern activists, in the 1980s, introduced the policy of women's empowerment, a different approach from the western feminists in the sphere of women's rights at the international level (Sen and Grown, 1987 as quoted in Elliott, 2007). It is often argued that women in the south not only face social and economic problems; moreover, they have to bear the pressure of organising the family and communities in any kind of social disruption (Sen & Grown, 1985). Owing to these diverse needs empowerment model was introduced which explains that the experience of being a woman differs according to one's culture, colonial history, and social and cultural structures (Moser, 1993)<sup>1</sup>.

Education is perceived to be one of the most significant tools for women's empowerment and to alter their subordinated position by such organisations (Surarpur, 2013; Kabeer, 1994). In contemporary India, for instance, empowering women through means of education is the nucleus of Indian policy programmes. These programmes aim to empower women economically and socially which gradually alter social structures. As True (2012) argues that traditional dominant ideology confined women to traditional gender roles by denying the right to education to them.

An overall increase in female literacy rate was recorded in Indian census 2011 from 53.67% in 2001 to 65.46% in 2011 (Dhar, 2011) which is indicative of success of the state-run programmes advocating female education. By going with these figures it could be argued that change is evident in contemporary urban India where female education is given much great importance than before even among the middle classes nowadays. My data too records such changes in mindset in regards to female education which is discussed in the next section.

## Analysis

I conducted my study in Delhi and Haryana, India. Prior to the fieldwork approval from University of Canterbury's ethics committee was obtained. I have used pseudonyms and have changed other identification details to protect and maintain privacy of my participants.

I interviewed 47 women from different educational backgrounds, and all of them, even the ones who did not receive any formal education, emphasised on their daughters receiving formal school education. For instance, Participant 2 went to school, but did not continue her studies and ran away from her school on the very first day. She regretted her decision and believed that if she were more educated than she could have got a good job which would have made her survival easier. When asked about providing education to her daughters she said that she strongly believes in making her daughters educated as it could provide a better life to them. She said:

Participant 2: I did not study so it does not mean that I should not educate my daughters.

Researcher: You think they should be educated?

<sup>1</sup>. I'm not very sure how far does this example fit here. Still I want to share it here that how the experience of being a woman could be different according to one's own region. Saudi is the only country in the world that denies the right to drive to her women citizen. For majority of the women across the globe driving is not an issue for struggle at all. However, driving remains an issue for struggle in Saudi as in 1990, when 47 women drove their cars after dismissing their chauffeurs. Later, the women lost their jobs, their travel papers were denied, and several mosques broadcasted their names on the loudspeakers with the demand that they should be beheaded.

Participant 2: Of course, nowadays its important, I think my life is useless. It is god's wish how much they can study, but studying is a good thing, indeed.

Researcher: So, you think a girl also has a right to study?

Participant 2: Yes, I think they should study. No matter how much money it will cost, but we will make them study. If they want to study then they will study. We did not study, but they should study. I am illiterate and my life is worthless, but daughters' life should be good, that's why from the deepest core of my heart I want them to study.

Participant 48 could not finish her secondary schooling because of some health issues She explained that even if she has to work as a maid to give a good life and provide education to her daughter she will happily do it. She then said:

Participant 48: There are lot of financial difficulties in life, and not sure how I will do it. But, I will work to provide my daughter education because nowadays education is valued the most. My aim is to make her educated and successful so she could live a good life.

Both of these participants articulated the idea of female education, for a better and successful life quite passionately and emotionally. Within their parental roles women, as mothers, feel their responsibility toward their daughters to provide them proper schooling and education. As education will aid their daughters in achieving a better and secured life than them as they could not finish their schooling for different reasons. They argued female education to be a contemporary basic need for a secured and stable life as they themselves are facing financial and survival challenges due to lack of their education. Female education was given equal emphasis both by highly educated and less educated women for girls' safe and better future.

On the other hand, providing education to daughters was viewed as treating daughters equal to sons. Participant 14 has two daughters and one son. She said that, nowadays girls are more successful than boys; she further said both her and husband and she provide equal love and equal education to their daughters that signify their daughters are equal or even more than their son. Participant 19, a mother of three daughters and one son, and a holder of Masters' degree shared a similar story. She and her husband did a long research to find good private English medium schools for all of their daughters where they could receive quality education through which they could become capable to build their own lives successfully. She commented:

I think it is a pitiable thinking that boys are better than daughters. I don't believe in all such things, that boys are better than girls. I think that girls are nowadays leaving the boys behind in everything. So, I never had anything like this in my mind that there is any difference between a boy and a girl. Me and my husband we both pay more attention towards our daughters. Its not that we are differentiating between them regarding education or anything we give equal importance to all our kids...

Both participants 14 and 19 articulated the arguments of gender equality and fair treatment of daughters primarily in the context of female education within their social roles of mother. They both believe in women's capability and calibre as girls are becoming more successful than boys in contemporary times. A constant articulation of female education as a contemporary practice and idea remained the primary essence in their accounts. Thus, the fundamental traditional gender roles of women confining within four walls of home, and being dependent on male family members (Sorensen & McLanahan, 1989; True, 2012) has

been discarded by women as mothers. This is evident with the increasing female literacy aiding women to enter the paid employment sector.

The primary component within these accounts, and other interviews that I conducted was that participants feel their responsibility as mothers to provide quality education to all their daughters<sup>2</sup> without any discrimination towards their daughters. One of the reasons discussed earlier is to provide a better and safe future to girls. But, there is another important aspect of changes in regards to female literacy rate, that is, to accommodate social gender roles these roles for women are looking after husband and children efficiently. As no participant simply advocated individualistic values to her daughter, and collective family values still play crucial role for these social alterations within contemporary urban India.

Participant 43 is a mother of three, and is a housewife. She explained how education is not only important for becoming independent, but is also beneficial for being an efficient mother, wife and daughter-in-law emphasising on the social and collective values. This she explained in regards to her daughters' education:

Our daughters are more than our son. We have never forbidden them from pursuing studies. The elder daughter is working and we provided her high education. The younger daughter did not want to work, but she wanted to study and we spent lots of money on her education. She did engineering and got married. It is better if a person gets independent. See, either you work or not, but education is very important and it never gets wasted rather a person's knowledge increases. She will teach her children tomorrow, she will be able to talk with the guests nicely. What if the in-laws will not be at home? If she will be well educated then she can handle the situation well.

This participant again, similar to other participants, has acknowledged the importance of female education for a self-dependent life. But, she did not confine the importance of education to this contemporary aspect rather she also suggested how education enhances the social skills to perform traditional gender roles much efficiently. Social transformations within gender roles are evident, and so is their reproduction. This phenomenon of employing educational skills to augment social skills of gender roles for women is apparent since the 20<sup>th</sup> century in India. Male social reformers, for example, encouraged female education on the grounds that education would aid women to perform their gender roles efficiently. It was argued that the ameliorating measures would help the women to be better wives and mothers, and 'better carriers' of traditional values (Chaudhuri, 2012). Leonard (1976) argues that in India female gynaecologists and physicians were required to attend female patients lead to the admission of girls in medical schools than to make them independent or emancipated.

Owing to the very nature of female education to be culturally specific participants explained different impacts of education in their life within the confined traditional gender roles. Such as teaching children, finding better and brighter career options and better schools and coaching schools for them. In addition to this, it also helps families to find a well earning and well settled groom for their daughters.

However, this has also increased burdens for families and parents to find a suitable match for their daughters. In view of the fact, that with increase in female literacy rate followed by an increased employment rate there is a strong need to find suitable educated and well earning grooms for the young brides. In order to meet this social expectation the family ends up providing a big wedding (Kumari, 2010). And, there is also a constant expectation from the

<sup>2</sup> My focus on this article is only on female education, and I am only touching on that aspect.

working women<sup>3</sup>, within the Indian society, that they would continue to perform all household chores (Kumari, 2010). Thus, the essential features of women's emancipation and empowerment are employed to largely accommodate the traditional preferences.

Participant 20's account throws light on the above mentioned factor of educating daughters to serve traditional patriarchal needs in regards to finding a suitable groom. She told:

When I was doing my masters I cleared government test so I had to leave my Masters. My professor wanted me to go for a PhD and become a lecturer. He called my parents and tried to convince them that I was quite intelligent and they should make me study more as my marriage could have been delayed. He tried to convince my parents, and my parents replied that if they would make me study so much then they would need a highly educated boy which was not possible for them. So, I could not do my PhD and then my professor didn't say anything. He called my parents saying that I should do PhD as I was quite intelligent and he also said that he would help me in getting my papers published. I had a dissertation in masters and I did very well in that so my professor was very impressed he tried to convince my family. But, it wasn't possible as it would have been hard to find a boy for my parents then.

She does not mention any resistance against her parents when they forbid her to pursue the PhD. Despite the fact that she was intelligent, capable and had calibre to finish a doctorate successfully as suggested by her professor. There was an agreement and harmony that she provided to her parents' idea of that Masters was enough and doing a PhD could have created hassles in finding an appropriate partner. This indicates that even for educated women in India family values hold much importance than individualism. Female education is crucial but to an extent, it is beneficial as per the given patriarchal structure, and could create challenges for families and the girls in various ways one of them is to find a suitable partner.

Above discussion highlights that ideas and practices around female education to meet contemporary needs of literacy and a secure future, and to meet traditional patriarchal gender roles expectation is modern phenomenon. This phenomenon could be understood via the concept of multiple modernities which is discussed in the next section.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

India has a complex modern scenario where women's empowerment and development are evident with increase rates of violence against them in contemporary times (Kohli, 2012). The concept of multiple modernities suggests that modernity is not universal and could bear different meanings and implications within different societies. In a nutshell, modernity is culturally specific, and modernity in India cannot be simply understood as countering patriarchal norms, nor is it simply western and alien (Chaudhuri, 2012). Rather all institutions in India tend to have a "double articulation in both tradition and modernity. These do not simply form stages in the successive development of society, neither do they lie side by side in perfect harmony" (Das, 1994; p.53). Chaudhuri (2012) said "India is often seen as a land of contrasts where tradition and modernity coexist" (p.281). Female education, for instance, has opened several avenues for young women to make their careers and secure their future

<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon is quite common in the contemporary India where matrimonial in the newspaper under the 'Bride Wanted' section could be seen with full of advertisement asking for brides who are a perfect blend of modern and traditional values. By modern they mean an educated and working girl who could speak fluent English, and a sense of carrying herself for different social gatherings. Traditional indicates that the bride should have basic knowledge to perform routine domestic chores, and should respect and look after her in-laws. These advertisements usually given by the middle class families.

financially and socially. This is advocated by their families and mainly by their mothers. As being women they can understand their daughters' positioning much better than other family members. However, this change in gender roles is still situated within the patriarchal social structure which led women to continue their gender roles in a novel manner. In this case, it is to use educational skills to be better wives, mothers, and daughter-in-law which as discussed earlier suggest modernity to be directly proportional to dominant cultural values and settings.

Fuchs aptly argues, 'Even if modernity can be regarded as a global phenomenon, it does not constitute a common project': (Fuchs, 1994, p. v). Similarly, Eisenstadt (2000) argues for the notion of multiple modernities. He evinces that modernity cannot be understood plainly as it is understood in the western society because different societies respond culturally to different modern values and forces.

This interaction, in the context of female education within urban middle class is leading to structural changes while retaining some aspects of traditional value systems suiting the contemporary time. This interaction is redefining social structures and practices in a novel fashion in contemporary Indian society. Thus, both modern and some aspects of traditional values are fractured and interwoven in a complex web of interaction in regards to female education. That is leading to reproducing and transformation of social structures simultaneously in a novel manner where both women's development and their subordination is evident at the same time.

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## **POLITICS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN BAUCHI METROPOLIS (BAUCHI STATE NIGERIA)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Women's societal position remains very low facing adverse situations in terms of social harassment and economic discrimination; a majority of them being extremely poor, considering this scenario, this study examines the politics of women empowerment and factors influencing it. Through the combination of primary and secondary method, the research reveals that in spite of women strategic role and numerical strength they are still downgraded. Information generated from respondents' reveals that the stronger the socio-cultural and religious network, the weaker the chances at the agenda's success and illiteracy among women particularly in rural areas. The socio-cultural and religious network in Bauchi metropolis is strong, though Islam as a religion stipulated the role of both men and women in the family and society particularly at empowering them to own properties making them to have share in the inherited properties at their parents, husbands and relations', the segment quest is still at limbo. While that of Islamic is theoretical, the practical quest towards women empowerment in Bauchi is questionable; this paper recommends the need for women empowerment economically, socially and politically. This could be achieved through education, provision of micro-finance, skill acquisition, exposure of information media etc these have the potential to increase women empowerment. Therefore, effective initiative should be taken by concerned agencies' in improving women empowerment namely Government Organisation (GOs), Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) women Organisations (WOs), and other stake holders (private initiatives, civil society) aimed at stipulating the process of women empowerment.

Keywords: Women, Empowerment, Bauchi Metropolis.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The attempt to promote women empowerment was recognized during the 1980s and 1990s through international and local conferences and conventions as a global phenomenon. Freire (1999; 201) contended that "more than 960 million adults, two thirds of who were women are illiterate. And illiteracy is a significant problem in all countries, 'everyone has the right to education'" (UN Report, 1990; 21)

This statement is justifiable because most of the world countries have failed to realize this goal. The New York Nation Millennium Summit attended by leaders across the globe including



those from Africa and Nigeria in September 2000, marked the need to initiate women empowerment strategies as an important way to minimise poverty, hunger, diseases, and other problems of gender violation and discrimination.

In Nigeria, women constitute 69,086,302 out of 140,431,790 population,(Census, 2006). However, women empowerment initiative began with First ladism, during the General Ibrahim Babangida's military regime. His wife Maryam institutionalized the concept. Since then, the notion became ubiquitous and was hooked to all the states and local governments of the federation. The First lady (wife of the president) helped to stimulate the growth of many women organizations such as the Family Support Programme (FSP), National Programme on Immunization (NPI), Child Care Trust (CCT) , and others. These organizations took issues of women in many areas like maternal mortality, child health, economic and educational empowerment strategy through the National Council for Women Societies (NCWS)

In Bauchi state, women constituted 2,283,800 out of total number of population of 4.2 million in state, and the majority of them lack access to control over resources plus basic education. (Census,2006). According to the Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), Bauchi state ranks fourth with a poverty incidence of 86.3 per cent out of the 10 states in Nigeria with the highest poverty incidence. Poverty remains high among women. Out of the 4.2 million people living in Bauchi state, 2 million live under 50 naira a day approximately(1 Ringgit), while 1 million live under 100 naira approximately(2 Ringgit) per day( BSMWASD,2008a). In addition, a report from the Bauchi State Economic Empowerment Strategy (BASEEDS, 2005), indicates that 1.5 million People lack access to school: and out of 3 of every 5 who work full- time, do not earn enough to sustain their families above the poverty level; almost 4 out of 5 children live in poverty, and 2 out of 5 go to school ( Bauchi Report on Gender, 2009).

In Bauchi metropolis, the number of women according to the 2006 census population was 318,038. In June,2011 using the national growth rate for urban centres which was 4.5%,a survey conducted by Gani,Chiroma and Gana (2012) indicated that women dominated the total population with 50.6% (160,972) of the total population size with high level of poverty and unemployment rate of 60%. In an attempt to empower women in Bauchi metropolis, both Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations such as civil societies, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare, Rahama women organization, Bauchi state agency for youth and women empowerment (BAYWARD), federation of Muslim women society of Nigeria (FOMWAN), WODASS, CDF and CBF, COMPASS, WIN, DEC, WIA, and others played significant roles in women empowerment through sustainable micro finance, skill acquisition, health services, qualitative education, advocacy, and humanitarian services and so on.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Women empowerment is a global phenomenon. Many programs were initiated and have tremendously helped in empowering women across the globe. Oxaal and Badens (1997) contended that empowering women does not reduce men's power; therefore the need to empower women became important. So as to help women have access to resource control and decision making, especially in the economic development of the family, thus help men in the development process of the society in general.

Similarly, in Nigeria and Bauchi state in Particular, various attempts have been put in place to promote women empowerment by both public and private organizations, locally and internationally, but faced some setbacks. Therefore, the study will specifically examine women

empowerment programs through the Federation of Muslim women association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) in Bauchi metropolis.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The research is important because it unveiled some of the programs offered by FOMWAN to empower women in Bauchi metropolis and suggest to the government, non-governmental organizations and concerned agencies internationally, nationally and locally, the relevance of paying attention towards empowering women, and solving the prevailing problems based on the findings of this study in order to have successful women empowerment programs in the Bauchi metropolis.

The research will also contribute immensely to the existing body of knowledge on women empowerment especially in the Nigerian context.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify women empowerment programmes offered by FOMWAN in Bauchi metropolis.
2. To determine the extent to which the programmes of FOMWAN empower women in Bauchi metropolis
3. To suggest better ways towards a successful women empowerment programs in Bauchi metropolis

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Specifically, the study aims to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the programmes provided for women empowerment by FOMWAN in Bauchi metropolis?
- 2 How do the programmes empower women in Bauchi metropolis?
- 3 What strategies can be mobilized for a successful women empowerment in Bauchi metropolis?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A lot of scholars have written on women empowerment, some of these works are in regards to Nigeria.

Some of the related books and articles have been critically appreciated in this study.

Generally, women empowerment is one of the contemporary challenges worldwide.

Batilawa (1994) argues using the feminist perspective that, “women empowerment requires the challenging the patriarchal power relations that result in women having less control over material assets and intellectual resources”

Similarly, Oxaal and Badens (1997) asserted that empowering women dose not cuts men’s power, empowering women enables women to get access to decision making and resource control particularly in the socio economic development of the family. In addition, empowering women serves as a medium where women join hands to help men in the sustainable development of the society in general.

Kabeer (1999) buttressed women empowerment as the capacity to make choices, and can be categorized into three inter connected segments: access to resources, the ability to utilize the resources and realize opportunities in a beneficial way. Thus, empowering women is a means to an end not an end in itself.

From another perspective, Straomoist (2000) contended that education, through formal and informal means is another aspect of women empowerment, because girl child access to education particularly in third world countries remains low, and the findings suggested that women empowerment should constitute both ways that will enable them to tackle sexual stereotypes and other important aspect of life such as reproductive health, domestic violence and others.

A report conducted on girl child education in Nigeria revealed that, girl's access to education sub Saharan Africa is low and from 121 million out of school children, 65 million are girls.

(UNICEF SEP, 2007).

Adebusoye (2006) observed that early marriage limits the girl child access to education, social status, choice making, and lack of awareness to health services. Like sex education, poor antenatal and postnatal care which is a threat to her health and double up the risk of infant and maternal mortality and pave the way for vulnerability, and other sexually transmitted diseases STDS, HIV AND AIDS. Oleribe (20007) argued that girl child education is the key to women empowerment globally, it could be achieved through formal training of girls and skill acquisition. In a similar vein, Oleribe (2002a) contended that denying GCE/WAEC examinations is the most pronounced scenario that vividly indicates lack of care to girl child education. This shows failure of both the parent and government to provide encouragement as well as conducive and qualitative provision of education.

