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Journal of Gender and Power is aimed at providing an international forum for discussing various issues and processes of gender construction. It is a scholarly, interdisciplinary journal, which features articles in all fields of gender studies, drawing on various paradigms and approaches. We invite scholars to submit articles and reviews reporting on theoretical considerations and empirical research.

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BOOK AND JOURNAL REVIEWS

Editor's Preface

This volume of „Journal of Gender and Power" includes articles devoted to gender issues in developing countries. Six articles analyse various problems in Africa: five in Nigeria and one in Zimbabwe. Besides, two articles are written about Asian countries: Nepal and Bangladesh. They all together give an fascinating picture of gender roles in these, economically and politically marginalized parts of the world. They show how womanhood and manhood are there socially constructed. They present the dynamics of inequality and marginalization, in the context of social, economic and cultural condition; but also in light of socialization and stratification processes. Also the controversies related to African feminism and African maternity are considered, in the context of patriarchal society. In some cases Authors confront traditional views and stereotypes on gender roles with modern social changes. But they concentrate their attention not only on diagnosis and explanations of researched issues. Often they are proponents of social change aimed at receiving equality in the relationship between women and men; in marriage, in workplace, in sustainable excess to energy consumption, in access to medical knowledge and health education. So, this is a research aimed at changing the injustice social reality.

Let me give here some examples, which take into account educational/socialization issues. Oluwaseun Olanrewaju and Omolara Awogbayila write: „In promoting gender parity, gender equality as a subject should be inculcated into the school curricula at both primary and secondary levels in order to sensitize children [...] at an early age". And Segilola Yewande Oladejo is convinced „that health education programs should be undertaken by communities to improve women's awareness". There is no doubt that idea of women's emancipation is written into all of texts in this volume.

The situation of women in Africa and also in most Asian countries still symbolize the gender inequality and discrimination of women in the

world. And this situation is different, at least to the certain extent from the reality of Western world. I hope that this volume will be another piece of contribution to understand of need to make a permanent effort to support progressive movements in developing countries which act for emancipation of women.

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Editor-in-Chief

ARTICLES

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Traditional Gender Roles and Marriage: A Case Study of Residents in Maryland Lagos State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT. A recent report by the World Economic Forum on Global Gender Gap finds that the possibility of achieving gender equality is not in the offing. In Nigeria, discussions on gender inequality have gained more prominence in the last two decades, attracting the interest of policy makers, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), development experts as well as academics. This study was an attempt to evaluate the perception of gender by married men and women. Specifically, it focused on young married men and women between the ages of 25–40, residing in Maryland, Lagos state. The study adopts the primary research method through close ended questionnaires. Findings from the study reveal that majority of the respondents support traditional concept of gender. However, there is a decline in gender stereotype with respect to gender roles between husbands and wives. The study recommends that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should adopt a more comprehensive approach of advocacy that will influence the orientation of the citizens on the benefits of achieving gender equality.

KEYWORDS: marriage, gender, perception, inequality, equality

Introduction

Gender is socially and culturally constructed and has nothing to do with biological differences. Several literature (Ajayi, 2008; Abegunde, 2014; Anyalebechi, 2016; Olanrewaju, 2018) have critically examined the subjugation of women through gender defined roles. Conversely, other scholarly works (Leith-Ross, 1939; Amadiume, 1987) have explored the strength of women as industrious, leaders and decision makers. Notwithstanding the above, women in various countries of the world are marginalized and subjugated. Critically, the need to change this narrative becomes impera-

tive considering the positive contribution of women to various fields of endeavour in recent years. Indeed, it can be asserted that the contemporary Nigerian woman is in many ways different from the traditional woman of old. In recent years, women such as late Professor Dora Akunliyi (former Director General of NAFDAC) Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala (Director-General of World Trade Organization and former minister of finance), Dr. Oby Ezekwnsili (former minister of education), reputable and successful businesswomen such as, Mrs. Ibukun Awosika and Mrs. Folorunso Alakija have held positions exclusive to men and contributed to the socio-economic development of Nigeria. Although, women are beginning to gain recognition and prominence, it should be noted that gender inequality has undermined the majority of women from contributing to the development of Nigeria.

Scholarly articles on gender have explored the concept from a wide range of perspectives, such as; gender and politics (Randall, 1987; Uku, 1992; Awofeso & Odeyemi, 2014), gender and culture (Para-Mallam, 2010; Makama, 2013; Neculăesei, 2015; Okeoma, 2017), gender and justice (Gheaus, 2012; Odiaka, 2013; Olanrewaju, 2018), gender and religion (Klingorová & Havlíček, 2015; Olasupo, 2016; Sibani, 2017), gender and leadership (Applebaum, Audit & Miller, 2003; Dunn, Gerlach & Adrienne, 2014; Górska, 2016), gender roles differentiation (Jolliffe, 1989; Fennell & Walker, 2003; Omadjohwoefe, 2011). This study attempts to interrogate the influence of gender on the marital roles and responsibilities of young couples. It evaluates the perception of gender by married men and women. Objectively, this study seeks to analyse how the perception of gender by married men and women within the age bracket of 25–40 years influence gender roles in marriages. Section one presents the background of the research. Section two conceptualizes gender and reviews relevant literature related to the research topic. Section three examines the research method. Section four analyses the research findings. Section five concludes the study and offers recommendations as well as issues for further study.