Adeshida (2008) ascertained that, girls constitute the highest number of children in Nigeria, in the words of the UNICEF Deputy Representative, Robert Limlim "For Nigeria to achieve the goal of being among the largest 20 economies in the world, she must rapidly educate her children, most of all, the girls. Educating girls is known to be the basis for sound economic

and social development. Educating girls produces mothers who are educated and who will in turn educate their children, care for their families and provide their children with adequate nutrition” Hence, girls education influences better health for children, reduces child morbidity and mortality”. The findings of a survey conducted by UNESCO (2012) in Nigeria indicated literacy rate among adult as 56.9 per cent with variations between states (Lagos 92.0 % and Borno 14.5%) Also, out of 3.5 million children, only 450,000 have the opportunity to education. In Bauchi state, the literacy rate of male was 913.500 and female as 672.414, a total of 1.885.914 which equals 34%. In addition, Nigeria had about seven million children (10% of the world total) who lack access to basic education.(NMEC,2011).

Another Report conducted by the National Bureau of statistics NBS shows that poverty remains high among the populace. In 2004, the poverty rate increased from 54.7% to 60.9% in 2010. Based on one report the southern part of the country had high chance for human development and empowerment while the northern part had lower chances. The three geopolitical zones where the Transforming Education Girl in Northern Nigeria and Tanzania (TENGINT) project took place were characterized by heterogeneous variables such as religion .language, culture, and politics. The average rate of poverty in the three northern zones was 73.8 % in comparison to 63.3 5 in the southern parts of the country.

(British Council, Nigeria, 2012).

Isaac (2007) contended that Narayan (2005) argued that women in developing countries remained very poor, therefore, preventing them access to political process which will endanger their socio economic status. Longwe (2002) pointed to the failure of NEPAD by neglecting the important problems of women oppression NEPAD subscribed to World Bank and IMF’s SAP

policies in Africa, a policy which is not beneficial to women resulting in unwanted burdens of the “Feminisation of poverty and women’s depression”.

Gurumurity (2003) observed that, information communication technology in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh as capable to socio-economic growth and development, considering the effort of government in the attempt to encourage the new ICT and made a reform from the old monopolistic and bureaucratic traditional public service to a more market oriented type. This brings about business opportunities Also, a lot of attempts and discussions with regards to ICT to foster development in the region, lacked provisions for women development. Hence women empowerment is important; particularly as it contributes to the socio- economic development of the society.

From another perspective, Hafez (2003) contended that “rather than being dominated and depressed, Islamic women were empowered as a result of their willing submission to higher levels of religious attainment. In their attempt to” seek self-proximity to Allah” They work collectively to help poor women, by organizing training sessions for women, community projects and skill acquisition. This group of women offered such services for the sake of Allah not to earn reward from anyone. To this end, empowerment in this perspective is not a goal but a method to reach a Muslim ideal.

In conclusion, empowering women will benefit the family and society as a whole in the building process of sustainable development.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The “Webern Analysis of Power” suggested by Isaac (2007) is adopted in the study as a guiding framework in analysing the subject matter. This is because it explained that an individual’s state

of being and conditions rely on his or her market situation. Therefore, in analysing power either man or woman has to influence the workings of the market, his or her favour on the outcome or rewards of his or her skills and expertise can command in a competitive market (society).” In realizing oneself, the following power resources are necessary:

1 .Economic resources: This means control over land, labour, or capital, and the goods and services produced there from.

2. Social resources: Social status or standing based on social roles or meeting socially valued criteria.

3. Political resources: Use of resources of state institutions to enforce authority and decisions.

4. Informational resources: This entails acquisition of knowledge by means of formal education and training programmes

5. Moral resources: Legitimacy often accorded to decision makers, their roles or decision they make for example social approval given to non-state actors.

6. Physical resource: Ability to coerce people to compel their cooperation or compliance (Isaac, 2007).

This theory offers a suitable explanation for the possible ways to empower women in a reliable pattern and in any given society, through availability of necessary resources for women’s benefits, thus encourage women empowerment,(Isaac,2007).

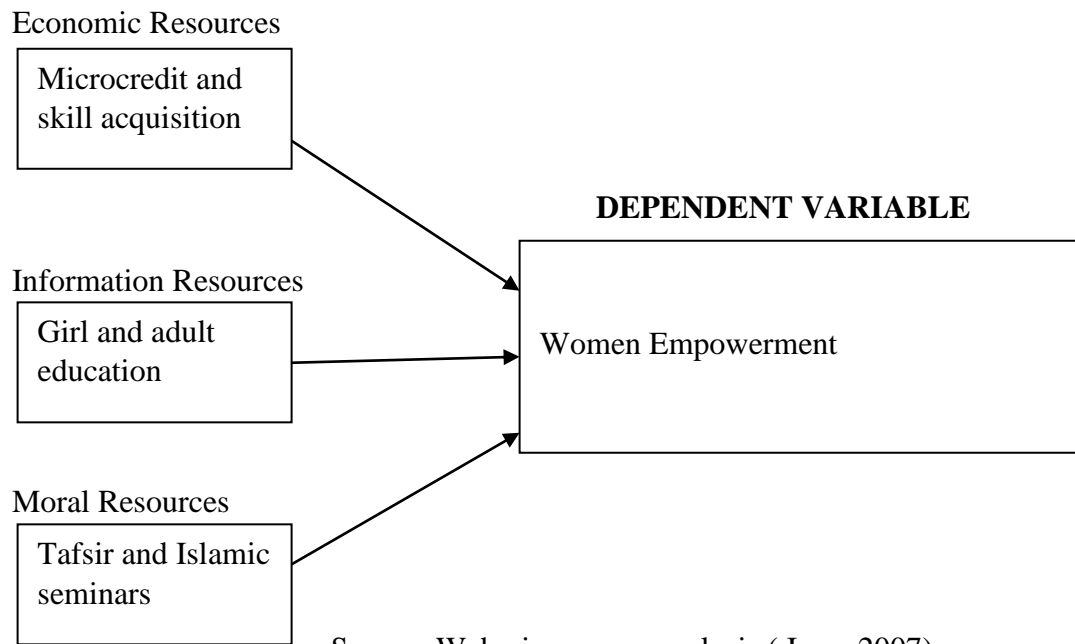
Based on this, the framework of study is presented in the figure below:

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



Figure 1

## INDEPENDENT VARIABLES



## HYPOTHESES

Based on the theoretical framework the following hypotheses have been drawn:

- 1- Economic resources positively influence women empowerment
- 2- Information resources lead to women empowerment.
- 3- Moral resources assist women empowerment.

## OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

- 1- Economic Resources mean the ability of women to have assets like capital, land or labour that are useful to help achieve an aim like access to micro credit, and skill acquisition that will help empower women to solve their immediate problems and that of the family.
- 2- Information Resources refer to the opportunity for women to acquire of knowledge through formal training, this is knowledge provided to women.
- 3- Moral Resources means the ability of women to be conversant with the principles of right and wrong behaviour, a moral lesson learned from the Quran and sunnah to serve as a guide to follow in life.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study used qualitative approach base on content analysis of data collected from various sources. The primary source includes data from FOMWAN Bauchi wing, media reports (local and international media) which includes radio, television, newspapers and magazines, whereas, secondary sources are data from textbooks, journals articles and FOMWAN periodic journal,

In order to explore its women empowerment programmes economically and educationally as well as its achievements and challenges. Also, the study looked at economic resources, informational resources and moral resources as a way to empower women.

The programmes of women empowerment were measured using actions and reactions among people in the study area.

## **DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS**

The followings are discussions of the findings based on the variables from the theoretical framework:

**ECONOMIC RESOURCES:** In its economic empowerment programs to women in Bauchi state, FOMWAN aimed to empower women economically through capacity building workshops and seminars. And successfully, the organization was able to established business ventures such as hijab industries, transport services, printing and forms of gari(corn flour) processing, market stalls construction.(FOMWAN bulletin,2009). Hence with economic resource women would solve their immediate needs, help the family and relatives especially in supporting men in the developing process of the family in general.

**INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES:** In its attempt to empower women, FOMWAN objectives includes: education of Muslim women at all levels, provision of health services especially in

productive health, care for early school leavers (drop outs or school age children not enrolled), rehabilitation of school children, abandoned children, orphans and refuge children

Provision of girl child education and adult literacy for women both Arabic and English through establishment of formal and informal schools Furthermore, the Organization established over 200 schools of various types in different stages: day care centre, nursery, primary, secondary, adult literacy. Others include establishment of hospitals, maternity, welfare clinic, pharmacies and orphanages.(FOMWAN bulletin, 2009). Thus educating a woman is like educating the whole society and educated women produces good and healthy children because of their awareness educationally.

**MORAL RESOURCE:** One of the main goals of FOMWAN is educating the Muslim women also promoting the understanding of the teachings of the Quran and the sunnah. As a result conducted various preaching (tafseer), and seminars in order to educate women the moral aspect of life as it has been derived from the Quran and teachings of the Holy Prophet ( S.A.W.). This will help women to be morally sound and help to build the moral upbringing of the children and the family which will extend to the society in general.

## **SUMMARY CONCLUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The information generated from the findings revealed that programs initiated to empower women in Bauchi metropolis by FOMWAN faces some challenges, this is due to the socio-cultural and religious network which make the chances weaker for the agendas success. Furthermore, illiteracy among women particularly within metropolis reinforces the inability of the agendas success. Drawing from women's deprivation such as economic inequality, their limited roles in household decision making, restricted mobility and inadequate knowledge, making them vulnerable. The socio-cultural and religious network in Bauchi is so strong though Islam as a religion stipulated the role of both men and women in the family and society particularly at empowering them to own properties, making them to have share in the inherited properties at their parents, husbands and relations; the segment is still at limbo.

While that of Islam is theocratic, the practical quest towards women empowerment in Bauchi state and Nigeria in general through the successive ventures faced some setbacks.

## **CONCLUSION**

The level of women empowerment is still at limbo, the fact that education, training and skills acquisition, provision of micro finance or credit, involving them in partisan activities, giving them political appointments, exposure to information media, and special mobility are some of the most influential factors that enhance women's empowerment. In contrast, the traditional beliefs, attitudes and practices are deeply embedded in women's lives that hinder their empowerment. To move forward, some concrete steps need to be undertaking by FOMWAN and major intervening agencies normally governmental, non-governmental, and women organizations with other

stakeholders (private initiatives, civil society) aimed at stimulating the process of feminine empowerment.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the following findings, the following recommendations are offered.

1. Interventions should be in the nature of governmental planning program or steps to provide greater opportunities for the sustainable development of women at all levels and to reduce discriminatory practices against women as well as all types of gender based typecasts.
2. Education and skill acquisition: The ministry of women affairs should implement educational programs both formal and informal more effectively. With financial assistance in areas like craft, netting, tailoring, home gardening and so on to help sustain their skills and make them economically sound. Moreover, improving literacy and skill of women will be beneficial on their socio-economic environments. This will minimize poverty especially among women.
3. Empowering women to participate with their men counterparts in the developing process of the society is very important; hence empowerment policies must be incorporated into majority programmes for the purpose of sustainable development.
4. Local actors such as community leaders, school teachers, religious leaders, and local elites should educate and create more awareness to the community about the importance of women empowerment in order to dislodge the primitive and traditional beliefs towards women empowerment. Which stands as one of the major challenges of the agenda, and to support Governmental, and Non-governmental agencies locally or internationally aimed at empowering women empowerment in Bauchi metropolis and Bauchi state in general.

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# The Impact of Employment-Oriented Social Welfare Programs on Empowering Poor Women toward Community Consolidation

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## 1. Characteristics of Globalization

Massey (1995) explain division of labor that global city, such as London, New York is more develop by capital invest place which is easier to get suitable labor force especially research, planning, development after Globalization. Globalization has three characteristics in labor market for poor women. First of all, division of international labor stream is dividing as follows: an underdeveloped country has Low wage, low-tech labor-intensive such as manufacturing industry: an advanced countries has finances, investment, and high-tech information industry. Secondly, poor women work in the informal sector that stability lacked in the incomes and employment sides. Thirdly, to this stream, Ratio of poor women workers is increasing who step forward and still stay in the formal sector.

## 2. Characteristics of Globalization in South Korea Case

This stream can find out that South Korea has following characteristics. First, the ratio of poor women workers is increasing. Second, instability of job and the insecurity of poor women workers are increasing. During 7 years, average income is following: Part-time-women (68.02) < full-time - women (108.57)< Part-time-men(120.47). You can also see the trend that income gap by gender is bigger. Gap of the labor conditions becomes bigger. Especially, in case of poor women is inferior.

Figure 1. Women's income for 7 years

	average income	percentage %	gap of wage percentage %
Full-Time	155.37	(-)	-
Part-time	93.033	(60)	40.12
Full-Time. men	178.28	(-)	-
Full-Time. women	108.57	(61)	39.10
Part-time. men	120.47	(68)	32.40
Part-time. women	68.02	(38)	61.80
total 2)	132.22	(74)	25.80

Third, the number of women workers who work in the small size corporation is increasing. Trend was found that poor women often end up with working for informal sector. You can easily see the trend that female on poverty and also can confirm trend to go into to an informal sector feminine poverty among baptism independent enterprise floors.



Figure 2. Number of workers by corporation size (Unit: %)

corporation size (person)	2001			2011		
	total	men	women	total	men	women
	100.0	70.5	29.5	100.0	61.9	38.1
1 ~ 4	76.9	51.3	25.6	73.9	43.0	30.9
5 ~ 9	16.8	13.6	3.2	19.6	13.8	5.8
10 ~ 29	5.5	4.8	0.6	5.8	4.5	1.2
30 ~ 49	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.1
50 ~ 99	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0
100 ~	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Ministry of Labor, (2001, 2011)

The above-mentioned briefly is that poor women have a risk to sink into poverty. Poverty seriousness causes accelerative increase of other field's social problem such as dismantling of family structure. So, a poor woman has not only poverty but also social risks.

Therefore, interventions of suitable social welfare program are urgent. Therefore my research question is “What extent are the social welfare programs effective in decreasing such risks for women?” The evaluation whether social welfare program for poor women was derived from poverty or not.

### 3. Introduction of Employment-Oriented Social Welfare Programs

Employment-Oriented Social Welfare Programs in South Korea consist of Employment Insurance, Public assistant programs, and Social Employment Programs.

#### 1) Employment Insurance

Conditional recipients by Unemployment benefits rapidly increasing after IMF. Most occupational category in reemployment training for unemployed women is babysitter, telemarketer, and cook. Short-term employment training for unemployed women is executing 1-4 weeks short-term adaptation training such as simple service and niche market.

#### 2) Public assistant program – Self sufficiency Program

It contains 2000 supports living programs on benefit to working poor. This provide an opportunity in order to establish self-sufficient program base for the poor through network between welfare and employment by providing self-sufficient program

#### 3) Social Employment Program

Polarize trend of both labor market and society is necessary, not only existing market economy or public economy but also social economy. So, ministry of labor and private foundation for expelling poverty from the latter half of 2003 are diversified and exploding.

#### 4. Analysis of effect about Employment-Oriented Social Welfare Programs

##### 1) Employment Insurance

Effect of Employment Insurance is differently based on gender: in case of men receiving unemployment benefits has a positive effect. On the contrary to these women receiving employment benefits has a negative (-) effect. Because, receiving employment benefits cause involuntary unemployment to re-employment. Employment rate of reemployment training for unemployed women increase gradually. Also Employment rate of short-term adaptation training for unemployed women increase gradually. So, Employment-Insurance have limits to support worker in informal sector which most of that are poor women workers.

Figure 3. Possibility of re-employment

variables	total	men	women
receiving employment benefits	-0.2734(0.19)	-0.0805(0.22)	-0.8833(0.40)**
House-hold	0.4608(0.34)	-0.5781(0.83)	0.8708(0.4043)**
number of child	0.1514(0.09)*	0.0465(0.10)	0.3327(0.16)**
N	2250	1550	700
-2 Log likelihood	885.219	1956.624	540.941
Sig	1716.27***	1298.02***	336.04***

\* 90% \*\* 95%

##### 2) Public assistant program – Self sufficiency Program

An each relevant year man self-support business will be cold, and the ratio decreases gradually. In contrast absolute participation and Percentage of women participants on self-sufficient program continuously increases. 70-80% of the current Self sufficiency Program participation is woman. Most women participate in nursing (over 90%). In case of nursing, average income of that is lower than the other business. Labor costs are low compare with another program in case of nursing. These aspects are to look indirectly a new issue arises the feminization of poverty.

Figure 4. Self sufficiency Program participation by gender (unit: number, %)

year	men (person, %)	women (person, %)
2009	2,340 (28.4)	5,895 (71.6)
2010	2,580 (25.8)	7,421 (74.2)
2011	3,151 (23.0)	10,559 (77.0)
2012	4,623 (20.2)	18,231 (79.8)

Source: Ministry of Labor

Figure 5. Self sufficiency Program participation by gender in Kind of business (unit: number, %)

Kind of business	year	2009		2010		2011		2012	
		M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Nursing		35 (1.9)	1,826 (98.1)	44 (1.7)	2,566 (98.3)	59 (1.8)	3,282 (98.2)	93 (1.7)	5,422 (98.3)
House repair		875 (68.8)	396 (31.2)	1,062 (65.0)	572 (35.0)	1,201 (64.8)	652 (35.2)	1,492 (66.3)	759 (33.7)
Recycling		249 (39.9)	375 (60.1)	366 (37.2)	618 (62.8)	496 (40.2)	737 (59.8)	677 (42.4)	920 (57.6)
Cleaning		278 (36.9)	476 (63.1)	341 (31.9)	728 (68.1)	421 (27.1)	1,130 (72.9)	626 (29.3)	1,513 (70.7)
Recycling perishable		70 (64.2)	39 (35.8)	43 (62.3)	26 (37.7)	45 (62.5)	27 (37.5)	62 (74.7)	21 (25.3)
total		1,507 (32.6)	3,112 (67.4)	1,856 (29.2)	4,510 (70.8)	2,222 (27.6)	5,828 (72.4)	2,950 (25.5)	8,635 (74.5)

Source: Ministry of Labor

Figure 6. Average income per person in Kind of business (unit: number, won)

Kind of business	Number of business	Number of participants	Average income per person(won)
House repair	6	173	109
Cleaning	9	171	97
Recycling	5	215	100
Nursing	10	1,038	76
total	30	1,597	85

Source: Ministry of Labor

### 3) Social Employment Program

Budget scales and supporting person of social enterprise continuously enlarge after introducing in 2003. For evaluating economic value, it is necessary to know sub-index such as income, expenditure, earnings, wages which relate to poor women highly. In that sub-index, wages is high relation to poor women.

Figure 7. budget and number of participants in Social Employment Program by year

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
budget (hundred million )	73 (half of year)	949	1,691	6,782	12,945
persons	2,000	47,491	69,314	111,897	201,059

Source: Ministry of Labor

##### 5. Conclusion: Empowering Poor Women toward Community Consolidation.

Until now these papers interpret trend of labor market and impact of Employment-Oriented Social Welfare Programs for poor women after IMF by globalization. Indeed, social welfare system of the Korean government has accomplished gradual intuitional and expenditure expansion after IMF. Nevertheless, employment insurance was vulnerable to poor workers in informal sector, especially women. Public Assistant Program, Self-Sufficient Program encourages economic independence. Also Social Employment Program is unmeaning, but the exit rate appears high. Therefore, enlargement of opportunity is need. In this way, it was a feeble system for safety nets which prevented feminine poverty.

It is wild optimism that socio-economic status of female worker would be empowered. Therefore, enlargement of opportunity is need. But, employment-Oriented Social Welfare Programs of the central government have a low efficiency. In contrast, Self-Sufficiency Program put community to main activity unit and target, and willing to utilize NPO and so on. So, you will have to try to consider how Employment-Oriented Social Welfare Programs of Private Leading empower socio-economic status of poor women. What socio-economic status of female worker would be empowered is nothing more than a one's signature.

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# **The role of participatory video in empowering non-English backgrounds immigrant women in Australia**

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*Immigrant women in the contemporary world compose more than half of immigrant's population. Therefore, this group should not be left out so that these women can be empowered. Immigrant women face double problems as women and migrants. Participatory video workshops, known for decades as an empowering tool, are one of methods that can help them gain mastery over their life. This research aims at giving a voice to the participants who are the immigrant women with non-English speaking background in Australia. It also aims at putting this method in practice and assessing possible empowerment process during and after the workshops.*

## **Introduction**

According to a United Nations (United Nations 2012) report, the number of immigrants globally has almost doubled in the last two decades. Similarly, the proportion of female migrants has increased. Immigration is a serious issue for Australia as a nation since at least one in three residents was born overseas or has parents born outside Australia (ABS 2013). Official statistics shows that at least 51% of immigrants are women. Most migrants and refugees come to their new countries with insufficient knowledge and/or a lack of language skills to find their way. They are often dependent on the goodwill of community support workers for their survival and for the quality of that survival. Apart from the different reasons that explain migration, immigrant women face additional problems as women and migrants in the destination country. It is important to remember, immigrant women should not be left out in process of 'women empowerment' in the world. Hence, there are different ways of achieving empowerment, most of which come from gaining knowledge through education. Education in this context is not necessarily formal education but can be interpreted as any form of learning.

According to Freire (1972), progressive social change begins with critical consciousness. Thus, this research tries to fill a by encouraging immigrant women to think critically rather than negatively about their circumstances and to offer them some effective tools to enable that process. Arguably, assessing the process of empowerment in participatory video projects involving immigrant women will help to connect theoretical ideas with ‘on the ground’ experiences which will allow government and non-government agencies to incorporate media literacy into settlement policymaking processes with benefits for Australian multicultural society. On the other hand, this project can help communities of immigrant women to find their own ‘voices’.

This research will explore the link between media literacy and empowerment by examining the process before, during and after a series of **Participatory Video (PV)** workshops I plan to conduct for immigrant women. Although participatory video is not a new concept, using it as a tool to explore dimensions of the settlement process will lead to new ways of thinking about it and its implications, particularly for this specific group. Having a group of immigrant women from non-English backgrounds, as in my case study, will arguably offer insights into the functional role of participatory video. While there are assumptions about the relationship between PV and empowerment, the power of video to transform behaviour remains largely unexplored (White 2003). This research is not going to assess the “success” or “failure” of the proposed participatory video workshops; rather, it will explore the impact media literacy might have in the lives of research participants. I believe this study can create a tool for settlement agencies to assist the increasing numbers of immigrant women who continue to arrive in Australia. This paper is organised into two parts: the first section includes a review of the literature and explanation of relevant definitions and theories while the second is an overview of my proposed methodology and the procedures which I plan to implement.

## **Background and key concepts**

Migration from one country to another can be a traumatic experience. As Jolly and Reeves (2005) declare, it can be especially difficult for women who have care of children. For people who do not speak English, the problem is magnified. For cultural reasons, many women take little part in decision-making processes in a new destination (Dona & Berry 1994, p.216). Regardless of immigrants' eagerness to become members of their new society, they suffer emotional trauma and loneliness (Caritias 2011). Many suffer from depression which results in marginalization and, according to Noh et al. (1992), women suffer more in this category. On the contrary, the search for discovering a new self in a new land places many obstacles in front of women. As previously mentioned, immigrant women, in particular face additional problems in destination country compare with immigrant men; especially when those women had been struggled in their country of origin with women's rights issues. In brief, they bring with them cultural problems from their country of origin which increase when added to their immigration problems. Many survive by finding a new way of life through new friendships, qualifications and maintaining a new identity. During this process, they have to overcome doubts about their own ability to succeed and to prepare themselves emotionally and physically for change. During the emergence of their new identity, they have to 'unlearn' their past identity. Hall (1990, p. 222) makes the pertinent point that identity has to be considered as a continuing process and always constituted within, not outside, representation which highlights the central role of representational media such as participatory video in this process.

Participatory video originated from its practice in the 1960s, in the Fogo Experiment in Canada which was supported by the National Film Board of Canada (Williamson 1989). It began in 1967 in the Fogo Islands, a small fishing community off the east coast of Newfoundland (Newhook 2009). Donald Snowden, from Memorial University,

Newfoundland, led and facilitated a process with community members to express their perspectives on local problems and ideas, translating them into films that were screened at other villages that faced similar problems (Crocker 2003). The films were made by participants in the project and shown to politicians who lived too far away and were too busy to actually visit the island. As a result of this dialogue, government policies and actions were changed. The techniques developed by Snowden became known as the Fogo Process (Crocker 2003; Newhook 2009). Since this first experience, participatory video has been utilized internationally in many different sectors such as project monitoring and evaluation, natural resource management, education, communication, advocacy and the emancipation of disadvantaged social groups (White 2003)

Participatory video as a set of techniques which help a group or community to tell their stories using available digital technologies can be defined as a tool for the facilitation and use by individuals and groups where participants who are learning and making videos share their positive or negative experiences — along with other stories — with the wider community and others, such as policymakers (Nemes et al. 2007, p. 1). Video is seen as an effective tool not only to help people to find a voice, but also hopefully to ‘reclaim’ a community’s level of confidence (Foster 2009, p. 234). In this era of new media technology, affordable digital video cameras make participatory video more accessible as a tool to empower ‘grass roots’ people (White 2003, p. 21). Women’s empowerment as a contemporary feminist concept is a sub-theory of empowerment theory which is based on gender equality. It is about enabling women to gain greater mastery over their social and economic life. In this interpretation of the concept, women must be significant actors in the process of change toward equality and improved status (Malhotra & Schuler 2005, p. 72). Furthermore, just as empowerment theory has different meanings within different contexts; its indicators are constantly changing. Kieffer (1984) argues that the most important indicators are self-esteem, causal



importance and efficacy. Hall (1992) suggests ten indicators for her identity empowerment theory for women. Although most of these indicators are relevant to women's empowerment — family, religion, society and self, for example — they are not quite as relevant to this research. The most relevant is the concept of 'self', a central element in theorising the immigration process. This project will explore how these indicators impact on a woman's sense of self and her identity. Furthermore, in studying women's empowerment, the following elements have to be considered: awareness/consciousness, choice/alternatives, resources, voice, agency and participation (Charmes & Wieringa 2003, p. 423). Women can have awareness but this is meaningless until they have choices, resources and voice. The process of empowerment happens after the achievement of awareness which subsequently, presents the possibility of choice. Through this process, participants acquire agency, when they are able to start acting on their own behalf. Eventually, this can lead to them becoming decision makers and active participants in their own lives. At least, that is the ideal process of empowerment. Ultimately, this project seeks evidence for these stages which will enable theorising the processes involved.

Sahay (1998) argues that women's empowerment is closely linked to the social welfare of a society. Although empowerment is defined as an ongoing process, the question is how it is possible to assess empowerment and what indicators are there for it. Since empowerment can have various indicators in different circumstances, I shall narrow the key indicators to focus on the concepts of 'immigrant women' (Dion 2001, p. 512). In this study, measurement or evaluation in terms of the immigration concept would be achieved through perceived (and real) experiences of acculturation which happens when an individual accepts a new identity.

There have been endless debates about the meaning of 'identity'. In the Cambridge Dictionary Online (2014), *identity* is defined as 'what a person is, or the qualities of a person or group which make them different from others'. Although this definition might be accurate,

identity has a broader definition which refers to social categories and, at the same time, to the sources of an individual's self-respect or dignity (Fearon 1999). The concept of 'first identity' is one that all people of a nation have in common. It means that cultural identities reflect common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide people with a common historical background. It means that all people can have a different identity, based on their experiences and beliefs. This suggests 'identity' can be viewed as a form of 'production' — something that is 'never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation' (Hall 1990, p. 222).

As previously explained, personal identity is a dynamic concept which includes everything that constitutes a person and distinguishes her or him from others. Following this contemporary idea, a person's identity is constantly adjusted and redefined in relation to their social encounters and relationships (Jamarani 2012, p. 3). Identity is a collective of values that a human picks up consciously and unconsciously throughout life which has been a key issue in the survival of individuals (Beisser 1971, p. 145). When the values are conscious, values become ideals, goals or principles. The conscious value is especially important in the process of empowerment. Values emerge from repeated patterns of behaviour and circumstances which can change through time. Women mostly are trapped in their unconscious or traditional values; to emerge from this trap, they need to be more objective which is created through knowledge acquisition. Objectivity is the awareness of personal skills which enables women to seek new options and opportunities (Hall 1990, p. 25-40). Subsequently, increasing awareness can change the behaviour and quality of life and result in empowerment (Hall 1992, p. 2). Although everyone's identity is different, empowerment can be achieved through exchanges with others.

Women account for half of the world's population, yet evidence suggests they are far behind men in terms of work, space, income, education and policymaking (Dion 2001, p. 520). This

varies across different countries and regions. For example, in a developing country, the differences are far greater (Sahay 1998, p. 3). Women's empowerment as a contemporary feminist concept is a sub-theory of empowerment theory which is based on gender equality. It is about empowering women to gain greater mastery over their social and economic life. In this interpretation of the concept, women must be significant actors in the process of change toward equality and better status (Malhotra & Schuler 2005, p. 72).

The concept of women's empowerment had a significant presence at the official United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 (Chen 1995). The conference declaration included coverage of all aspects of women's lives. Economy, poverty, human rights, media, environment, violence in the family and society, health and also women's role in power and decision making were some of these subjects which were defined at the conference (UNWOMEN 1995). The conference took measures to ensure an increase in women's equal access to — and full participation in — power structures and decision making. The conference encouraged all governmental and non-governmental organisations to 'provide leadership and self-esteem training to assist women and girls, particularly those with special needs, women with disabilities and women belonging to racial and ethnic minorities, to strengthen their self-esteem and to encourage them to take decision-making positions' through different strategies (UNWOMEN 2010). Since then, empowering women has been on the policy agenda for many international organisations. Women's empowerment means gaining self-esteem, enhancing knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it means developing the ability to take decisions and to find a voice in the family, society and in politics — key goals of this project.

## **Methodology**

Emerging affordable new media technologies, including video cameras and mobile phones, provide access to the Internet and social media sites as never before, thus making the concept of ‘citizen journalism’ very pertinent (Allen & Thorsen 2009). As Meadows (2013, p. 48) indicates, ‘citizen journalist’ refers generally to almost anyone writing — or reporting — anything based on facts or truths. In other words, it can be defined as the process whereby private individuals report information in the public sphere. The reports can include text, pictures, audio and video on a blog, Facebook, YouTube, etc. (Goode 2009). In fact, the emergence of the Internet with blogs, podcasts, streaming video and other web-related innovations is what has made citizen journalism possible. News organizations are going to depend more and more on citizen journalists to tell stories (Allen & Thorsen 2009, p. 20). The concept of citizen journalism exists in different forms, including alternative journalism, video activism (Harding 2001), citizen’s media, democratic media, and radical media (Atton 2009, p. 2). The assumption behind PV is the same. The theory is that a group or community who are able to access this media format can explore issues, voice concerns or create stories which are of importance to them to create their own visual interpretation of a particular event (Thede & Ambrosi 1991; Shaw & Robertson 1997; Huber 1999; White 2003). The goal is to bring about social change. The use of participatory video enables the participants to gain a voice and advocate for themselves and their communities.

As outlined in previous sections, this research is a practical and analytical study of the empowerment process from the perspective of female immigrants in Australia through an exploration of their experiences in a series of participatory video workshops. The study is broadly situated within the intersection of two fields of research: social science and media studies. Furthermore, by using the concept of video as citizens’ and community media for giving voice to the people and empowering them, it is more a study of the media associated

with community development. The research will use a qualitative approach to understand and measure the process of empowerment during participation in the video workshops.

The potential participants for this project are immigrant women to Australia from non-English speaking background who are still struggling to find their place in a new society. The participants need to have sufficient English language proficiency and have been settled in Australia for at least three years. The number of participants will be kept to about eight to ten as the optimum size for a workshop. This number will enable appropriate levels of technical support. Furthermore, the low number of participants will enable time for semi-structured interviews to be conducted during the workshop.

The workshops will be designed for participants to learn theoretical and practical media skills — the goal is that they will produce their own digital story /video clip. The workshops are designed around four sessions to be held a fortnight apart. Participants will be introduced to various aspects of media through a critical analysis of selected video material. They will learn basic camera operating techniques and how to create a storyboard relevant to their own projects. Although they will have the opportunity to work with professional-level cameras which will be supplied for the workshops, they will most likely shoot their stories using a mobile phone. They will also learn to work with simple editing software such as iMovie and Windows Movie Maker. The expectation is that participants will produce one or two minute videos by the end of the workshops. Participants will be supported and mentored during the workshop process to ensure that none is overwhelmed by the tasks they agree to take on and to encourage the best results possible.

Evaluation of the processes involved will take place during and after the workshops by evaluation forms and constant face to face interview with participants (Fetterman 1994). Evaluation forms are designed and still have to be redefined to get the best possible results.

There are two evaluation forms; the first one will be used in every session and the second at the end of participant's work on their projects. The forms are designed using appreciate the participatory video, empowerment evaluation and evaluation references (Fetterman 2001; White 2003; Hogan 2007; Nemes et al. 2007; Benest 2010; Lunch & Lunch 2013).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the data gathered, in hard copy and in a visual form, will be analysed by drawing on key theoretical concepts identified in the scholarly literature. In terms of the practical approach, the research aims to observe and record the video workshops, producing a short documentary from this material. The important point to make from this is that observation of participants will enable me to understand the emotions involved and reactions to the process (Bell 2006 p.17). In addition, it is expected that participants will make their short videos as a result of the workshops. These will also be used as part of my data set. It is expected that in the end project I will have a wide range of data to help me to theorise the role of such technologies in relation to the empowerment of immigrant women in Australia and elsewhere. In addition, I expect to have developed some useful tools which will be applicable in different cultural settings.

## **Biography**

Narges was born in Isfahan, Iran. She worked as media journalist and radio producer for more than a decades in IRIB. After moving to Australia she get her MA with Honours in Journalism and Mass Media and later she granted Scholarship to started her PhD in Griffith University.

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**THE ROLE OF WIFE IN HELPING THEIR HUSBAND ADJUST WITH  
NEW STATUS  
IN NYENTANA MARRIAGE IN BALI**

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## ABSTRACT

In Bali Province, marriage becomes the sacred thing because it is closely related with continuity of the family. There is patrilineal system which means descent linkage accorded from the male's descent system. But actually the patrilineal marriage in Bali harms the family with no sons because that family will have a disconnected family tree. Through *nyentana* marriage system, a daughter in the family without sons becomes *sentana rajeg* (the one who will inherit rights and duties toward the family). Previous research showed that some grooms usually face more pressure in the adjustment with the new family. This research is aimed at knowing the role of wife in helping their husband adjust with his new status in *nyentana* marriage. The study was designed in the form of qualitative study with two kinds of approaches, case study and ethnography study. Literature review and informational interview were used as the methods to obtain data.

**Keywords:** *marriage in Bali, marriage of the patrilineal society, nyentana marriage, adjustment*

## INTRODUCTION

Since many years ago, marriage is accepted as one of the most important corner stones in human life. Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both parents (Ireland, 1951). Other definition generally emphasize that the marital union is socially and legally recognized and establishes a family as a social unit that regulates sexual activity, produces and raises children, implies some reciprocal rights between the spouses and between them and their offspring, and constitutes a basic economic unit. The social and emotional support brought by marriages contributes to the physical, spiritual and social well-being of spouses (Williams, 1988; Ozogurlu, 1990) In short, marriage could be seen as a set of rights that gives access to the spouse's sexuality, labor, and property, although not all these aspects are necessarily present in all marriages. Since a happy marriage consists of confidence and sharing created by a relationship with love, respect and acceptance, it is an identifier of psychological health of spouses (Williams, 1988)

Marriage based on Indonesian Law is a physical and psychological bound between a male as husband and a female as wife with the purpose of building a happy and solid family as husband and wife on the basis of the Indonesia's principle number one, "Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa". In Indonesia, marriage is often related to the descent linkage. There are 3 kinds of kinship linkage, (a) parental linkage system; (b) patrilineal linkage system; and (c) matrilineal linkage system. Parental system means both parents have the same rights and duties toward the marriage, such as a duty to seek for money, honor, and inheritance. Patrilineal system means the descent line is in the husband's position and the husband is recognized higher in position and gets more rights. Whereas matrilineal system is the opposite of patrilineal, in which the descent line and the higher position in the family is in the wife or the woman's responsibility.

In Bali Province, marriage becomes the sacred thing because it is closely related to continuity of the family. Society in Bali is a society with patriarchic culture in which there is a difference in terms of rights and duties of the men and women in both familial and societal context, which is known as *Desa Pakraman*. Women are identical with domestic works where as men with the public sector works.

Other than holding different rights and duties, Balinese women are also distinguished in terms of rights for family inheritance. The inheritance here doesn't only mean wealth, but also in the form of duties on conducting religious ceremony in the men's neighborhood and duties toward the *desa pekraman*. However, the patrilineal marriage in Bali harms the family with no sons because that family will no longer have successor descent or in other words, they will have a disconnected family tree. As a result, the family has to give back the *karang* (land area) and *ayahan* (duties) to the *desa pekraman*.

Along with the rapid movement of the era, needs for gender equality is realized rapidly by the feminists and other groups which have great concern on the women position in the society. One of the ways women can do which is still in the fundamental and religious value track is *Nyentana* marriage. Through *Nyentana* marriage system, a daughter in the family without sons becomes *sentana rajeg* (the one who will inherit rights and duties toward the family).

The previous research showed that even though *nyentana* marriage speaks with the basic of gender equality and continuing family tree, *nyentana* marriage is still a controversy because it is deemed contrary to the patriarchic culture which positions men above women. Men's motivation to be willing to conduct a *nyentana* marriage is merely because of love and intention to prevent women's family from being called *cepung* family (a family which its descent linkage is disconnected). The men are usually from the women's big family.

For men who are not from women's big family and they do a *nyentana* marriage, they usually face more pressure in the adjustment with the new family. The fight is usually happened in the family prior to the marriage. This pressure often breaks the relationship of the man with his former family for the certain amount of time. Another pressure emerges from the society if the men are not able to adjust with the new environment and their behaviors are extremely in contrary to the rights and duties that they are supposed to have.

In the women side, becoming *purusa* (man) in the *nyentana* marriage makes them turn to be the family's expectation. They are the main actress in the family which hold the biggest role socially, economically, and as the successor descent. They also feel like being unable to leave the family and must protect their family's interest and needs.