Conceptual Clarifications

Gender Power Relations

Gender power relations define the values attached to the respective roles of men and women in society. This power play between men and women often relegates women to subordinate roles. Gender power rela-

tions in Nigeria, just like in many other African countries take a patriarchal dimension that reinforces gender inequality against women (Abdullahi, Adekeye & Shehu, 2011). Gender inequality against women cuts across cultural, religious, educational, as well as professional spheres and set the doubt in motion with respect to the prospect of ever achieving equality between men and women.

Gender Roles

Gender roles are widely held beliefs and stereotypes about sexual and psychological differences between males and females. Gender roles encompass a range of behaviours that are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex. Blackstone (2013, p. 335) elucidates that "Gender roles are the product of the interactions between individuals and their environments". Gender roles are socially constructed and have played significant part in creating structural barriers that enforce gender stereotype against women in Nigeria.

Gender Equality

Gender equality refers to achieving parity between men and women in every facet of human endeavour; politics, economy, education, marriage, religion, to mention but a few. It is an integral element of a development strategy that enables both men and women to contribute to the socio-economic development of a nation without discrimination. To this end, gender equality has the potential to reduce the level of poverty among women in Nigeria and improve their standard of living (Lawal, Ayoade & Taiwo, 2016). The concept of gender equality seeks to promote equal participation and representation of women in issues of national concern. Fundamentally, gender equality will ensure that the rights of women are respected and protected.

Research Questions

1. What percentage of the respondents supports traditional gender roles?
2. How does gender influence the marital roles and responsibilities of the respondents?

Literature Review

Traditional gender stereotypes promote patriarchy and shape gender roles in families and marriages. Several Scholars; Makama, 2013; Igwe & Akolokwu, 2015; Ume, Ali & Ashfaq, 2016; Mudau & Obadire, 2017 have all supported the view that cultural practices sustain gender roles and stereotyping in marriages. In their study, Thompson and Walker (1989) explicate that men and women are financially responsible for the family, however most men feel providing for their family is their sole responsibility and often make an attempt to resist their wives as co-providers. Loscocco and Walzer (2013, p. 1) emphasize that "marriages are situated in a highly gendered symbolic culture" and as a result, couples castigate one another for the problems faced in their marriages, without realizing that some of these problems stem from the social construction of gender and its influence on marriages (Stewart et al., 1997). In Nigeria, the cultural practice that endorses the man as the head of the family/breadwinner is more pronounced. For most men, providing for their families buttresses their level of success and reassures them of their male dominance in a society that promotes gender inequality. Aluko (2015) identifies that women contribute to the economic development of their respective communities; however this has not translated to equal decision making power between couples in the household. The belief in traditional cultures that assert the man as the head of the family promotes men to become domineering and authoritative husbands. Adams and Olajumoke (2016) support the view that patriarchal culture in Nigeria is deeply entrenched and confines women to traditional roles as house keepers, child bearers as well as child rearers, regardless of a woman's level of education.

Although, most literature on gender roles support the conventional argument that social construction of gender promotes inequality against women. In recent years, research works suggest that the inequalities witnessed as a result of gender roles have reduced as more women contribute to family upkeep. In their article, social change and traditional gender roles in Lagos State, Yusuf and Ajiboye (2014) opine that the traditional roles assigned to women, such as taking care of children and engaging in house chores are no longer the exclusive preserve of women because more women now seek employment to support their families. Akanle, Adesina and Nwaobiala (2018) note that there is an emergence of new gender roles in the family reconstructed by the social realities of urban settings. This paradigm shift has placed on women the sole responsibility of catering for

their families. However, catering for the family creates overbearing challenges for women that are less educated and earn meagre salaries (Eboiyehi, Muoghalu & Bankole, 2016). Drawing from this critique, the study builds on existing literature to unpack the subject matter of research.

Methodology

This study adopts the primary research method. Primary research produces first-hand information, because researchers gather data directly from the participants. Data were gathered through close-ended questionnaires and analysed using a quantitative approach to produce empirical findings. The empirical findings were examined in the context of existing literature on family and gender roles. Although, primary research ensures that data is derived directly from the respondents, however, it is pertinent to understand that a researcher's bias and interpretation of events may affect the outcome of the research. Hence, the researchers adopt the view which recognizes that researchers should be self-reflexive on their personal views to avoid bias. This research made use of close ended, check box questionnaires as its instrument of research. A close ended or structured questionnaire as Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) describe, ask questions that are accompanied by a list of all possible alternatives from which respondents select the answer that best describe their situation.