The above condition shows that it is necessary for women and men to keep the family with *nyentana* marriage live in harmony. Maintaining marriage relationship in an adjusted and balanced way is also one of the main factors which form the basis of social harmony. Each partner has a different problem solving ways and a sense of self esteem (Dinkmeyer, 2007). Therefore, teaching and discussing the ways to overcome conflicts and problems between the spouses, taking measures against problems in their future and telling them how to solve the se problems before they become more significant may contribute to the continuance and development of the relationship without encountering negative consequence.

Women as *purusa* who keep doing domestic works must be able to push their husband out from the pressure and adjust with both the former and newer environment. Based on the explanation above, the researchers want to know the role of women in helping their husband adjust with his new status in *nyentana* marriage.

## Marriage in Bali

Bali is well known for its culture and tradition. People hold strictly to the Balinese traditional law, which is called *adat* that regulates various aspects of life (Dharma, 2003 in Wulandari, 2013). One of the elements still being regulated is marriage system. Balinese has several marriage systems according to Utomo (in Wulandari, 2013) they are:

a. *Mapadik System*

In this system, the groom's family asks for the bride to marry the groom in a ceremony; and after the wedding ceremony is held, the bride lives permanently in the groom's house.

b. *Ngerorod/Rangkat System*

This system is held because there is no approval from the couple's family about their marriage. The bride is then eloped by the groom to have simple ceremony in his relative's house.

c. *Nyentana/Nyeburin System*

This system is the opposite of *Memadik* system. If in *Mepadik* the groom's family proposes for the bride, in *nyentana*, the bride's family will propose for the groom. It happens when a family has no sons to take care of its family properties and continues the family lines.

d. *Melegandang System*

This system is already forbidden in Bali because *melegandang* means kidnapping. *Melegandang* happened in Bali on the kingdom ages hundreds years ago when the kingdoms still had absolute authority in Balinese society. So when a powerful aristocrat man kidnapped a girl, there was not any lawful effort to save the girl who was kidnapped.

One of the four marriage systems which is respected most by the Balinese people is *Mepadik*, since Hinduism marriage principle states that marriage is monogamous in which the man, husband or groom is the breadwinner of the family (Patrilineal marriage system). *Ngerorod*

also follows patrilineal marriage system, however this marriage system is not respectful because *Ngerorod* is done when the couple could not get approval from their parents and they have to elope to their relatives' house to hold a small wedding ceremony. *Nyentana*, might be very controversial because it is basically reversed from Hinduism marriage principle as it runs matrilineal marriage system.

### Marriage of the Patrilineal Society

Patrilineal is a descent linkage is assessed through the male's descent. Patrilineal society means the society which holds the father descent principle. The main feature of patrilineal family marriage is the marriage payment from the male party to the female party as a symbol that the familial linkage of the girl with her family has been broken. The payment is much like dowry, and the form varies depending on the tradition in their place. The consequence that emerges from this condition is that the children that were born from this marriage will be in their father's descent linkage and will be the members of their father's *adat*.

Patrilineal system considers the relationship of the descent from male party (*purusa*). In this system, the man holds the important role if seen from both the family relationship itself and societal relationship. Besides that, a man has a right to inherit his parents' properties and has a duty or responsibility in taking care of *merajan* (family's holy building) and conducting *Pitra Yadnya* ceremony (cadaver burning) of his parents. In the social context, the role of men is also inheriting village land and he has responsibility toward his place of living.

### Nyentana Marriage

*Nyentana* marriage is a marriage where the husband is following his wife and staying in his wife's family house. Kaler (in Pursika, 2008) contended that *nyentana* marriage is the form of marriage based on Hindu teaching in Bali, where the woman is positioned as *purusa*. In the *nyentana* marriage processes, the men have to leave his *merajan* and his family as well as his ancestors in order to follow his wife's familial linkage. Started from he leaves his *merajan*, the man has officially become the responsibility of the woman's family. In this case, the man is no longer assigned as *purusa* (man), but as *pradana* (woman), so the man will follow his wife to live along with her family.

A marriage is called *nyentana* marriage if it follows the Balinese traditional law, as follows:

1. The woman's status should be *sentana rajeg*, means that the woman has set to be the one who is responsible to the family's continuation.
2. The negotiation to do a *nyentana* marriage has to be initiated by the bride's family to the groom. If the consensus has been reached, then the marriage can be done.
3. *Mebyakaonan* ceremony (the main agenda in a marriage which results in the both groom and bride officially become husband and wife) has to be conducted in the bride's house.
4. The husband has to get into his wife's family and be accepted as the member of the bride's family. This means the husband has already left his affiliation in his former family. The husband is no longer praying in his former *merajan*, but rather praying in his wife's *merajan*.
5. The husband's position now is as the *sentana nyeburin*. He has rights as *pradana* (woman) and this is shown by the wife bringing *sesajen* (much like traditional holy gifts) to the husband's family as a ritual of disengaging the bound of her husband with his former family Panetja (in Pursika, 2008).

## Adjustment

The term adjustment is sometimes referred to adaptation. This term is divided into two broad categories, psychological and socio-cultural. The former refers to feelings of well-being and satisfaction, whereas the latter is concerned with the ability to “fit in” or negotiate interactive aspects of the host culture. From this definition, it can be concluded that adjustment or adaptation refers to the ability to fit in with the environment and the cultural aspects of the environment which can also be seen from the feelings of well-being and satisfaction that individual has (Ward, 1993).

There are three main elements in the concept of adjustment. One is concern with ourselves. Up to a point, self-interest is a normal and necessary part of life. Another common element is the need get along with others. At work or at home, life’s biggest problems often turn out to be “people” problems. At the same time, some of life’s greatest satisfactions come from relationship with friends and lovers. A third common element is change. In recent years change has become so rapid and all-encompassing that it may be no exaggeration to say that life itself is change.

Benjamin B. Wolman defines adjustments as: 1) A harmonious relationship with the environment involving the ability to satisfy most of one’s needs and meet most of the demands, both physical and social; that are put upon one. 2) The variations and changes in behavior that are necessary to satisfy needs and meet demands so that one can establish a harmonious relationship with the environment (Wolman, 1973).

## METHODS

The research is a qualitative study. Qualitative study is a procedure of research that produces descriptive data in the forms of written and oral words from persons and behavior that can be observed (Bodgan and Taylor in Moeloeng, 2001:5, in Wulandari, 2013). Qualitative study is chosen because this research made a description about the role of women in helping their husband adjust with his new status in *nyentana* marriage.

There will be two approaches of qualitative study used in this study; they are case study and ethnography study. Qualitative approach is an approach in which the description of observation is not ordinarily expressed in quantitative terms, it is not suggested that numerical measures are not used, but that other means of description are emphasized (Best in Wulandari, 2013). Case study means that the researcher observes one unit of phenomena such as individuals, characteristics, action and interaction, relic, setting, and incident (Punch, 1998). Ethnography is the branch of anthropology in which by its combination to sociology focuses on the phenomena happen in society.

Data collection method of this research is interview and literature review. The form of interview used one of Charles Redding’s schemas, information-gathering interviews. Informational-gathering interview is the interview which is aimed at getting relevant and timely information as accurately and completely as possible in the shortest amount of time.

## RESULTS

### Decision for *Nyentana* Marriage

Based on the interview, the decision for *Nyentana* Marriage was made by the three respondents without any external forces from other parties. Respondents’ motives to marry with

*Nyentana* system are vary, starting from their familial background where there is only one daughter in their family, intention to make their parents happy, and to take care of their parents.

Even though there is no intervention from their parents in their decision making to marry with *Nyentana* system, support from their parents are fully given to them. Even one of the respondents reported that her parents were flexible and gave her a freedom to choose whether she wanted to marry with *Nyentana* marriage or not.

Basically, each respondent's husband was willing to marry with *Nyentana* system based on their personal intention. However, we found the differences in their reasons aside from their personal intention. The first respondent's husband were willing to marry with *Nyentana* system because of his personal intention as well as because he is not the only child in his family. He has some other brothers which could take care of the family in the future. Husband from the third respondent were willing to marry with *Nyentana* system because of his personal intention as well as the consideration of the length of their relationship. The relationship that they had built so far made the husband able to understand the respondent's familial situation better. Finally, the third respondent reported that the decision for *Nyentana* marriage came from her husband's initiative. Up until now, the respondent doesn't know why her husband proposed her for *Nyentana* marriage.

### **Adjustment of Husbands with Their New Status, Family, and Environment in *Nyentana* Marriage**

Facing a change in marriage status is of course something that people should take into account. Many things change and each person has to leave their previous life pattern and adjust with the new one. Adjustment that they have to face includes adjustment with their own status, adjustment with their new family, as well as adjustment with the new culture and environment as a whole.

The first respondent reported that her husband didn't find and difficulties in adjusting with his new status as a man who married with the *Nyentana* system. However, problem appeared between her husband and her parents. The problem emerged was because of the lack of communication between them. The lack of communication between them happened because parents didn't want to interfere too much to their daughter's little family. Hence, they decided to talk and complain just to their daughter instead of to their son-in-law. This made the communication between respondent's husband and parents is considered one way interaction, not two way interaction.

The other adjustment difficulty was seen from the interaction with other people outside from their nuclear family. Husband's job which required him to come home so late made some of their relations and neighbors think negatively about him and assume that he didn't want to socialize with the new environment. This happens much in Indonesia, especially Bali where the people value the interaction with the other people very highly and deem it as necessary in the societal relationships.

In the traditions aspect, the difference of societal rules (Balinese people call it *awig-awig*) between one village and the other made the respondent's husband exerted much effort to change his habit he brought from his former family. The normative and conservative thingy must be adjusted in order to build a harmony between family and the society in the new environment. Different situation faced by the second respondent, where the problem she faced is her husband toward her and her parents. This situation made their household doesn't seem good. Respondent's husband even neglects his wife and daughter. Communication between him and his parents-in-law is not good at all. Based on the respondent's report, her husband will get angry and mess up the things in the house if he wants something but his parents-in-law cannot fulfill his wants. Even though the

respondent and her husband are still bonded with the marriage tie, her husband asked for a divorce several times.

The third respondent reported that her husband didn't find any difficulty in adjusting himself with the new environment. The relationship of her husband with his parents-in-law, the big family, as well as the new traditions were going so well. For the respondent, this happened because the relationship that they built before marriage was been so long. So the proximity and intimacy between them are no more considered a brand new.

There is a similarity between the first and the second respondent in terms of the source of problem happening in their family. Communication is a feature source of problem faced by their husband. This communication problem which was not built so well with the respondents, respondents' parents, as well as the environment emerged more and more conflicts. Meanwhile, the third respondent reported that the relationship that has been built for so long benefited their family so they didn't really need to exert as much effort as what the families of the first and second respondents did.

### **Physical Effort Exerted by Wives in Helping Their Husband Adjust with The New Status**

*Nyentana* marriage is a kind of marriage which only few people will and want to have in Bali. Running a marriage with different system and build a harmonious relationship surrounded by people who marry with the common systems is not easy. It requires a supportive atmosphere from both sides, especially for the husband.

First respondent's attempt in helping her husband adjust with his new status and look for the solution for the problem at the same time is by becoming the mediator between her husband and her parents. This is sometimes necessary to break the communication gap between them as well as to avoid a wrong interpretation that will appear later.

*“Dalam permasalahan dengan suami, apa yang menjadi keinginan atau maksud orang tua mbok kemudia mbok sampaikan ke suami, dan apa yang menjadi keinginan suami disampaikan ke orang tua. Sembari mencoba meluruskan bahwa komunikasi yang dilakukan langsung saja dua arah. Termasuk dengan suami juga nasihat semacam itu sering diingatkan, agar jangan cepat tersinggung apabila hal yang sama terulang lagi. Karena pada dasarnya maksud orang tua pasti baik, hanya saja mereka ingin menegur tanpa bermaksud mengintervensi.”*

“Anytime we had a problem, I always tell my husband about what my parents want and vice versa. At the same time, I also explain to them what I want. I want them to talk directly to each other without me as a mediator so that nobody will be offended in the future. This is because I believe that my parents just want to address what they believe is right, not to interfere.”

Respondent conveyed what become her parents' wants to her husband and vice versa. The respondent tried to make clear what was said by both her parents and her husband so that there will be no misunderstanding between them. Nonetheless, she encouraged her parents and husband to talk directly and honestly to each other.

The other attempt done by the first respondent was that introducing her husband to his new neighbors and ask for their help in guiding her husband know his new environment. Sometimes she



also gave an explanation to her husband about the culture in her husband's new society so that her husband will understand more and be ready to face what will happen in the future.

*"Pak, ini suami saya.. mohon dibimbing Pak dengan tradisi kita disini.."*

"Sir, this is my husband. Please introduce him with our traditions"

Based on the respondent's confession, the time needed by her husband to self-adjust with the new environment didn't take a long time. She said that her husband is an easy person, meaning that he is able to get easily adjusted with the new environment.

The second respondent reported differently in terms of her physical attempt to help her husband adjust. She already tried to minimize the communication gap between her husband and her parents but her husband rejected that kindness. The respondent said that her husband always tried to run from the problems. He didn't want to meet his wife to talk about the problem they faced. As a result, their problem doesn't seem to have an end till now. Seeing this situation, respondent started to become desperate and decided to focus just on the only child she has.

In the other hand, the third respondent reported that she helped her husband adjust by keep maintaining a harmonious relationship and communication that has already been built so well. Even though respondent's husband didn't any difficulty in his adjustment, respondent keep giving her full support in running through the family.

### **Psychological Effort Done by Wives in Helping Their Husband Adjust with The New Status**

The difference of *Nyentana* marriage compare to the other kind of marriage is the exchange of role. Women who are supposed to be *pradana* in common marriage, turns out to be *purusa* in *Nyentana* marriage, and vice versa. This difference makes the effort of the husband to adjust more complicated. It seems much more complicated than in common marriage because the husband has to lower his dignity and adjust to the new family which is commonly done by the women. The role of wife is instead helping their husband adjust with their new status. The result of the interview showed that the help given to the husband in *Nyentana* marriage is not only physical, but also psychological.

The first and third respondent gave moral support and understanding about certain problems. When the interview was going on, respondent talked much about the problem in her family. She tried to make clear of the problem which included her parents, husband, and the other families. However, since the degree of acceptance on her husband was so high, he could understand and adjust with the new situation.

The second respondent told that the failure of the communication attempt to muffle the conflict made her focus on the other activities. This showed that there was no psychological approach done by the wife toward her husband to help him adjust in the new environment.

### **CONCLUSION**

The reasons why women want to do *Nyentana* marriage are vary. Some that are revealed were because of their familial background where there is only one daughter in their family, intention to make their parents happy, and to take care of their parents. On the other hand, the reasons for men engaged in *Nyentana* marriage were because of personal intention, consideration that he is not the only child in the family, the length of the relationship, and his personal initiative.

The main problem appeared in the *Nyentana* marriage couple is that the communication gap between husbands and their parents-in-law. Parents do not want to interfere too much to their daughter's small family, so as a result any kind of advices were told to their daughter, not directly to their son-in-law. Another reason appeared from the interaction of husband with other party outside his small family. Husbands have to adjust themselves with the culture in the new environment where they belong to, and sometimes the difference of their previous culture made it seem complicated.

In terms of the attempts of wives to help their husband adjust with his new status are divided into physical and psychological attempts. The physical attempts done by the wives were introducing their husband to the people in his new surroundings as well as became the mediator between their husband and their parents. On the other hand, the psychological attempt done by wives was that they tried to mentally support their husband so that their husbands are able to communicate and socialize well in the society.

## **DISCUSSION**

This research can be a basic for the further researches related to *Nyentana* marriage. There are only little amount of researches working on this field and this research will benefit researchers who are interested in it. However, this research is lacking on many things which can be improved in the next research. It would be far away better if we could add the number of participants in this research so that we could get a more empirical and comprehensive description of the role of wives in *Nyentana* marriage in Bali. Then, we also need to hear from the husbands' perspectives about their wives' role in helping them adjust with the new environment. Both perspectives will give a more complete explanation about it and will give a different touch on the results of this research.

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**List of the main questions given to the participants:**

1. How long have you been marrying your husband?
2. Why did you choose to do *Nyentana* marriage instead of common marriage?
3. What do you think is the reason of your husband for his decision to marry with *Nyentana* system?
4. Are you happy with your marriage?
5. What do you think is the difficulty faced by your husband in adjusting himself with the new society?
6. Do you have any problems that you and your husband facing now related to his adjustment with his new society?
7. What attempts did you do to help your husband adjust with his new society?

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# **Women Empowerment Through Entrepreneurship: A Study Of First Generation Women Entrepreneurs In Pune City**

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## **Abstract:**

Women empowerment can be regarded as a progression in which women challenge the existing norms of society. They try to bring variation in their traditional role. This is done to improve their personality and status in the family as well as in the society. Empowerment implies economic independence, improved standard of living, self-confidence, sense of achievement, improvement in leadership qualities and increased social interaction. Entrepreneurship is very often the solution to empower women. Entrepreneurship gives economic independence, builds self- confidence and develops leadership. It also augments capacity to manage complications and unpredictability. This paper is based on study of first generation women entrepreneurs in Pune city.

The objectives of paper are

- 1 To study motives of women entrepreneurs.
- 2 To find out problems of women entrepreneurs and suggest measures.
- 3 To study whether entrepreneurship is helpful in empowering women

( key words : Entrepreneurship, empowerment )

The term women empowerment has come to occupy an important position globally over the years. Educational attainment and economic participation are the key elements in empowerment of women. The economic empowerment is important for rapid economic development of any country. Entrepreneurship happens to be one of the best ways to attain economic empowerment. Involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities would ensure effective utilisation of labour, generation of income and hence improvement in quality of life. Promotion of women entrepreneurship is the best way to empower women.

*In the words of President Abdul J Kalam*

*“ Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation. When women are empowered , society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value system leads to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately good nation.”*

## **Concepts**

### **Women Entrepreneur**

An enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51% of capital and giving at least 51% of employment generated by the enterprise to women.

### **First Generation Entrepreneur**

He or she is the person who has started the business. The one who has not inherited the family business.

### **Women Empowerment**

Empowerment is the process by which without power gain one has greater control over their lives. This means control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology. It involves power to, power with and power within. Empowerment involves ability to get what one wants and to influence others on our concerns.

Empowerment implies

Economic independence.

Improved standard of living.

Self confidence

Sense of achievement

Increased social interaction

Improvement in leadership qualities

Decision making capacity in family and community.

Entrepreneurship is not just skill acquisition for acquisition sake. It is an acquisition of skills and ideas for the sake of creating employment for oneself and for others. It includes development based on creativity. The success of enterprises helps in developing the nation. It also reduces poverty rate with visible increment of employment rate among youths.

In India women comprises nearly half of the population. The emergence of women entrepreneurship and their contribution to national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown over period of time. Women entrepreneurs are to be appreciated for utilisation of modern technology, increased investment, finding export market, creating sizable employment for others. Women entrepreneurs have the potential to grow but they are capable of contributing much more what they are.