To draw its sample, this research applied the purposive sampling technique. Initially, 122 local residents in Maryland, Lagos were selected to participate in the research through the researchers existing contacts in their community. However, during the course of the research, 90 additional residents were contacted through snowballing technique, which enabled the researchers to establish contact with other residents that have the same characteristics with the initial contacts (respondents). However, of the 212 respondents, 5 did not complete the questionnaires. As a result, data analysis was based on the responses from 207 respondents. Statistical tools in the mode of frequency and percentage were applied to present results in tabular form. Although, Walliman (2006, p. 75) affirms that "to be able to make accurate judgments about a population from a sample, the sample should be as representative as possible''. Nonetheless, the purposive sampling technique provides valuable data on the perception of gender by the respondents and its broader connection to gender roles between couples.

Findings

Table 1. Information of the respondents based on attributes

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Sex		
Male	93	45.0
Female	114	55.0
Total	**207**	**100**
Age Category		
25–30	38	18.4
31–35	68	32.9
36–40	101	48.7
Total	**207**	**100**
Number of years married		
10 years and above	58	28.1
6–10 years	92	44.4
1–5 years	57	27.5
Total	**207**	**100**
Education		
Post Graduate	44	21.3
Higher Institution	129	62.3
Secondary School	34	16.4
Primary School	0	0.0
Total	**207**	**100**
Occupation		
Employed	198	95.7
Unemployed	9	4.3
Total	**207**	**100**

Table 1 above shows that respondents that have been married for 6–10 years have the highest frequency (44.4%), while those that have been married for 1–5 years have the lowest frequency (27.5%). Furthermore, more females (55%) participated in the study. With respect to age, 48.7% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 36–40 and 18.4% are within the age bracket of 25–30. 62.3% of the respondents attended higher institution, while 21.3% proceeded to post graduate school. Significantly, the

educational background of the 207 respondents exceeds primary school and majority (95.7%) are employed.

Table 2. Frequency of responses to questions on the perception of gender and gender roles by the respondents

S/N	Questions	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1	**Do you support traditional gender roles? (E.g. Men are the sole breadwinners and Women should take care of house chores)**		
	Yes, that should be the norm in every family	154	74.4
	No, it's 21st century. Women should support the family financially	53	25.6
	Total	**207**	**100**
2	**Who pays the bills for upkeep of the home?**		
	Husband	64	31.0
	Wife	0	0.0
	Both (Equally)	27	13.0
	Both (Husband pay more)	111	53.6
	Both (Wife pays more)	5	2.4
	Total	**207**	**100**
3	**Who does the house chores?**		
	Husband	0	0.0
	Wife	117	56.5
	Both (husband and Wife)	42	20.3
	Children	21	10.1
	House-help	27	13.1
	Total	**207**	**100**
4	**Who takes decisions on important family matters?**		
	My husband takes decisions on important family matters	68	32.9
	My wife takes decisions on important family matters	0	0.0
	Both of us take decisions on important family matters	139	67.1
	Total	**207**	**100**

5	**Finally, do you think there should be absolute gender equality? (E.g. no job role restrictions and equal pays, equal house chore share at home.**		
	Yes, there should be gender equality	179	86.5
	No, men should always be above women	28	13.5
	Total	**207**	**100**

As reflected in Table 2, a high percentage (74.4%) of the respondents supports traditional gender roles. It was also observed that both couples pay the bills for upkeep of the home. However, 53.6% indicated that husbands pay more of the bills for the upkeep of the home. According to 56.5% of the respondents, husbands and wives engage in house chores. Responses to the question on who takes the decision on important family matters show that 67.1% of couples jointly take decisions on important family matters. As evident from the responses, decisions on important family matters are not solely taken by the wives. Lastly, 86.5% of the respondents identified their support for gender equality.

Discussion

The study reveals that 74.4% of the respondents support traditional gender roles. As observed, most of the respondents believe that men should be the breadwinners of their families, while 25.6% avowed that women should work to support the family. This indicates that the younger generation of married men and women support the gender stereotype that bestows on the husband the financial responsibilities of providing for the family. The study supports the works of (Para-Mallam, 2010; Makama, 2013; Neculăesei, 2015; Okeoma, 2017) that the process of socialisation in every culture encompasses the cultural expectations of male and female behaviours. Gender stereotypes are derived from cultural values and the social construction of gender. Although majority of respondents reported that men should be the breadwinner of their families. However, responses indicated that women contribute to family upkeep. 13% of the respondents stated that both husbands and wives share the bills for the upkeep of the home equally, while 53.6% responded that the husbands bear more financial responsibilities. Sharing of financial responsibilities

between couples' benefits men and reduces their financial burdens. Conversely, receiving financial support from their wives creates in men the fear of losing their male ego and dominance (Zuo & Tang, 2000). The study reflects that 31% of men solely pay the bills for the upkeep of the home. As it appears, the social construction of gender more often depicted as promoting gender inequality against women also creates challenges for men. The idea of husband deriving his masculinity from providing for his family conforms to the traditional gender stereotype defined by society and places enormous responsibilities on the husband in the marriage. In this regard, Brown (2016) admits that the provider role of a man cannot be overemphasized, and young men should be nurtured in their transition to adulthood to understand their important roles as providers for their families.

Gender role with respect to house chores is gradually shifting from being the sole responsibility of women as more men engage in house chores to support their wives. In this study, 20.3% of the respondents acknowledge that both the husband and wife engage in house chores. This view supports the works of (Anderson 1999; Fernandez et al., 2016) that men are taking up increasing responsibilities with respect to house chores. Significantly, 56.5% of responses signified that performing house chores is the sole responsibility of the wife, while there was no positive response to signify that performing house cores is the sole responsibility of husbands. These responses agree with earlier submissions by Adesina (2013), Akanle (2014) and Cerrato and Eva (2018) that, although men participate in house chores, however there is no equilibrium with regards to the tasks performed by men/husbands and women/wives. In taking important family decisions, 67.1% of the respondents reported that couples take decisions jointly. The responses imply a shift from the gender norm that affirms the role of the man/husband as the sole decision maker on important family matters (Akanle, Adesina & Ogbimi, 2016). However, the above average response of 67.1% indicates that more effort is required to achieve gender equality with respect to decision making in the family. More so, 32.9% of the respondents acknowledge the man/husband as the sole decision maker. The percentage of respondents that acknowledge men as the sole decision maker is adduced to the stereotype gender role ascribed to men as the head of the family. Yusuf and Ajiboye (2014) emphasize that in contemporary Lagos, women are beginning to support with provision of family needs. However, the male is still revered as the head of the family.

As indicated from the study, 86.5% of the respondents express their support for gender equality. The percentage of respondents that support gender equality creates contrast when juxtaposed to the percentage (74.4%) of respondents that support traditional gender roles. Despite the advocacy for gender equality by Inter-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Women's Rights Movement, the socio-cultural construction of gender remains deeply rooted in defining gender roles in the society. Apparently, majority of people in society clamour for gender equality while their actions reflect and support gender inequality. Biased social attitudes strengthen gender inequality and impede the efforts made towards achieving gender equality.

Delimitations of the Study

The fieldwork faced several challenges which included a lack of co-operation by some residents who viewed the researchers as interlopers. Secondly, some of the residents refused to cooperate with the researchers for fear of revealing their identities and information. Thirdly, reliance on the meager resources of the researchers and the lack of external funding limited the depth of the research. In addition, some residents declined to participate in this research because of religious reasons. Their inputs could have widened the scope of the study. Lastly, the focus of this research on one particular locality (Maryland), limits the findings considering that they may not necessarily be applicable in other cases. Notwithstanding the limitations, the analysis of data gathered during the fieldwork provided considerable and deep insight into the subject matter of research.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As observed from this research, gender stereotype influences the roles undertaken by young couples in their marriages. Although, there is a variance in recent years considering that men partake in the responsibilities and tasks traditionally undertaken by women and women also participate in the traditional roles undertaken by men. However, what is yet to be achieved is a fundamental paradigm shift from the traditional gender

norm towards a more liberal and receptive orientation that embraces gender equality. Both men and women are not truly disposed to changing the narrative. Women are not willing to take financial responsibility with men equally for the upkeep of the home, even though this places enormous financial burdens on men. On the other hand, men will not share domestic chores with women equally because of their ego and pride. While gender equality may be achievable, there is no likelihood that the narrative will change anytime soon. This is particularly so considering that the social construction of gender has established a deeply rooted norm that defines the behavioural expectations of people.

In promoting gender parity, gender equality as a subject should be inculcated into the school curricula at both primary and secondary levels in order to sensitize children on gender equality at an early age. In advocating for gender equality, NGOs should adopt a more comprehensive and effective approach of advocacy that will influence the orientation of the citizens, more importantly the youths. This study exposes that the dimension of gender inequality is binary, and men are equally vulnerable to its consequences. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and NGOs should therefore focus on advocacy that recognizes gender discriminations against men, in order to achieve a balance in their advocacy for gender equality.

Issues for further study

Firstly, it is important to expand the scope of research to capture the subject matter of research from a broader study that will cover a larger population from multiple study areas. Secondly, it is suggested that research be conducted to assess the fulfillment of couples vis-à-vis the gender roles they are constrained to perform in their marriages. Thirdly, it is equally necessary to study how gender roles play out in homes where women are the sole providers for their families. Regardless of the above, this study is significant in lending a voice against gender inequality, as it exposes that gender stereotype remains a deep-rooted challenge confronting our society.