### **Review of Literature**

Sextan and Kennt in their article Female executives and entrepreneurs: Preliminary comparison reported the results of study of characteristics of women entrepreneurs. The results indicated that women entrepreneurs tended to be more similar than dissimilar.

Nayan Barua and Aprjeeta Burka in their book Women Entrepreneurship analysed the impact generated by Entrepreneurship Development Programme on women entrepreneurs.

S Mathivanan and Selvakumar in their article on “ A study of socio economic background and status of women entrepreneurs in small scale industries emphasised that the women should be allowed freely to undertake the business and women entrepreneurs must be recognised , if it is recognised well then the country’s economic will be flourished.

### **Profile of Pune city**

Pune is second largest city in Maharashtra (one of the developed states of India ) next to Mumbai. Now a days it is also called as I T hub as lot of software companies are shifting its base to Pune. It is also called as cultural capital of Maharashtra.

Pune is safe city having professional environment. It has many vocational training institutes even specially designed for women. Women have variety of educational as well as professional opportunities at Pune.

Women from Pune are well educated, progressive, forward looking and well versed with the latest technology. They possess good skill set. Women are working in wide range of technical and nontechnical profession right from aviation to traditional teaching job. Not only percentage of working women is increasing but women entrepreneurs are also increasing.

Although large number of women entrepreneurs are looking after their family business or have a low tech business like food, jewellery etc., increasing number of women are entering in technical fields like I T, manufacturing, transport, travel and tourism etc.

### **Objectives**

- 1 To study motives of women entrepreneurs.
- 2 To find out problems of women entrepreneurs and suggest measures.
- 3 To study whether entrepreneurship is helpful in empowering women.



## Research Methodology

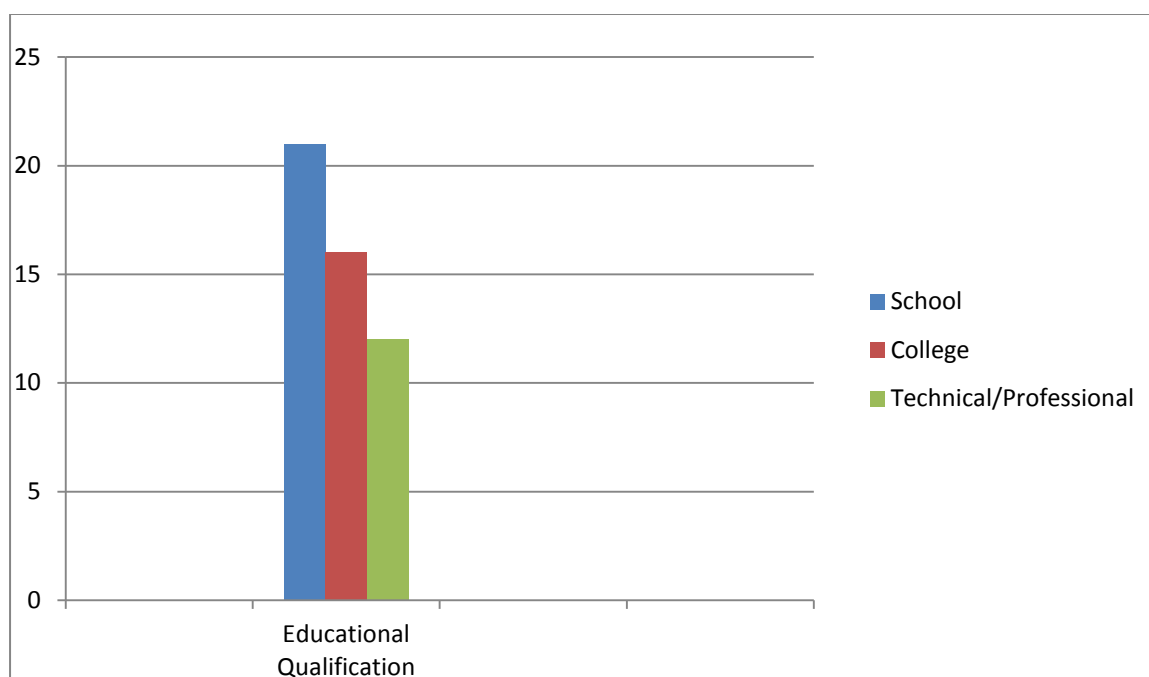
This paper is based on primary as well as secondary data. Primary data is collected through questionnaires and personal interviews. Sample size is fifty. Data is collected from first generation women entrepreneurs in Pune city. Sample is selected from various types of business such as manufacturing, food, service and the business run with the help of self help group.

## Observations and Findings

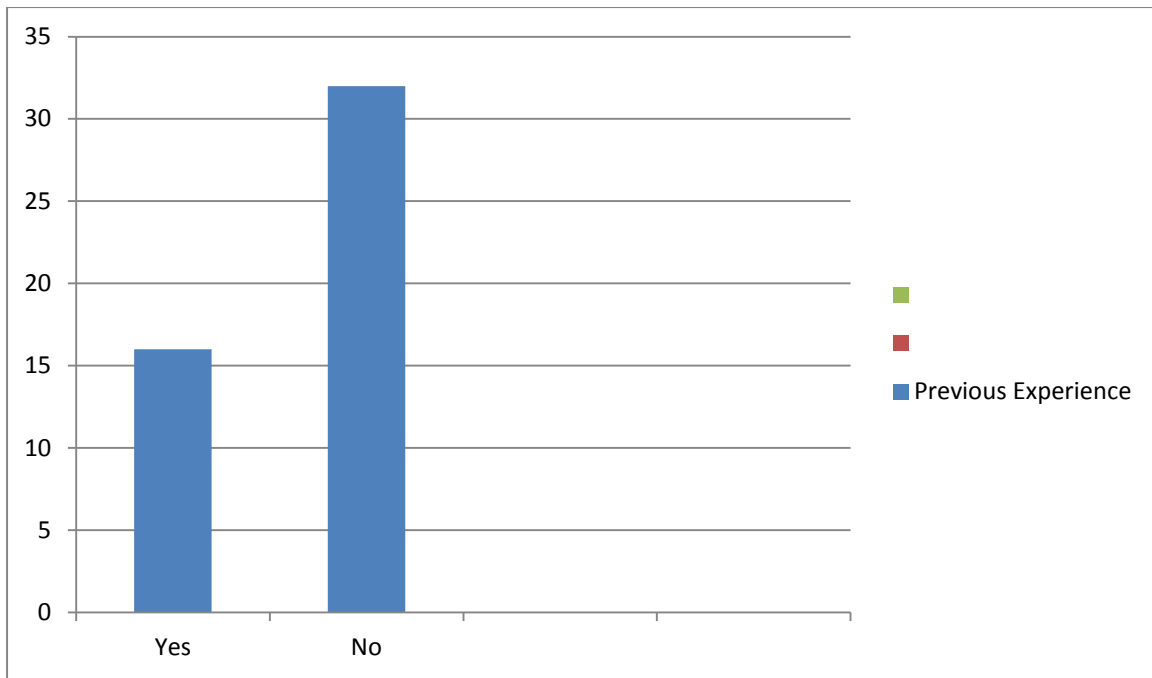
Age of an entrepreneur at the commencement of the business

Age between	20 -30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years
	21	16	13

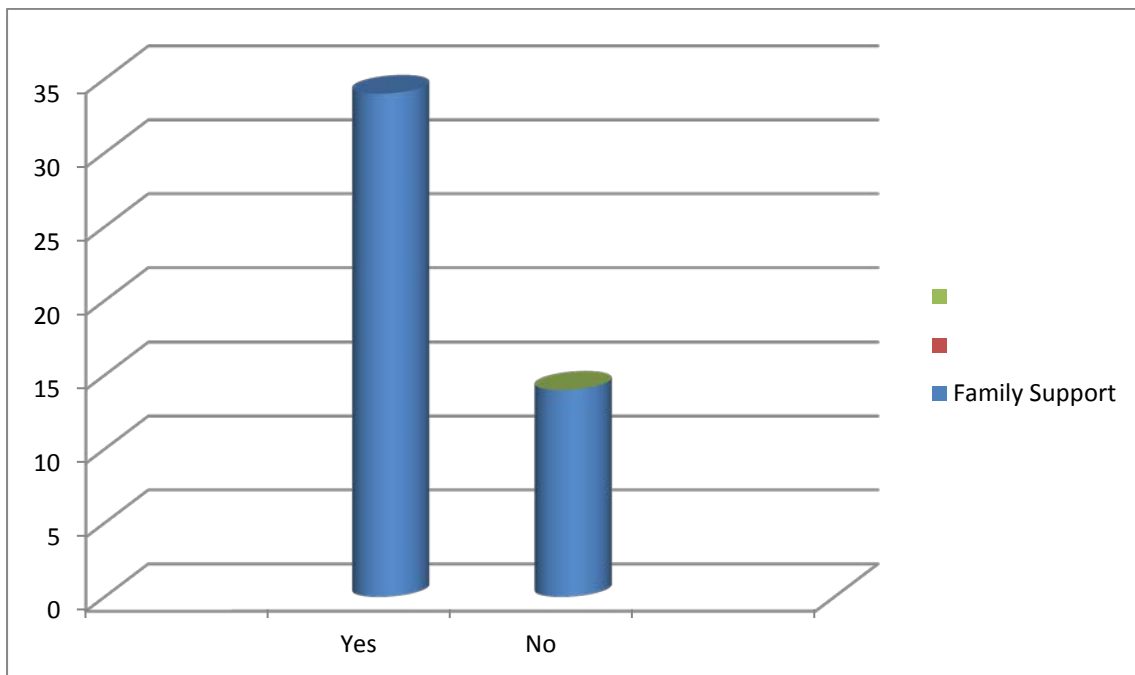
It was found that 42% of respondents have started business between the age group 20 to 30 years. 32% have started between 30 to 40 years and 26% have commenced between 40 to 50 years.



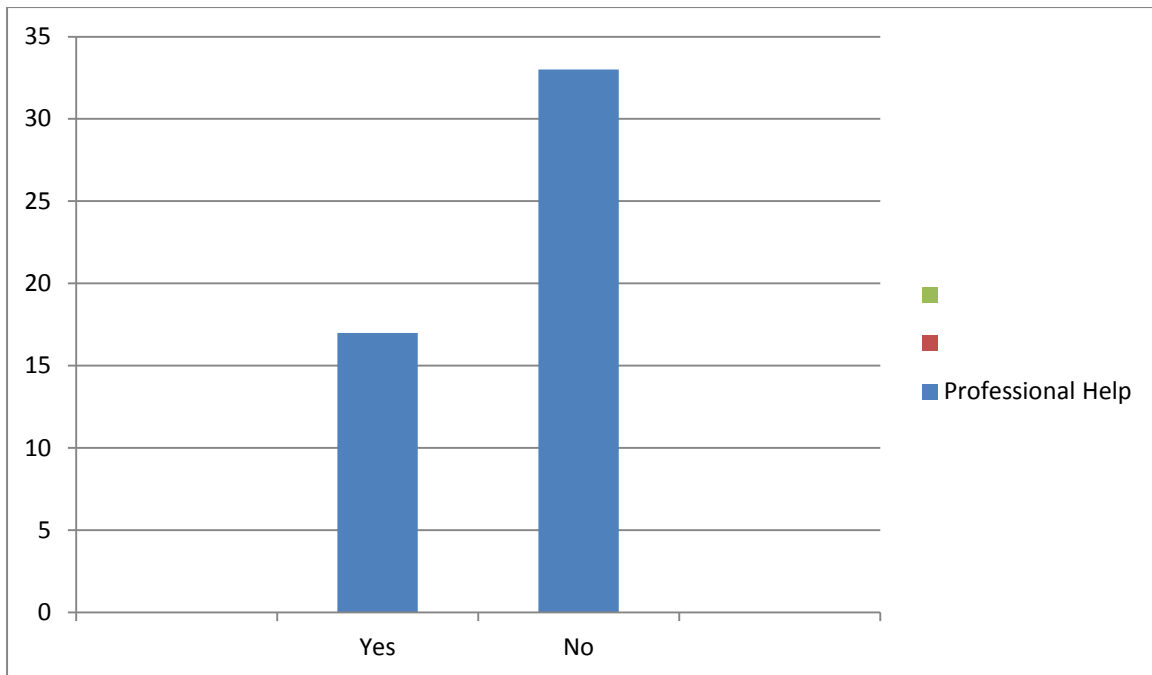
Above diagram reveals educational qualification acquired by the respondents at the time of commencement of the business.



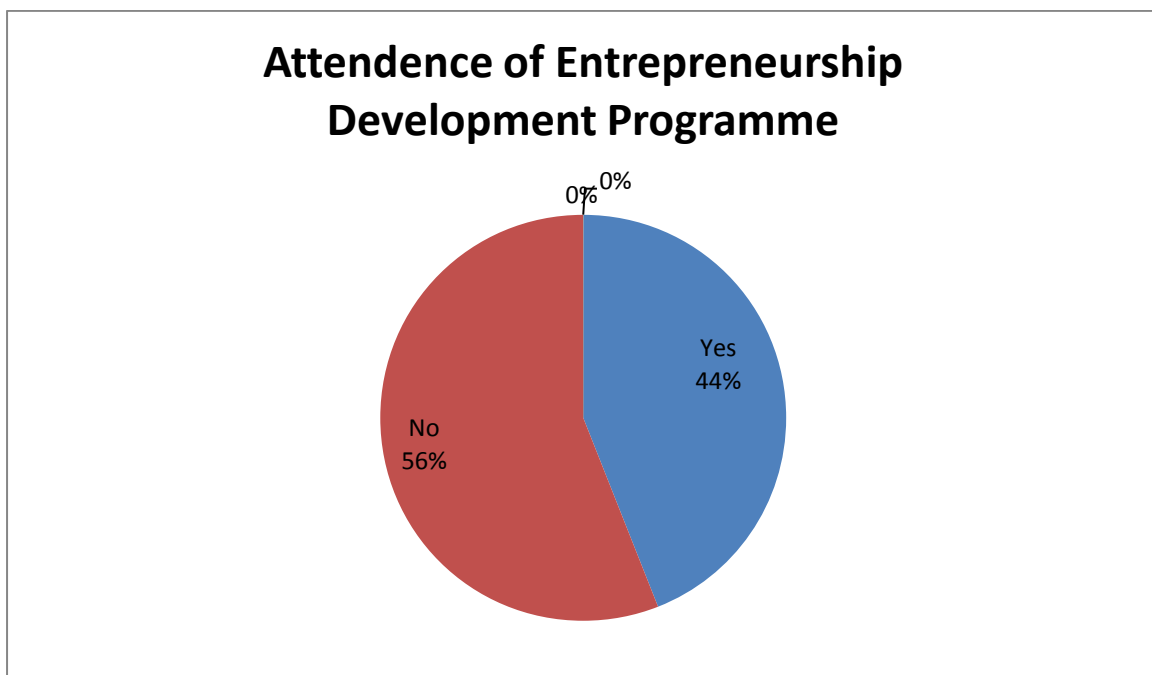
As per above diagram 32% respondents have the experience of same field but 68% were new entrants in the business.



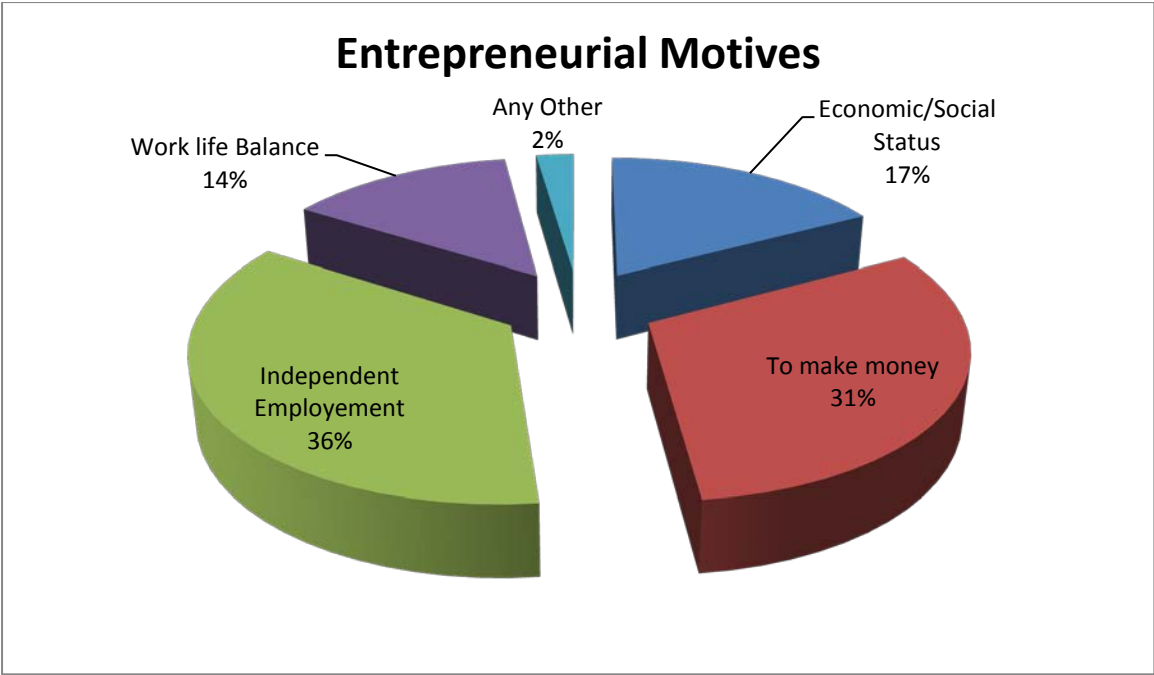
70% respondents agreed that their family supports them in running the business while 30% respondents said that they have no support from the family.



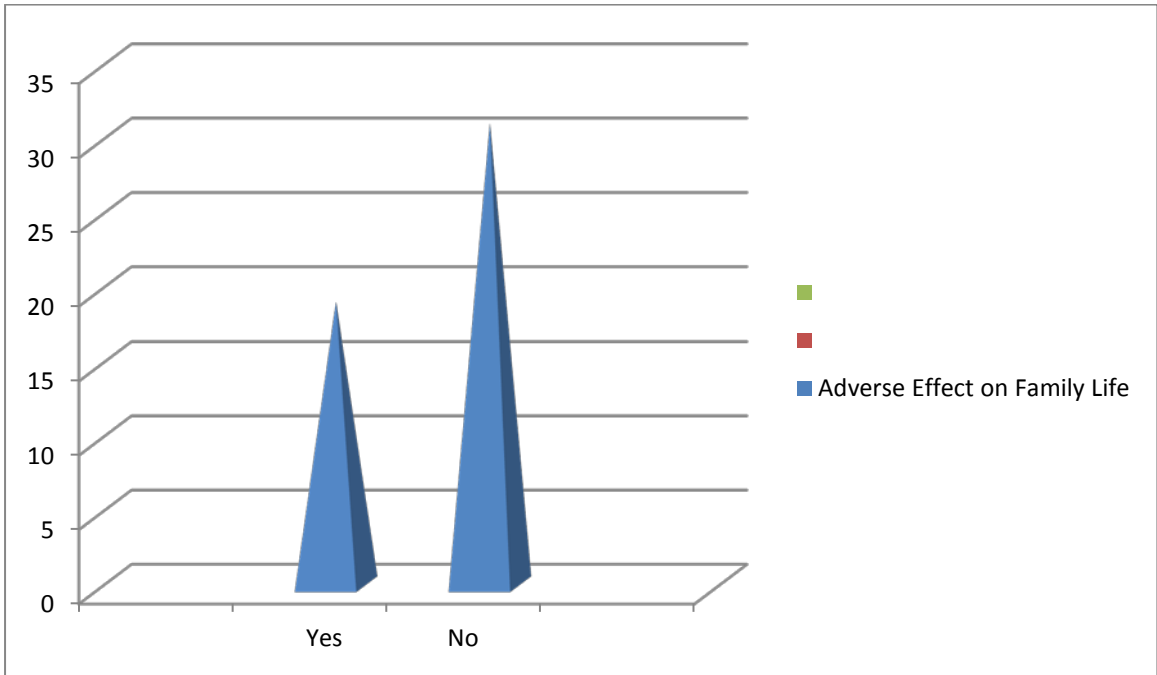
The above diagram represents percentage of respondents who have taken professional help while setting the business unit. 34% have taken professional help.