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Gender Roles on Energy Consumption for Sustainability: A Case of Kathmandu Urban Households

ABSTRACT. Sustainability has become a global topic and is pursued in all countries along South Asia—Nepal, that it has become part of the political agenda, specifically visible in Kathmandu, the country's capital. Household is one of the highest energy-consuming sectors, and women have a higher responsibility for household chores in most cases. However, women are still lagged in the energy sector. The energy studies are more focused on technical policy with limitations of the gender lens. This study analyzes energy, gender, and sustainability interlinkage as a common goal and identifies the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of energy consumption from a gender perspective in Kathmandu's. The findings show that female participation in energy decisions is likely to increase in female-headed families. Kathmandu urban women still have lack of knowledge, the right information, and affordability. The overall sustainability study indicates that the energy policy needs to be a gender-neutral policy. Conclusively, innovative technical interventions can be combined with the subsidy, increase women's participation to reduce inequality, encourage efficient cooking technology to reduce the nation's financial burden.

KEYWORDS: sustainability, energy, gender, household, quality of life, Kathmandu

Introduction

Energy and gender integration are still in policy debates for the last two decades. Most studies acknowledge that women's participation in

the energy sector contributes significantly to achieving global energy efficiency goals for sustainable development (Oparaocha & Dutta, 2011; Clancy et al., 2016; Habtezion, 2016). Habtezion (2016) accentuates that energy acts as a blood vein in economic development and is considered crucial in accomplishing sustainable development goals (SDGs). The energy consumption pattern depends on diverse practices in everyday culture and settings (Barr & Prillwitz, 2013). Men and women have different roles and control over the resources within households. Household energy consumption in the world accounts for a 35% share of total energy, and household has proved the most gendered spheres of society in most cultures (Barr & Prillwitz, 2013; IEA, 2020). WHO's (2006) study identifies that women's low participation is a significant barrier in development. It denotes that women have a pivotal role in the transition towards sustainable energy practices as they are the primary energy users in the households (Milne, 2003). However, women are mostly ignored in energy-related decisions and industries, ignoring women's productive activities (Ceceiski, 1995; UNDP, 2014). It indicates the limitations of real energy users' information in energy-related activities generating the information gap between users and policymakers. It claims that gender information in energy decisions plays an essential role in sustainable energy; however, it has scant studies of gender relations and roles on economic, social, and environmental aspects related to energy consumption. This study attempted to highlight this stance and develop sustainable indicators at the contextual level with references to a global vision that identifies the actual Kathmandu context from a gender lens on the sustainable energy path.

Statement of Problem

In most societies of most countries, such as Nepal, household chores are taken as women's primary responsibilities. Numerous studies (Clancy et al., 2016; Habtezion, 2016; Oberhauser, 2017) have proved that modern energy services used in households have improved women's socio-economic status and improved health consequences. Recognizing the importance of the gender dimension in energy policies, the seventh SDG has prioritized proper access to clean and affordable energy as universal rights (United Nations, 2016). The fifth goal emphasized gender as an inseparable entity in energy justice for sustainability. Additional-

ly, it highlights that expanding energy access must go beyond meeting basic needs: improving economic take-off conditions. It emphasizes on innovation, sustainable consumption, and justice (Habtezion, 2016). Development research shows that increasing women's management participation can achieve a win-win situation for both women and policy management (Köhlin et al., 2011). It advises that women should have an equal role in energy decisions and accessibility in all development activities.

Nepal is one of the least energy-consuming countries globally; however, it has the highest energy intensity in South Asia—4.5 times higher than the world average, which is 1.8 times higher than India or China (ADB, 2013; IEA, 2019). In Nepal, the residential sector accounts for the largest energy consumption by 80%, and cooking holds the 60% energy use of total energy share (Nakarmi, 2018). Kathmandu city—Nepal's capital holds 22% of its total urban population (CBS, 2015) and is an ethnically diverse city. The city is accompanied by the complex urban problems of severe demand on resources that resulted in a frequent energy crisis, inequitable distribution, and environmental degradation. However, Kathmandu households have been managing the energy crisis by fuel stacking, and multiple fuel uses by women. Ultimately, it has added financial burden, the use of more space, and resulted in a low quality of life. In most parts of Nepal, energy is substituted using human muscles (somatic energy), particularly in household chores, such as washing clothes, cleaning, and grinding by women. Traditionally, men are considered the breadwinner, and women are managers of the house; when women also started to earn and work outside, still household chores are managed by women in most cases. Women must extend their skills in three different production areas: household work, child-rearing, and the economic sector. In those conditions, modern energy and technology can help them manage three production zones competitively and confidently in such a globalization context.

Historically, both men and women are considered as sources of empowerment as a representation of Shakti—male (power) and Prakriti—female (nature) in Hindu philosophy. Similarly, the equality concept can be acknowledged through the example of *Ardhanareshowr* in Hindu doctrine. However, the concept is rarely translated into energy-related decisions at the household and policy level. The Nepalese society is driven by patriarchy that is reflected in women's decision power.

Even after the three decades of Rio summit and Beijing conference of gender advocacy have accomplished, still, women are hardly seen in an equal position in the energy sector.