The above diagram shows 44% of respondents attended entrepreneurship development programme.

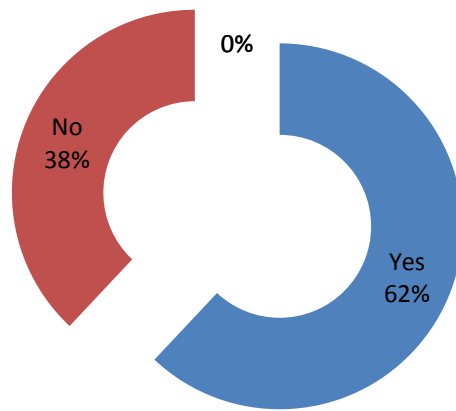


This diagram gives picture of motives of respondents to start business. Majority of respondents(36%) chosen entrepreneurship to have an independent employment. 31% to make money. 17% started their own venture to gain social and economic status in society and 14% to have work life balance.



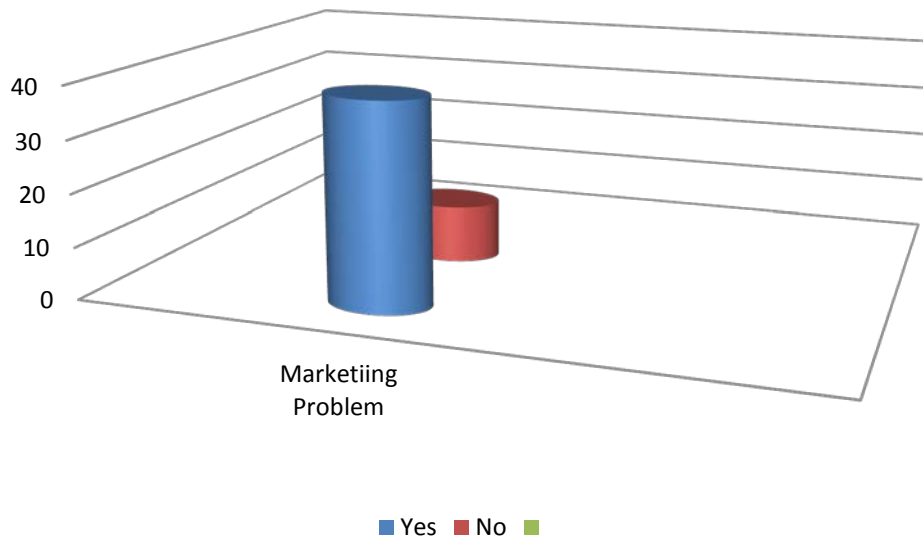
42% of respondents agree that their family life adversely affects because of their business. 58% claims that there is no such effect.

## Financial Problem



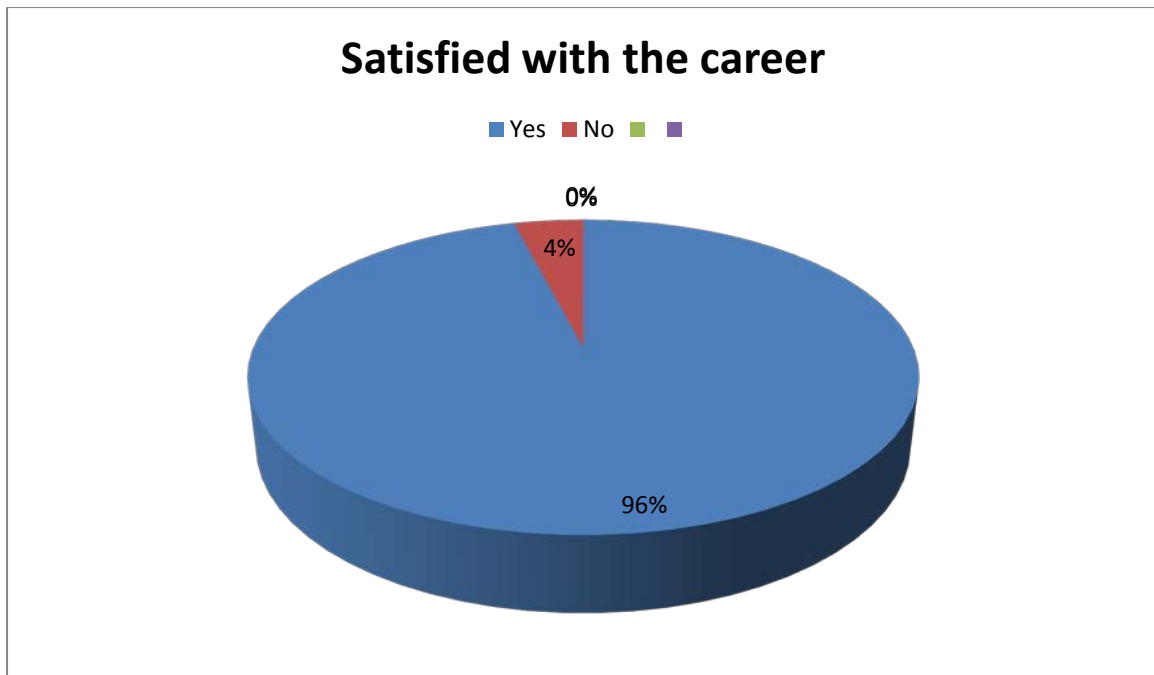
62% respondents face financial problems while 38% does not have these problems.

## Marketing Problem



As per above diagram 78% respondents face problems in marketing their products and services.

22% do not face such problems.



Out of 50 respondents only 2 are not satisfied with their career choice. Remaining 48 are happy to become entrepreneur.

It was found that majority of respondents have started business when their age was between 20 to 30 years when the risk taking capacity is high. Majority of them have completed college education. Education makes oneself aware about happenings in the world. It means they were aware about business environment. 43 respondents out of 50 are married. Many of them have started business after marriage. Their husbands have supported their decision to start business. Though family members of many respondents do not help them in day to day business activities, they give moral and emotional support. But more than 50% respondents are of the opinion that their family life is affected by business. 70% of respondents are comfortable in dealing with employees. They do not have any difficulty in motivating them. Many of them have male employees also. 82% of respondents did not receive any subsidy or incentive from government; still they did not face obstacles while starting the business. An interesting observation is about motives. Majority of them started their own enterprise to have independent employment, to gain status in society and to make money. But few have chosen entrepreneurship to have work life balance and to achieve something in society. 80% respondents claim that they face any problem particular to women entrepreneur. Their economic and social statuses are enhanced. Now they have a greater say in decision making in family matters. They have better control on their lives. 99% respondents are satisfied and happy in their career. We can conclude that entrepreneurship is one of the major ways to empower women.

## **Suggestions**

1 “Entrepreneurship” should be taught from secondary school level. Leadership, Team building, decision making are the key attributes of entrepreneur. Training to develop these competencies could be given in schools. Success stories of great entrepreneurs and business men should be included in syllabus. So that students will be motivated.

2 Women entrepreneurs should be made aware about sources of finance. They should be given information about various schemes of government, subsidies, and various loans available to women entrepreneurs.

3 Marketing is the major challenge of women entrepreneurs. Government and various associations should assist them to market their products and services. Exhibitions to promote their products should be organised.

4 Entrepreneurship Development Programmes should be organised. This will enhance their managerial capabilities and they will receive guidance about finance and marketing.

## **Conclusion**

The progress of any nation depends on status and living conditions of its women. Promotion of women entrepreneurship ensures economic independence and increase in social status. It makes women aware about their rights. It creates more respect in the family and gives self-prestige avoids gender discrimination. It enhances leadership qualities among women. Promotion of women entrepreneurship will motivate the future generation of women and will solve unemployment problem

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## **Women school leaders' perception of professional development and needs, a qualitative study**

N. Congo-Poottaren, S. Beebeejaun-Roojee and C. Surajbali-Bissoonauth

Mauritius has witnessed a rise in the number of women school leaders in the past two years. Still, women school leaders' voices in the literature on professional development and needs are lacking. The intent of this research project has been to illuminate the perceptions of women leaders who are currently involved in leading secondary schools and, through their voices, listen to their call for their future development needs for successful school leadership.

This qualitative research has looked into the personal narratives of lived experience to uncover and value professional development. Data were collected mainly by means of interviewing and understood from the lenses of leadership theories to create women leaders' vision of the journey to the position of school leader, thus aiming at an understanding of the needs for further development.

Major findings include the disappointment with the current provision of professional development with paucity in programmes for aspiring school leaders. Women leaders recognised the importance of professional development but expressed their dissatisfaction on induction programmes for newly appointed principals, professional development strategies and lack of support from the government. Chief development needs as observed by women leaders principals included leadership skills in relation to student learning and curriculum development, knowledge on resource management, and information technology and legislation.

**Key words:** Professional development, leadership theories and women school leaders

## **INTRODUCTION**

As in other newly industrialized countries, the role of women in Mauritius is changing rapidly. A major force for change has been the rapid influx of women into the many jobs created in the 1980s with the advent of the export processing zones. Although low-paying for the most part, the jobs allowed women to gain a certain degree of personal and social freedom. The government has taken measures to promote equality of the sexes by repealing discriminatory laws dealing with inheritance and marriage. In 1989 the government appointed equal opportunity officers in the principal ministries to deal with women's issues. Now when Mauritius is compared with other countries, gender equality has reached appealing dimensions. The struggle to produce a faceless and genderless nation whereby more and more women are called upon to integrate the working field is high on the agenda of the present government. Nowadays, women occupy high positions in the labour force and also jobs which were once perceived as the privilege of men are now performed by women namely engineers, member of the parliament, mechanics, bus conductors and drivers and members of the police force and fire services. Mauritian girls have shaken off the shackles of timidity and participate massively in sports activities. In the same vein women joining in the post of Head of schools in the Secondary Sector is quite a new phenomenon which took momentum in the years 2009 .Recently during a workshop at the Mauritius Institute of Education on school leadership, these women voiced their apprehension on various issues and the authors present took this opportunity to make their voices heard.

### **Purpose of the study:**

The purpose of this study is to find out how far the professional development facilities offered to women school leaders are helping them to handle the various challenges that they have to face. In this context, the study first identifies and describes the challenges that women school leaders face and then it analyses the contribution that their professional development makes in helping them mediate these challenges. It thus attempts to identify the gaps in their professional development and advocates for further professional development in these areas.

### **Research questions:**

1. What are the challenges that women school leaders have to face at school?
2. What is women school leaders' experience of professional development?
3. What is the contribution of their professional development in mediating these challenges?

### **Significance of the study:**

This study will be useful in many ways. The first benefit of this study is that the findings will contribute to knowledge on women and their involvement in educational leadership in Mauritius. The second benefit obtained by this study is that recommendations and suggestions made could supplement efforts made to improve the programmes aimed at the professional development of women school leaders and school leaders in general. The findings can also guide the development of standards for school leaders. The study will also assist in further research work.

**Limitations:**

There is a scarcity of literature on women in educational leadership compared to the extensive literature on educational leadership available. The interview, which is the face-to-face data collection technique used, will limit the study to a few respondents who participated in the study on a voluntary basis.

**Literature review:**

The literature review has been organised under three axes namely:

- Challenges that women school leaders have to face.
- Leadership theories and women
- Professional development programmes and induction sessions

**Challenges that women school leaders have to face.**

Women as school leaders have to face challenges that all school leaders have to face and also those specific because they are women. Various studies have found that what heads of schools are expected to do today vary considerably with what they used to do (Bush, 2009; Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000). There is also a call for school leaders to move away from traditional roles such as “to model excellent teaching, to observe teachers in classrooms and to directly advise and guide the work of all teachers” and to “take heed of newer and purportedly more effective forms of distributed leadership” (Cuellar & Giles, 2012, pp.297). Childs-Bowen et al. 2000 refers to school leader to be “leaders of leaders” (pp.30). School leaders also have to lead their schools amidst “high expectations, accountability, standardisation and a growing concern for measurement of schooling outcomes” (Cuellar & Giles, 2012, pp.421). Starratt (2004) concurred that “school leaders are called upon to accommodate these challenges coming from outside the school by making adjustments to their schools” (pp.1).

Added to the dimension of leadership is the fact that these are women. In a highly patriarchal society such as Mauritius, women leaders often have to face resistance at work. Eagly and Carli (2007) state that once people stereotype women, they tend to resist female leaders. Eagly and Karau (2002) and Eagly and Carli (2007) called this double blind as people find a dissonance between the female gender role and typical leader roles. According to Marshall (1985) as women take on leadership position, they set into male prerogatives. Hence people negatively view this move. This is linked to the way males and females are educated and instructed as to the norms, behaviours, values and beliefs of group membership as men or women. Furthermore, as women occupy positions which used to solely belong to males, this leads to an unusual configuration which is a source of problem for women leaders. In many societies, leadership is a masculine paradigm which is linked to masculine values (Manwa, 2002; Schein, 1994). Hence people associate leadership with males (Manwa, 2002; Pounder & Coleman, 2002). When women step into leadership position, this is not in line with normal practices. There is also the fact that women leaders face problems in leadership position because they have lower pride in themselves and are not able to realise the full scope of their achievement (Dorsey, 1989).

Various studies have come forward with the view that success can be depicted by male values such as assertiveness, aggressiveness, and task-oriented leadership abilities (Jogulu & Wood 2006; Envick, 2008) while females are expected to be modest, quiet, selfless, and nurturing (Eagly & Carl, 2003). Hence this is a problem which women leaders have to face. There is also the fact that studies have reported that males are task-oriented while females are more concerned with relationships (Marrajo. & Kliender, 1992). Therefore when males take on leadership positions, this was more easily accepted than when women do it (Ryan. & Haslam, 2007).

Another challenge that women leaders face is that they become “sensitive to their marginality at the senior level” (Pitman, 2008). They become anxious (Vallacher, et al., 2003). Furthermore that visibility also puts them in a situation where they feel vulnerable. They adopt strategies which might not be compatible with their feminine nature. They may even try to suppress true female characteristics. Kram and McCollorn (1998) calls this the ‘high visibility, high vulnerability’ dynamic. All this might interfere with their ability to lead. Women may not lead differently than men, but their leadership is nevertheless seen differently and they are heavily criticised (Sinclair, 2004a).

There is also the fact that women leaders need to develop good relationships and in many cases it implies getting along with men. This implies getting along ‘with the unspoken rules and codes of behaviour that shape this strategic relationship dynamic (Pitman, 2008). Women do not form part of networking opportunities which could help them to successfully negotiate strategic alliances.

There is also a challenge which is linked to women’s sexuality. Baird (2007) finds that women are under heavy scrutiny concerning their hairstyles, weight and so on. Women cannot separate themselves from their physical appearance and presence. However, attempts have been made to dissociate women from their appearance when the androgynous dressing came into the limelight (Cochrane & Hoepper, 2007).

## **Leadership theories**

Early literature on leadership theories starts with the Great man theory (Carlyle, 1841). The Great man theory posits that people are born to lead. These Great man leaders were born with all the necessary traits to lead others. Then there is the Trait Theory which claims that successful leaders possess certain traits which make them ideal for leadership position (Stogdill, 1974). Another school of thoughts on leadership theories gave rise to the behavioural leadership theories which focus on how leaders behaved or what leaders were doing (Halpin. & Winer, 1957; Hemphill. & Coons, 1957). Behavioural theories of leadership support the view that leaders are made not born, since people can learn to become leaders (Saal. & Knight, 1988). Later on, a new way to look at leadership emerged with the contingency theories of leadership. Fiedler (1967) came forward with an explanation in in different situations, leadership effectiveness would be determined by the leadership style and the degree to which leaders could be influenced. However, House and Mitchell (1974) posit that followers were essential for leadership. The role of leaders is to develop followers. This idea is also supported by Vroom and Yetton (1973).

More recent theories of leadership focused on motivational factors (Horner, 1997). There is much attention which is given to transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Translational leadership postulates that there is a power relationship between leaders and

followers and that there is an exchange relationship between them (Burns, 1978). Order and stability is kept by followers doing what they are expected to do. Transactional leadership seeks to preserve constancy rather than encouraging transformation within the structure through steady financial and social exchanges that accomplish predetermined goals for both the leaders and their followers. On the other hand, transformational leadership is more lasting and it relies on the leader helping followers to meet their needs. The relationship between the leader and the followers are based on trust and commitment. Followers are not solely motivated by financial rewards (Bass, 1985).

These leadership theories can be applied in the educational context (Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Howell & Costley, 2006). It is useful to situate the present educational context in order to see the relevance of leadership theories. School leaders use these theories in order to help them negotiate the various tasks which they encounter (Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Howell & Costley, 2006). According to Bar-Yam et al. (2002) schools are facing major changes which are linked to the various difficulties that arose in the world and this has led to the recognition that educational leadership has to be able to meet these difficulties. Hoy and Miskel (2005) claim that in this turbulent environment it would be most appropriate to use transformational leadership.

Today schools are required to produce all-round citizens of tomorrow who are capable of meeting the needs of society (Helm, Turckes, & Hinton, 2010; Rotherham & Willingham, 2009). Bassett (2005) advances that school leadership will need to adopt to this need, while Sanchez (2003) and Wagner et al, are of the opinion that transformational leadership is what schools need. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership “occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (pp.20). Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam (1996) found that transformational leadership encourages improved performance.

To add to the above, based on the social role theory analysis approach to leadership, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and van Engen (2003) claim that the way men and women leaders behave may be different. The authors claim that the possibility that women and men differ in their typical leadership is important because leaders’ own behaviour is a major determinant of their effectiveness and chances for advancement (pp. 569) In a study conducted by Moskovitz, Suh and Desaulners (1994) it was found that men displayed more sovereign, masterful, forceful, and instrumentally knowledgeable behaviours than women. They also found that women displayed more communal behaviour. They were more friendly, unselfish, concerned with others and expressive than men. Eagly et al, (2000) supports this finding by arguing that gender influences leadership behaviours. However, other studies (Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; Cross & Madson, 1997) claim that differences in leadership behaviours also occur because of the internalisation of gender roles by leaders.