Half of the population are women in Kathmandu (CBS, 2015), and they are still lagging in exercising their rights, particularly in the energy decision-making sector. A gap of unequal voices on energy needs (ADB, 2015) and low participation in energy decisions may hinder the SDGs goal achievement. Gender has been aligned with sustainability; mainly, social sustainability demands gender equality in every activity (Dempsey et al., 2011; Shrestha et al., 2020). Keeping the gender lens in the energy policy can make it easier to succeed in a sustainable development goal of 5 and 7. Gender integration in the energy sector plays an essential role in the sustainability pathway. However, it has not been adequately combined in the energy policy of Kathmandu.

Research objective

The objective of this study was to examine economic, social, and environmental contexts of energy consumption in urban households from a gender perspective. It establishes the energy sustainability indicators placing gender views and investigates the actual level of energy sustainability while integrating gender and power role in sustainability. This study will help policymakers, the appliances industry, researchers, and gender experts to improvise and develop gender-neutral policy showing contextual SDG scenarios and showing the importance of gender role in energy policy.

Literature Review

Gender Perspective on Energy Sustainability and Indicators

The Brundtland Commission report in 1987 has introduced the term sustainability, highlighting resources consumption for present and future needs. More than 70 definitions and 500 concepts about sustainability exist (Carrera & Mack, 2010). However, the most popular category refers to the three-pillar ideas that define sustainability as a combination of economic, environmental, and social domains. It emphasizes that every ho-

usehold is accountable to the sustainability challenges for the conscious use of natural resources, maintain diversity, gender equality, reduce energy poverty and institutional inequities. The ultimate goal of sustainability is often defined in terms of human well-being or quality of life, limiting energy use.

According to Gatersleben energy use is a valid indicator to monitor human behavior on environmental impact (Gatersleben, 2001). The study shows that people worldwide used 1.5 kW of energy per capita or 36 kWh per day. However, sustainability does not mean to live below the comfort and facilities but should maintain quality of life with 30 GJ, which advises a balance of social and environmental consumption. People need to pay attention to their comfort, freedom, and entertainment to maintain quality of life, reducing environmental degradation. Despite a dependency of energy consumption on different socio-economic, demographic factors, such as household income, family composition, residence type, and location, numerous studies (Harris, 2003; Bentley & Leeuw, 2009; Santoyo-Castelazo & Azapagic, 2014) have recognized that the three significant bottom line of sustainability measures to the energy use pattern. Different constituencies have drafted the sustainability indicators, but none of them has presented appropriate contextual indicators for Kathmandu household energy consumption from a gender perspective. The sustainability condition of the energy consumption of Kathmandu urban households' actual scenario is explored here in three bottom-lined contexts. The indicators are identified with gender in central place are defined below.

Economic Sustainability and Indicators

Economic sustainability reflects an economic system that comprises inclusive institutions, gender-neutral policies, and functions to ensure a socially equitable society. The level of well-being is often reflected in per capita, gross domestic product (GDP) to uncover economic development. However, statisticians and economists argue that GDP does not represent the actual welfare level. Economic indicators of energy consumption levels link to welfare by the capacity of energy expenditure and household income (Gatersleben, 2001). It takes account of the financial condition and affordability of energy sources in households. Complying with Gatersleben's concept, indicators are framed on a context basis. For instance, the energy intensity, use of renewable energy, and transformation of energy use are considered economic indicators because energy

use transformation results from income increment directly or indirectly. Previous studies highlight that the economic context implies clean energy's affordability in urban households (Harris, 2003; Bentley & Leeuw, 2009; Santoyo-Castelazo & Azapagic, 2014). Thus, it is crucial to increase electrical appliances and escalate the productivity of income generation. For instance, when women use higher electrical appliances instead of human muscles, they can use their time and effort in income-generating activities to support increasing their household and the nation's economic sustainability.

Environmental Sustainability and Indicators

Environmental sustainability in the household accounts significantly of direct energy used by end-users compared to indirect energy. Environmental sustainability considers natural capital supplemented by environment and conservation of energy; minimum resources use avoiding exploitation of it and maintaining a clean environment as human needs. This dimension ensures a healthy environment for dwellers within and outside buildings to elevate clean energy use for environmental balance. Environmental indicators criteria for household consumption are acquired from Spangenberg and Lorek's (2002) study, including energy use, source of energy, appliances use, and carbon emission (Fisk et al., 2013). The kitchen indoor air quality is a crucial aspect of environmental sustainability for women's health, which is investigated in this study.