Women leaders have to use a language and communication style which encourages collaboration. It is less hierarchical than that used by men. Hence the behaviours of women is thus in line with their communal nature (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). This is further reinforced by a meta-analysis study conducted by Eagly, Karau, Mines and Johnson (1994). Hence this leads to Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt. and van Engen (2003) claim that “women may favour a transformational style because it provides them with a means of overcoming the dilemma of role incongruity – namely, that conforming to their leader role can impede their ability to meet the requirements of their gender role and that conforming to their gender role can

impede their ability to meet the requirements of their leader role” (pp.573). In another study conducted by Yoder (2001) it was found that women are more prone to use transformational leadership. They thus do not make use of an excessively manly impression and ranked control. Thus transformational leadership is found to be more in line with the requirements of female gender role which calls forward “caring, supportive and considerate behaviours” (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt. & van Engen, 2003, pp573). Further, various researches assert that most transformational behaviours have been observed in women leaders (Hackman, Furniss, Jill & Paterson, 1992; Ross & Offermann, 1997). Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and van Engen (2003) claim that women leaders have come to accept that norms which are associated with female gender roles govern their leadership behaviour and even become the accepted behaviour. The results which Kawatra and Krishnan (2004) “provide support to the claim that feminine leadership creates team-oriented, collaborative, and people-oriented cultures” (pp.7). Hence, women leaders are associated with transformational leadership.

### **Professional development programmes and induction sessions**

Professional development has been defined as “a lifelong collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through a daily job-embedded, learner-centered, focused approach” (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2006, pp. 217). The studies conducted concerning the professional development of heads of schools came up with the fact that attempts to provide professional development are based on three major philosophical views, namely the traditional/scientific management, the craft model and the reflective-inquiry model (Daresh, 2001; Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). There is the traditional/scientific management where heads of schools are not actively engaged in their professional development. They were exposed to research on management. In fact, “Organizations were seen as machines and people were viewed as appendages to those machines” (Carlson, 1996, pp. 20). Then there is the craft model where heads of schools are trained by experts who act as mentors. The last model, the reflective inquiry is dynamic in nature as heads of schools are encouraged to be self-reflective, that is, reflective practitioners to review and challenge their own values and beliefs and generate new knowledge which they can apply at schools.

In their book *Developing School Leaders: An International Perspective*, Brundrett and Crawford (2008) note that there is some apprehension that the preparation and in-service development for heads of school does not properly equip them to overcome the challenges that they face. Yet, it is claimed that because there are so many challenges which school leaders have to face, they need to be properly trained. Bush (2009) made an appeal for the educational authorities to provide their school leaders with proper development. This is supported by the findings of McKinsey Report (2010) which was conducted in eight countries and which claims that “Quality school requires quality leadership. Quality leadership cannot be assumed or acquired without a coherent, integrated, consequential, and systematic approach to leadership... development” (pp.1).

Darling-Hammond et al (2007) found that some development programmes for school leaders are “inadequate to the challenges of managing schools in a diverse society in which expectations for learning are increasingly ambitious” (pp. 5). They also noted that what was proposed to the school heads did not meet their needs. Some studies have also recommended that development should be provided to school heads throughout their careers and that the development should meet the needs of each head of school (Darling-Hammond et al, 2005; Dempster, 2001). There are also other claims that professional development should be tailor-made to help school heads meet the present and future challenges as well as aimed at

developing reflective practitioners. In another study, it was found that professional development for Heads of schools should be “long-term, planned, and job-embedded; focuses on student achievement; supports reflective practice; and provides opportunities to work, discuss, and solve problems with peers” (Houle, 2006, pp. 146)

## METHODOLOGY

The intent of this research project was to illuminate the perceptions of women leaders who are currently involved in leading secondary schools and, through their voices, listen to their call for their future development needs for successful school leadership. A qualitative research design was selected as is well suited to the study of persons’ lived experiences (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

The small sample of the present study ( $N = 6$ ) allowed for depth of study (Patton, 2002) of the phenomenon of women leaders on their journey to school leadership and listen to their call for their future development needs for successful school leadership. The sample comprised of six purposive women leaders in their early forties who have a minimum of two years’ working experience as Head in State Secondary schools. This is in line with Morse (1989) who claimed that “a good information source is someone who has undergone or is undergoing the experience and is able to reflect on and provide detailed experiential information about the phenomenon” (pp. 121). For an interpretive research study, the sample is adequate (Stake, 2000; Patton, 2002).

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) described the qualitative tradition of phenomenology as the study of “reality as it appears to individuals” (pp. 491) and view the researcher as being “intimately connected with the phenomena being studied” (pp. 495). According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), a phenomenological study looks into past experiences, current experiences and consists of a reflective dialogue. Merleau-Ponty (1962) reports that “phenomenology is the study of essences” (pp. vii). Essences are the essential elements of a phenomenon, those things which make it recognizable as such (van Manen, 1990). Porter (1999) explains that phenomenology does not look for cause-effect relationships nor does it seek to generalise. According to van Manen (1997) phenomenology allows the reader to see an event in such a way that it brings new understanding.

### **Data collection**

Interviews were the primary data collection method used. Interviews allow us to gain the perspective of others without direct observation of their experiences (Patton, 2002). Interviews also allow for the immediate clarification of questions and follow-up to responses thereby improving the quality of data collected.

We choose semi- structured interviews (Patton, 1980, pp. 206) which is described as an interview guide approach, whereby issues as well as the context of the research are specified in advance in outline form. We worked from a pre-determined sequence but altered this according to the directions taken by the participants. The interviewees answered the same questions, and we were seeking description of their journeys to the position of leader, the challenges they meet and the perceptions of their professional development needs and well as their interpretation in terms of the gaps in their professional development.

Six prompts were used to guide open-ended interviews. The prompts were on background data regarding participants’ work experience in education, participants’ experiences with

their own professional development, challenges that women leaders meet at school, skills provided in their professional development which empowered them to deal with these challenges and the adequacy of the professional development received which would identify the gaps which needed to be closed by new professional development programmes. The prompts were sent to the participants four days prior to the interview. The six prompts were generally used in the same order with each participant. However, participants were allowed while answering the question to move away from the specific prompt. The interviewer did not redirect the interviewee toward the prompt. Follow-up questions were asked where felt appropriate as unexpected areas of interests were uncovered and to clarify or expand on a response. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Then the verbatim transcripts were read. Data were coded using the axial coding system under themes relevant to the research questions.

## **Discussion on Emergent themes**

### **1. Challenges: Being women and being the leaders.**

All the young female Head of schools were of the opinion that being women itself is looked upon as a problem. They described the attitude of others at school vis a vis themselves as 'not to be taken seriously' often instructions are not followed by subordinates and in order to make oneself heard they often have to use the 'order book' where messages are written and formerly addressed and have to be acknowledged. This type of behaviour can be explained by the phenomenon known as 'masculine norm'. Various studies identify a masculine 'norm' that exists in institutions. There are studies which deal with stereotypes which prevent people from responding and recognising female authority (Chesterman, et. al., 2005; Sinclair, 2004a, 2000, 1994; Still, 1996; Burton & Ryall, 1995; Karpin, 1995; Rosener, 1995). In fact what happens is that people tend to perceive "women's ineffective leadership style and their lack of skills to reach senior levels' as the source of many female managers' problems" (Wellington, et. al. 2003, pp.19).

HOS explained they came to believe that male leaders tend to have the necessary traits to leader others. This seems to be in line with findings from Schein (1973) as it was shown that males possess successful managerial characteristics. Women explained that they reached leadership position believing that leaders have to be tough. They recount events when their school leaders were all males, displaying a nearly autocratic leadership style, showing very little consideration to human relationship. Hence these women explained that when they reached leadership position they did not find that the way males lead is suitable to them. They believed that this was a main issue which they struggled with. They found that they were guided by other dimensions such as spirituality, friendship and relationship building. These female school leaders were in between minds in deciding which leadership theory would guide them. While describing how they see themselves as leaders, it matched a lot what Apfelbaum & Hadley (1986) found women leaders to be "down-to-earth, result-minded, participatory and aware of personal values of subordinates, and good listeners, resulting at times in a maternal, momma-leadership style" ( pp.215).

Furthermore, while describing the dilemmas they face when they reached leadership position, they tried to define their characteristics as female leaders. They would claim that they are good communicators, open minded and dedicated. They believed in teamwork and delegation. They are of the opinion that by working in teams more work can be done.



However, they feared that it might be misinterpreted by subordinates who might feel that the women leaders are not capable of doing the job themselves. They also explained that they believe that as a school leader they would make judicious use of power that they would inspire and motivate their staff and try to build trust and respect as well as create a climate where they would encourage teachers to emerge as teacher leaders. Helgesen (1990) found that women lead by creating a 'web of inclusion' whereas males tend to favour hierarchy. Women explained that one issue which concerned them when they were appointed is the fact that they would need opportunities to unpack this entire excess luggage and assert themselves as women leaders.

Perreault (1992) claimed that women are not taken seriously by men in a lower position. In some cases it was found that women are subjected to disrespect. This gives rise to a hostile working environment. Women leaders then have to consider getting over these issues which hang over their power, authority, self-esteem, career and personality. Women have been found to adapt and change their behaviours at work (McIntyre et al, 2007). Ferguson and Sharples (1994) found that "even if the women are later admired for their accomplishments they have to first break down the threshold barriers on their own" (pp.77).

Another important recurring theme that came up during the interview was that women HOS had the strong feeling of being 'judged' on everything they do. They stated that even the way they talk, dress, walk and behave are being assessed. This makes them anxious at times, and they fear burnout. Sinclair (2013) stated that 'women leaders are both made more visible and judged more on their bodies, which are seen as a marker for their identity (including morality, trustworthiness and leadership) in a way that men's bodies are not' (p.239). Sometimes women may feel like tokens (Kanter, 1977a, b). Kanter (1977) further adds that for these women, stereotyping leads to women have difficulty to influence decision making. Such attitude leads to people treating these women with disrespect. When women are aware of this stereotyping or the fact that people are heavily exaggerating differences between male and female leadership, this tends to put pressure on women and they may feel demotivated and isolated (Kanter, 1977a,b). Women may even doubt their ability (Powell, 1993). Hopfl and Kostera (2003) claimed that women are not seen as representing only their identities, they are also seen as carrying sexualities, pregnancy and motherhood. Hence people tend to challenge the leadership of women by pointing to these roles. Sinclair (2013) found that "reducing women to their bodies and gendered roles is a time-honoured way for audiences to cope with anxieties about women with power" (pp.242). HOS explained that at times they have to question the way they have been socialised as they were not prepared to seamlessly navigate organisational life.

HOS narrated their confusion about whether they should be understanding and be blamed as 'soft' or display sternness and known as the iron lady. This confusion has been explained by Lord (1985) who talks about a leadership prototype. This idea is expanded by Schein (2001) who explained that there are some characteristics of management which are represented by male. Deaux and Taylor (1973) expanded on this idea and found that if women are successful then it is not due to effort but to luck. However, if women fail, then it is due to their lack of ability. If women tend to adopt a masculine type' of leadership, this leads to role conflicts (Heilman, Block & Martell, 1995) and they are also negatively labelled (Eagly, Makhijani & Klonsky, 1992). These women wondered whether fitting in necessarily imply adopting male styles of leadership. Gattung (2010) explained that she "was treated like an equal by my male

colleagues... but for me in a way it reinforced my being in 'male' mode" (pp.211). Adopting the norms of the winning group puts a toll on women as was mentioned by Pitman (2008).

HOS strongly believed that there exists an aura of prejudice toward women being in charge. In a study conducted by Eagly and Karau (2002), they found that prejudice toward women leaders come from the idea that women have communal attributes such as nurturing, affectionate, sympathetic and men have the "agentic" characteristics such as aggressive, ambitious, independent, self-confident. This explains why male are successful leaders. Additionally, if women do engage in stereotypically masculine or male-dominated behaviors such as those perceived as necessary in management and leadership positions, they are evaluated less favorably than men because they are violating their stereotypical gender roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Women have to face the fact that they are expected to be modest, quiet, selfless, and nurturing (Eagly & Carl, 2003). These characteristics are not associated with success and achievement as many institutions expect that leaders would be executive-oriented, take criticism, and work for the benefit of the organisation (Nelson & Levesque 2007). In the same line of thought even if women display transformational leadership, they are still regarded as not being skilled in task-oriented endeavours (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Karau & Makhijani, 1995). This type of prejudice is even present when there are discipline problems to deal with. Various studies have found that male leaders are seen more favourably than female leaders when disciplining juniors (Atwater, Carey & Waldman, 2001).

Women leaders mentioned that they see themselves as women first and then as leaders. They explained that for them this has always been the case and they are proud to be women and leaders. They realise that being women and leaders entail leading differently than men but they do not have any problem with that. They explained that leaders can be kind and considerate and devote time to building relationship with staff, to call staff by their names and to enquire about petty issues such as on family members. They prefer to have the collaboration of all staff than to have to overcome resistance. However, they say that as leaders they do not deny the fact that at times they tend to be more transactional than transformational. As long as they get the work done to their satisfaction, they do not find it difficult to swing from one end to another. This is in line with Yoder (2001) who asserts that women use a transformational style, while Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, van Engen (2003) find that women navigate between being transformational and transactional as this allows them to remain faithful to their communal values.

Female HOS reported that often when they used the participatory leadership style they are tagged as being 'soft'. Women are also sometimes seen as having values that are 'too soft' (Nixon & Chandler, 2011). In fact when women leaders were being authentic, many claimed that these 'efforts may be seen as disruptive and dangerous to the established patriarchal order' (Sinclair, 2010, p.246). Various studies have shown that although women have taken cognisance of that fact, they tend to remain authentic to their values, as they realise that taking a more male oriented leadership style would imply emotional censoring and suppression (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

HOS were very much aware of stereotyping of women leaders and these make leadership difficult for women. Various studies have suggested that leadership styles are also linked to stereotypes of women leader (Goff, 2005; Henderson, 2004). This leads to the fact that men are more socially accepted as leaders because they are depicted as task-oriented which would make them better leaders (Ryan & Haslan, 2007). The most common stereotypical beliefs

which were mentioned by the HOS were that women are unable to be competitive, cannot be decisive and are emotionally unstable and the most disturbing ones are those references made to the female gender/body. These types of stereotyping make women HOS nervous and unsure about their capabilities to lead.

### **Experiences of female Head of School about “Professional Development”**

There is indeed a challenge which comes with the professional development of women school leaders. During the interviews, women leaders explained that they did not have particular qualification to become HOS but the pre-requisite for such post was experience in the teaching profession, thus they got the post through a selection exercise and were promoted from being teachers to school leaders. When they were appointed they did not necessarily hold any specific qualifications in school leadership or management. However, upon appointment they are given one week of intensive induction. The women leaders were of the opinion that the induction course was too theory-based and too short. They also mentioned that several resource persons were invited and each dealt with a particular issue. There was very little link between the issues which were tackled. At the same time, there were very little interaction between the resource persons and the trainees. Trainees were not able to clarify queries or probe further on issues which they were interested in. In many cases the resource persons could not relate theory with practice as most of them have never been heads of schools. The examples which they provided lacked in-depth insights in leading schools. Such grievances resonate with the literature on professional development, in fact, various studies have found that professional development initiatives for school leaders have failed to adequately prepare them for fulfilling their roles (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Meyerson, 2005; Levine, 2005). Levine (2005) also claimed that these programmes may be irrelevant. As in the case of Mauritius, professional development is based on what the Education Authorities believe school leaders should know.

The HOS pointed out that they do realise how difficult their task would be and many went for professional development on their own initiative. However they are of the opinion that even these professional development courses did not manage to fully equip them with the skills and knowledge in order to efficiently manage their schools. Yet there were some attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice as they were involved in various activities like problem-based learning and role playing which helped them to explore various issues such as the use of data to measure school performance, methods of examining school's tone, culture and climate; understanding the linkages between standards, the curriculum and performance assessments; development of a strong sense of professionalism which corresponds to the expectations that the professional has of its members. HOS stated that there was minimal attention given to transforming theory into practice. This leads to the fact that there is need to examine school leaders' preparation programmes as well as determining the needs of development of current principals (Leithwood & Levin, 2008; Nicholson et al., 2005).

Another cause for concern would be that HOS explained that during their professional development they did not come across knowledge on the legal aspects which may be linked to schools and school management. They mentioned that they still do not know much about the Education Act, the Data Protection Act, Dangerous Drug Act and the Telecommunication Act, Convention on the Rights of Children and other legal issues. At school, students use a lot of information technology and there have been, for example, cases of cyber bullying, or students hacking the mails of other students and even nasty comments being posted on social networks. There have also been cases of teachers and non-teaching staff coming to work

whilst under the influence of alcohol. At times, teachers report cases of suspected child abuse. These women explained that they are not more equipped after their professional development to deal with such issues.

On the brighter side, women leaders acknowledged that through the course they got to understand the importance of using information technology in school management. They unanimously admitted that the course has developed their communication skills. They have learnt that using information technology will provide them with the help and support they need in the daily running of the school as it will help them to process information more quickly and more accurately. They have also come to realise how much more could be done at schools and in the classrooms if they were to use information technology more extensively. This would help them to free time to deal with other issues more effectively. However, they are not yet ready to use information technology to help in the preparation of the school timetable, though they are able to use productivity tools such as word-processing and spreadsheet. HOS admitted that their experience of professional development led them to realise how much more they need to learn in order to be able to use information technology. Now they realise that they could use internet and the web as a tool for communication and inquiry to enhance school management and to determine the performance of the school. Modules such as Communication skills help in overcoming inhibitions and thus make them feel more comfortable in front of an audience. They were made aware of the importance of effective communication if they want to achieve the vision and mission of the school, it's very important to be able to communicate with the stakeholders.

Participants appreciated the wide range of learning opportunities provided to them which enabled the development of basic leadership skills. They were able to discuss critically the different leadership theories, styles and skills. They now have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a school leader. They have discussed about the vision and mission statement and how to go about developing them in a school.

A major short coming which these women leaders talked about is that leadership is treated as a masculine concept. When leaders are mentioned only male counterpart are taken as example. Sometimes the neutral gender concept is adopted but never a 'she' mentioned. There was a general feeling of frustration vis a vis such type of disregard .They pointed out that no attention was given to the fact that there are now more and more women school leaders which implies that there are contexts and situations which women school leaders have to face which men school leaders will not. They mentioned that no gender issues are taken in the modules throughout the course. There is a serious gap in their professional development as far as this issue is concerned. This dissonance can be found in literature as well when Hennig and Jardin, (1977) and Zirkel and Gluckerman, (1984) mention that there are many studies which explain why women are underrepresented in school leadership positions, yet there is a paucity of research on the challenges which women leaders face as they struggle to come to terms with the demands of the job (Ortiz, 1979; Stockard, 1979).

## **Conclusion and future directions**

The study brings into focus the needs of women in term of professional development. Their main grievance as women HOS is:

The lack of the element of gender in their professional development programme which impinges in the way they lead schools. Heads of schools should be acquainted with research and knowledge concerning female leadership. Professional development which has to be provided should be able to bridge theory and praxis. The need for a 'professional development' to provide HOS with practical, proven, up-to-date approaches to a quality curriculum leadership, management as well as supervision is felt. Thus they would feel empowered and be able to advise on the development, selection of instructional materials such as textbooks, films and other technological applications at school as well as handling issues such as promotion of school-family-community partnerships, team building as well as apply transformational leadership. It will be only through an appropriate professional development that Female HOS would be able to rise above the stereotyping, gender bias, associated to them as women when they occupy such post.

### **Future Directions**

Today HOS are called to "restructure schools and implement new educational paradigms that focus on pedagogical findings, foster the ideals of a just and humane educational system and prepare the populace to make moral and ethical decisions in an ever-changing society" (Cline & Necochea, 2000, pp.157). This leads to the fact that there is a need to examine school leaders' preparation programmes as well as determining the needs of development of current principals (Howley et al., 2002; Leithwood & Levin, 2008; Nicholson et al., 2005).

We do concur with DeJaeghere, Williams, and Kyeyune (2008) who are of the opinion that it is important that school leaders contribute to the design of the programmes by "assessing their needs, identifying their strength and areas for improvement, and providing them resources and adaptive skills to lead complex and changing school environment" (pp.13). One size does not fit all. Erasmus and Westhuizen (1996) pertinently pointed out that a systematic approach to school leaders' professional development should be adopted because "If the beginning principals are to succeed, alternative training methods need to emerge" (pp.197).

We also believe that, a component of mentoring by both female and male experienced HOS could be incorporated into their professional development. This could be used to foster learning. Since these women leaders are in their first years of leading a school, they would surely benefit from the wisdom and experience acquired by their mentors. At the same time this mentoring should also aim at developing independence, autonomy and critical reflection in school leaders.

This research does reveal that there is a gap in the professional development as far as specificities of female HOS are concerned. In fact there is little information available on the types of professional development in which principals engage and also whether the professional development programmes are properly designed to meet the needs of school leaders. Knight (2007) stated, "after attending several unsuccessful training sessions, teachers [and principals] often lose their enthusiasm for new interventions, and each additional ineffective session makes it more and more difficult for them to embrace new ideas" (pp. 2). Another reason why the professional development needs of school leaders should be attended to, relates to the findings of Guskey and Yoon (2000). It was found that if professional development is to be efficient then there is need to consider the context, the process and the

content. Furthermore they point out that there is also need for professional development to be followed by systemic implementation, be driven by stakeholders and be sustained.

Female HOS should be provided with challenging and novel tasks and they should feel that they are in control of their learning. Furthermore, they should also have strategies to allow them to apply what they have learnt in everyday situations. Emphasis on transferability is crucial. Women HOS need to know how to be more proactive and look out for opportunities. They should become more at ease with making their intentions known and learn how to negotiate and how to instigate changes at school level so that they can operate in a more conducive environment. They also need to learn how to counteract stereotypes that imply that female leadership does not go hand in hand with effective leadership. In addition, they need professional development which does not propose to help them adapt their behaviours to fit into a male-dominated environment.

Several issues need to be considered in the professional development of female HOS, including how to be more self-promoting, how to be more confident or have more self-belief, how to hold on to their values and beliefs whilst demonstrating results and how to network with other HOS in order to share practices which could assist them in their progress. They need to learn not to let themselves be dominated by a limiting female archetype that places women in a cultural 'straight jacket' (Pitman, 2008).

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## **Zimbabwe Women and the Cultural Sector: A Review**

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This article was compiled by a team of researchers from Southern African Cultural Leadership (SACL), a European Union-supported cooperative that relies on the cultural sector in designing poverty reduction tactics in Southern Africa. The aim of this article is to secure more effective tools for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating women development in Zimbabwe's cultural sector by identifying gaps and trend changes, and by suggesting appropriate strategies for women development interventions.

In Zimbabwe, like many countries, when facing worrying levels of poverty women emerge particularly vulnerable, suffering most in terms of declining access to social services and social protection. "Zimbabwean women have been pushed to the periphery of political and economic life, struggling to survive," (2010: 23) writes Grace Kwinjeh. They become the 'safety net/cushion' when families face economic hardships, taking on several jobs in order to make ends meet (Malaba 2008: 5). This sentiment was reiterated by the Vice President, Joye Mujuru during the Zimbabwe facet of the *Women's Decade* launch in 2011. She assessed that many Zimbabwean women were not novices in entrepreneurship, having started at least one business to sustain their families during times of economic hardships or to augment household

income. To that end, the Third Session of the Seventh Parliament Meeting held in Harare this year saw 23 legislative bills introduced, including, among others, the 'Women's Council Bill,' which would help establish formal structures for coordinating the implementation of women's empowerment programmes in Zimbabwe. Although these bills initiate welcome debates in both government on issues specific to women, much more still needs to be done ad hoc in order to bring real empowerment to women.

Zimbabwe's cultural sector has considerable potential to raise women's income. It is a culturally diverse country, affording a wide variety of cultural products. Tourism enables a lucrative market for these diverse cultural goods. Yet, the cultural sector remains largely untapped.

Working from that standpoint, SACL's recommendation became clear: specifically that the cultural sector must be professionalized—the challenge thence became the approach on how to do that; how to balance demand of professions in Zimbabwe's cultural sector with the markets' need to support women within that profession. Key findings from SACL's studies have indicated a narrow skills base in specialized roles in the cultural sector. There have been efforts to create professionalize the cultural sector by organizations such as the Association for Women's Clubs run by Ms Sekai Holland and Jekesa Pfungwa / Vulinqondo, which operates in Harare and in Bulawayo; as well as the more remote areas around the cities. Yet, training initiatives geared for women remain inadequate, unable to keep up with current challenges in Zimbabwe's cultural sector.

This article is structured into five parts, including (1) context and methodology; (2) women demographic profiles; (3) women employment, women unemployment and women entrepreneurship; (4) SACL training programmes for women; and (5) final recommendations.

### Context and Methodology:

A variety of approaches have been used to document and compile this article, including quantitative and qualitative. Statistical data came from different surveys, including those conducted by *Zimbabwe Trust*, *Zimstats* and *Zimbabwe Demographic Profile*. Published and unpublished research reports with relevant information on women in the cultural sector and on government policies involving the cultural sector were also sourced. Individual questionnaires were distributed by SACL both to women participating in training programmes and to those organizations or individuals conducting the training. Key stakeholders also were interviewed individually and as part of focus-group discussions (focus-groups ranged from three members to 26 members). SACL's own training programmes enabled key case studies for the article. SACL supports a variety of women training programmes in both Bulawayo and Harare; and provide invaluable accounts on women's experiences in the cultural sector.

Culture has been adopted as part of the European Union's vision of development cooperation, and is considered crucial to the EU's policy framework in the area of human development. Following from the EU Commission, "culture" in this article is understood "in its multiple facets, referring both to the fine arts, other forms of artistic expressions, cultural goods and services, and to the anthropological meaning. It is the

basis for a symbolic world of meanings, beliefs, values, traditions which are expressed in language, art, religion and myths” (European Commission 2010: 4). From this broad definition, a variety of disciplines fall under the term of “culture.” However, for purposes of this study, those disciplines most directly affecting Zimbabwe stakeholders have been marked as the dramatic arts, the visual arts, the literary arts and music.

According to *The Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust*, women comprise only 30% of Zimbabweans working within the cultural sector (Buher et al 2009: 68). This low number, SACL reports, stems in part because of the stereotyped perceptions regarding women participating in the cultural sector. Rigid social expectations may discourage women from participating in social activities occurring at night or from attending events that involve extended travel from their home cities or villages. Attending art gallery openings, museum exhibits or music concerts, as required by the cultural sector, may become difficult if not impossible.

Likewise, in Zimbabwe, women are “traditionally brought up to associate making money with immorality” (Chitsike 2000: 71). The Shona expression *anoda mari sehure* (‘she wants to make money like a prostitute’) is recognized as an example of what challenges may emerge for women looking to establish businesses within the cultural sector. Writes Colletah Chitsike; Zimbabwean women “are permitted to want money, but not large sums of money. When they have it, they have to hide the fact, neither showing it nor claiming that they have earned it due to personal success” (2000: 73). Better education on the different ways entrepreneurship is viewed by gender, as a result, is pinpointed by SACL as an important step in securing women’s

successful participation in the cultural sector, placed alongside the need for skills training in the sector. A speaker during the launch of the *Women'd Decade*, as example, noted how culture has not sufficiently evolved to locate the woman outside the home, which has further curtailed women's ambitions to grow their enterprises to levels that may seem to affect their "Home duties."

### Demographics:

This section broadly deals with the current demographic status of women in Zimbabwe more generally, providing analysis and description of the demographics and vulnerability variables. According to figures released by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in the first quarter of 2013, literacy in Zimbabwe stood at 93%. However males make up 70% of all the students receiving Higher and Tertiary education. Congruently the professional workforce in Zimbabwe has a large tilt in favor of males with only 11% in formal employment. As a result, most women have become enterprising to support their families; and it is they who make up the majority involved in informal employment such as buying and selling, mobile kitchens, baking, hairdressing, cross border trading, etc. The 2012 *Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey* (ZAMPS) cited that only 25% of Zimbabwean women read a newspaper at least once in 7 days compared to men who make up almost double that figure.

This information shows that women continue to be marginalized with regards to economic growth, and are provided few opportunities to join in participative capacity building initiatives. Practical training in small business management is therefore indispensable, because women do not have the same access to education as their male counterparts in Zimbabwe; where it is still prevalent that women should be groomed



to be wives; and where education for women is regarded as an unnecessary expense. SACL research shows that it is imperative to train women on how they can contribute to the formal sector; to provide them with specific support on how they can grow informal businesses into strategic companies/partnerships; to help them establish sustainable incomes through different generating projects; and to encourage them to view entrepreneurship from the angle of ‘employer.’

#### Women Employment, Women Unemployment and Women Entrepreneurship:

Increasing opportunities and creating spaces for women economic participation is a challenge throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Diagnostic reports reveal that very few Sub-Saharan women are participating in the economy. This exclusion of women does not only perpetuate inequalities in Zimbabwe, it also denies the affected women and their families the opportunity to step out of poverty. It is important to recognize that such a state of affairs—where women have limited opportunities to participate in the economy—is a potential security threat for the country. Therefore, the need to put in place interventions that are informed by research on the status of women is crucial.

Like other organizations working with women, SACL recognizes that women economic participation is essential for purposes of poverty eradication. Yet, that process of participation should be made through securing women’s engagement in society, including bettering education, providing effective healthcare, and securing wellbeing. Reports show that relatively few Zimbabwean women serve as entrepreneurs largely because they lack the requisite skills to enter the labor market and they lack necessary capital to invest in education or to start a business.

In tackling economic participation by women, the dual nature of Zimbabwe's economy must be recognized. This duality is manifested in the formal and informal sectors of the economy. The formal sector is mainly dominated by big business owning most of the wealth of Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the informal sector is mainly made up of the poor who are often struggling to survive. As a result of the Zimbabwean economy being largely driven by big business there is potential for small and medium enterprises to be affected negatively. These businesses are not in a position to compete fairly with big business in the open market. An example that comes to mind is the revitalization of shopping centers, which has adversely affected local small and medium enterprises (from thenceforth referred in this article as SMEs). SMEs and cooperatives that relied on importing goods mainly from South Africa to sell locally are an example of businesses that have been affected. These enterprises thrived on selling to a localized customer base, something which is no longer viable anymore due to the emergence of hyper-markets such as OK Stores, Spar retail chains and more recently the coming of Pick n' Pay stores to Zimbabwe. These stores have a much larger capital base; can afford to make bulk purchases, which means they can procure goods cheaper. Eventually they take away the only competitive advantage that small enterprises and cooperatives had, that of providing goods to a local customer base because it is cheaper only taking into account commuting costs to shopping centers. However, this is not the case anymore, as even including commuting costs, these big retailers still offer significant saving opportunities for the consumers. In Glen View Township there used to be small shopping places that serviced the local consumers. These shops have since closed down, losing customers to big business; additionally, other big stores are purchasing land to build 'mega stores' in these communities, making it close to impossible for

smaller businesses to survive at all. This is the case in many centers throughout the major cities of Zimbabwe.

Entrepreneurship is another key area for participation of women in Zimbabwe's cultural sector. One area of entrepreneurship that has not been fully exploited is women cooperatives. When asked about cooperatives, most women discuss funeral clubs or monthly rotational money clubs. There does not appear to be a collective effort to utilize the investment funds to build wealth or create businesses. To that end, SACL has included in its women entrepreneurial training a host of tangible ideas on how to maximize the success of cooperatives, including accessing and applying for additional funding. As a result of SACL, several new women cooperatives have formed in Zimbabwe.

Women cooperatives may take a variety of forms, but all involve a form of pooling of funds. One effective form witnessed by SACL is the 'contribution club'—where women contribute monthly for 12 months. On the 12th month they as a collective purchase household groceries and distribute equally among themselves. As SACL's research shows, this type of cooperative helps participants with simple terms of investing; it is the suggestion of SACL that continued training in cooperatives, particularly 'contribution clubs,' will generate sustainable benefits for the widest number of women, supporting them through the challenges of saving money and financial planning.

One form of cooperative pinpointed by SACL research to be problematic is that cooperative type that loans out the money that would have otherwise have been

pooled. In loaning their monies, cooperative members then ask for a fixed interest, usually 20% over 30 days. The major, reoccurring problem has been the lack of an effective method to recover money from problematic borrowers. The women in these collectives seem to have little or no recourse, legal or otherwise, to address defaulters. These particular types of cooperatives could benefit from being taught other forms of investing; ones that can yield a good profit yet carry lower risk.

Women's economic participation should be located in the broad context of the policies of Zimbabwe, including education and skills development policies, policy on cooperatives and policies on supporting entrepreneurship. Government support for the cultural sector has been and continues to be limited in Zimbabwe. Those policies that restrict freedoms of speech have had a particularly negative impact on the cultural sector, stifling creativity specifically in the dramatic and visual arts.

Making a change to Zimbabwe's cultural policies is not easy. As indicated by SACL research, the cultural sector is regarded largely as part of the entertainment industry. There exists little data or research that discusses the cultural sector outside of its relationship to entertainment. This lack of available documentation has made it difficult to convince Zimbabwe government to increase funding or to change policies. As a result, this article—and other such studies on Zimbabwe's cultural sector—become crucial to strengthening Zimbabwe's cultural sector. This research will enable better-supported arguments on cultural policies to take place at local and national levels, which could lead to better policies and legislation in support of the cultural sector.

Zimbabwe's government recently established the *Women's Development Fund* to provide financial assistance to women in need. Loans were provided through the Fund without the need for collateral security; US\$1million was allocated the fund under the current budget. Unfortunately, many of the women participating in the funding programme have been unable to repay their loans, placing further financial strain on women would-be-entrepreneurs. While the methods implemented in order to recover the amounts may be considered harsh, the requirements to access these loans have been tightened, with only the most viable business models now considered for funding.

Clearly the cultural sector is a place for growth that, if properly cultivated, can contribute meaningfully to the economic development of women in Zimbabwe. The fact that women are heads of over 60% of households in Zimbabwe not only makes strengthening the cultural sector desirable, but important for the nation and the generations to come.

### SACL Programmes

One key area in which education empowers individuals to participate meaningfully is through access to the labor market. The amount and quality of education received by individuals is strongly associated with the probability of finding employment and with the level of wages one can expect to earn. For this reason, education is widely regarded as a key mechanism for bringing about transformation, a reduction in unemployment and the eradication of poverty.

At SACL's core has been to encourage economic participation through skills

development, job creation and entrepreneurship. Education and skills development are central in increasing the chances of Zimbabweans to participate in their economy but are also part of a mandate to make women empowerment holistic, encompassing skills, finance technology and legislature. Yet, women face particular challenges in gaining entry into the cultural sector (as outlined in this article). Taking into account the challenges specific to women, SACL introduced training initiatives that specifically target women needs. These are discussed below. What we found particularly striking was that, in regards to the women involved in SACL training, income garnered by these women improved not just the quality of their lives but their entire families as well. Many women noted how their income would provide school attendance for their children and regular meals for their families. Their decisions to participate in SACL's business training, therefore, were made not necessarily out of a desire to start a business but rather as a quest to gain economic independence for themselves and their families.

SACL reports on training shows that employment creation and support for entrepreneurship should form the core of current interventions in the area of women economic participation in the cultural sector. This includes data on informal businesses owned by women and the impact of the skill development interventions in improving employability. Particularly useful has been SACL's training on how to keep financial records. Those women who are already heading their own businesses confessed that they did not keep financial records. This is worrisome not only because it suggests that some may not be complying with Zimbabwean law but also because they are depriving themselves of using their financial records as an opportunity to improve their businesses. Some women remarked that, even if they

have not yet started a business, this training in record keeping has helped them with day-to-day chores in their households, including balancing a checkbook and ‘saving money for a rainy day.’

SACL research has also shown that many women are unfamiliar with the process required to register their businesses. Many, in fact, have been involved with businesses that are not yet registered. Without proper registration these women are ineligible to receive what little funding exists for small business owners. As part of SACL training, then, women were provided step-by-step instructions on how to register their businesses. By registering through SACL initiatives, these women businesses are now able to access certain business opportunities, including those offered by the government.

#### Final Recommendations:

As has been made clear in this article, supporting women to enter the cultural sector economy is an important part of women development in general. Furthermore, the professionalization of women development has benefits to entire families as well as the Zimbabwe economy as a whole. SACL asserts that women are the future of the country and should be given the chance and platforms to engage in women development and the growth of the country and the cultural sector. To that end, SACL espouses a grassroots approach to gender equality and fosters sustainability by engaging with and alongside young women movements.

The challenges facing women development includes lack of partnerships. Lack of clear government policy/legislation that supports women entrepreneurs in meaningful

and sustainable ways is a particular challenge. Operating business without knowledge of professional business structures is a huge impediment for women development. Because women are also breadwinners more often than not they service home needs ahead of business, due diligence which result in shortfalls in the business. SACL looks for long-term engagement with Zimbabwe's women by establishing a network and system that facilitates a database of resources available for women's economic empowerment at both national and international levels.

A further issue that needs to be addressed is that women entrepreneurship needs a wider range of placement opportunities. Identifying where women who acquired skills in their informal settings can apply those skills in a formal environment can be one example of making positive change. This could, as example, take the form of a baking enterprise hiring apprentices to help with day-to-day running of the enterprise—while also providing training on how to bake and how to run a baking enterprise. Such initiatives can contribute to social and human development in ways different from those pursued by social work or community development: these entrepreneurial initiatives have the capacity to support the sustainable development of the cultural sector by building capacities and by facilitating exchanges between mentor and apprentice. Women could also benefit from creating synergies with men who are well placed in the economic sector. Women should be coached to advance their agendas by building solidarity on common causes that transcends partisan interests as political polarities are a spasmodic challenge and in the long term hampers any collective growth that women stand to achieve without these intermissions.

Research from this article shows that we must capitalize on the benefits that women



development in the cultural sector have in Zimbabwe. Doing so will have considerable impact on the ability to enhance human capital and economic potential across Zimbabwe. The same also applies to working with and optimizing women's groups that are already functioning as this supports the popular sentiment echoed during the *Women's Decade* launch, that women should continue to work in those areas deemed most relevant to and congruent with the needs of Zimbabwe as a whole; and that, rather than completely bunking current government-instituted entrepreneurial programmes, be educated on how to extend and improve upon those current systems.

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