Social and Gender Role in Sustainability Indicators

Social sustainability has a consideration of cultural aspects to value the social norms of society. It ensures fairness in the distribution of opportunities and gender participation within the household and policy level. It emphasizes that men and women are fundamental vehicles to increase equality using their different skills, knowledge, and experience. The previous studies have shown that substantial energy-efficiency could be achieved through technological and economic intervention without compromising the quality of life (Mills & Schleich, 2012; Cherp et al., 2018; Rosenthal et al., 2018). Levett (1998) has defined sustainability as the environment's limits, and the allocation of fair share is one of the measures in social sustainability. He suggests that instead of setting rules and options, innovative solutions can nurture social demands and needs. Gatersleben and Vlek (1998) have recognized that social indicator as com-

fort, health, safety, freedom, and social justice to maintain social and cultural values. The literature suggests that sustainability means the equality and essential role of gender participation in energy decisions that prioritize both men's and women's need to achieve the gender-neutral policy. It advises constructing indicators on a context basis to reveal the actual sustainability scenario. With this realization, the research framework has guided the exploration of sustainability in three-pillar aspects placing gender at a central place (Fig. 1). This study has explored the three pillars of sustainability in gender perspective in Kathmandu households' context and recognized the improvement sectors in the gender-inclusive concept of decision-making, skills, policy approach, and knowledge enhancement of energy, as shown in figure 1.
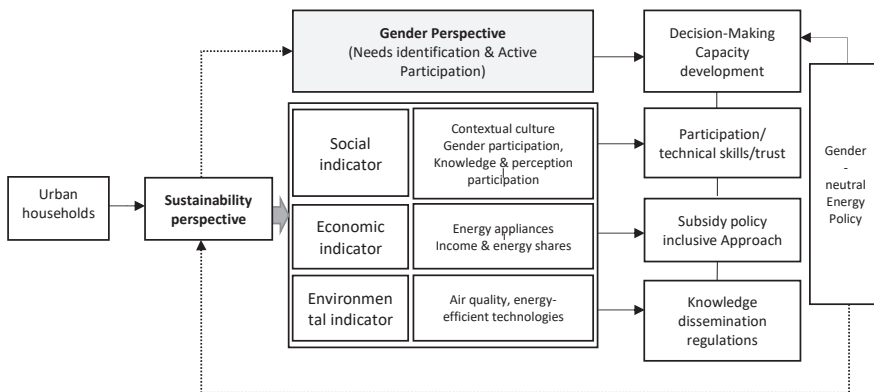
Figure 1. Research Framework on Sustainability from Gender Lens

Research design and methodology

This study is based on field observation, questionnaire surveys, and interviews about socio-economic demographics, household cooking culture, energy consumption, and the environment. The economic variables include energy-related appliances used in households, solar energy, and the relation between the householders' energy share and income. The social variables include gender participation in social events of local and neighborhood levels. Decision variables included purchasing decisions related to household basics, electrical appliances, and cooking fuel,

as shown in tables 3 & 4. The environmental variables include kitchen environment data: number of windows, exhaust fan, chimney air quality measurement, and comfort. The air quality test was done using Onset's HOBO MX1102 CO2 sensor in the cooking areas. It has a recording range: 0 to 5000 ppm and accuracy: ±50 ppm ±5% on a non-condensing environment. The 18 indicators were recognized from literature and contextual study: five in economic, twelve in social, and eight in environmental sustainability and explored in the three study layers (Annex A1). The cross-tabulation of those variables were employed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to identify the percentage of sustainability indicators in three study areas. The results identified in percentage and counts were converted into a ten-point scale to obtain a sustainable level. The survey sample of 623 questionnaires was administered and analyzed from the SPSS in descriptive results. The qualitative analysis of interviews and observation was analyzed from ATLAS.ti, creating codes and network. The discussion and interpretation were obtained in a neutral voice relating to literature.

Selection of Study Area

Kathmandu city is the capital of Nepal—the world's 96th largest country by area. The study areas were identified in inner, middle, and outer-city as three layers based on urbanization and different socio-economic contexts for household surveys. The inner-city is mentioned as city layer 1, which history dates to 2000 years old, the primary domain of an indigenous group of Newar. The middle-city was urbanized highly between the 1980s and 2000s; inhabitants migrated from the nearby cities and moved from the inner-city.

As city layer 3—highly urbanized from the 2000s to the present and the primary domain of migrants from rural and nearby urban areas, the outer-city contained mixed ethnicities (Shrestha et al., 2020). The random stratified sampling survey was accomplished in 60 neighborhoods for diverse respondents, and air quality tests in the kitchen were done in six distinct households and fifteen for extended interviews. It is an ethnically diverse city that holds Newar as original ethnic group accounts—30%, Brahmin/Chhetri—28%, Rai/Limbu/Gurung accounts—21%, and other ethnicities are 14% of the population (GoN, 2019b).
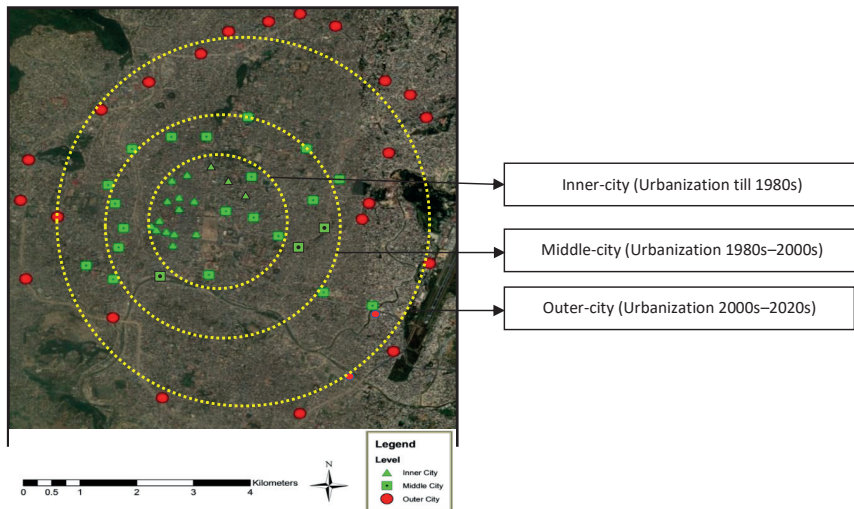
Figure 2. Selection of neighborhoods in three city layers

Air Quality Test Survey

HOBO sensor was placed in the cooking area at the height of 1.2 m from the floor level and 0.5-meter distance from the cooking area. The air quality test was done in rental and owner's households in three study layers to investigate scenarios of cooking culture, kitchen hoods, and design implications. Investigation in urban areas was challenging to take their time and access to their kitchen that took extended time and resulted in variation in data samples (Table 2). D2, D3, and D6 houses had 34, 9 & 31 sq. m, respectively, the area of spaces with two windows, exhaust fans, and chimneys (Table 1). It revealed that most of the self-owned household kitchens had ventilation, while rental spaces lacked ventilation and electric kitchen hoods. It illustrated that most of the rental kitchen did not have consideration of the cooking environment. Detailed of the indoor environment is listed in table 2.

Table 1. Detailed data of air quality tested households

Households	Area	Family members	Samples	Date	Temperature	Relative humidity	Air quality - CO2
D12	18 sq.m.	3	1428	1/31/19 to 02/15/2019	Temp. -10°C, -23°C	70%	Min. 367 ppm Max. 3683 ppm Avg. 603 ppm St. Dev. 241
D13	6 sq.m.	1	2344	02/15/19 to 02/23/19	Temp. -13°C, -18°C Avg. 14°C	77%	Min. 291 ppm Max. 2239 ppm Avg. 703 ppm St. Dev. 480
D8	22 sq.m.	3	2330	02/24/19 to 03/04/19	Temp. -15°C, -20°C Avg. 17°C	60%	Min. 343 ppm Max. 2521 ppm Avg. 519 ppm St. Dev. 314
D3	9 sq.m.	4	2890	4/10/2019 to 04/20/2019	Temp. Avg. 25°C	59%	Min. 340 ppm Max. 2266 ppm Avg. 623ppm St. Dev. 341
D2	34 sq.m.	5	7510	12/07/19 to 01/02/20	Temp. Avg. 13°C	68%	Min. 331 ppm Max. 1981 ppm Avg. 647 ppm St. Dev. 363
D6	31 sq.m.	5	4583	01/10/20 to 01/25/20	Temp. -11°C, 9°C, -16°C	75%	Min. 202 ppm Max. 1782 ppm Avg. 591 ppm St. Dev. 379

Results

Socio-economic Demographics

Table 3 represents the survey respondents' socio-economic and demographic data. In this study, the expenditure was considered to represent income groups because respondents expressed their expenditure transparently compared to income. (Assumption: the person who spends "x" amount of money means; he/she has "x" amount of income). Table 4, 5 & 6 display environmental, energy, and participation data based on a questionnaire survey.

Table 2. Urban household's profile

Socioeconomic and household variables		Counts (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	278	45
	Female	345	55
Age	18–35	205	33
	36–50	249	40
	Above 51	169	27
Education	Below 10 Grade	243	39
	10–12 grade	212	34
	Undergraduate	125	20
	Graduate and above	43	7
Expenditure groups	Below $200	119	19
	$200–$400	374	60
	Above $401	130	21
Property ownership	Male	326	52
	Female	172	28
	Joint	125	20
Family types	Joint	106	17
	Nuclear	485	78
	Single	32	5
Headship	Male	419	67
	Female	129	21
	Joint	75	12
Ethnicity groups	Brahmin/Chhetri	246	39
	Newars	260	42
	Rai/limbu/Tamang	60	10
	Others	57	9

Electric appliances users	1 to 5	100	16
	5 to 10	357	58
	11 to 15	146	23
	16 above	20	3
House type	Modern	527	85
	Traditional	39	6
	Mixed	57	9
Residence type	Own	364	58
	Rental	259	42

Table 3. Energy and environmental variables

Variables	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Max.
Environmental	Number of hours in kitchen work	3.03	1.064	8
	Number of windows in a kitchen	0.87	0.801	5
	Number of appliances	9.12	3.767	26
Energy	Number of hours fan used.	2.23	2.160	12
	Electricity bill (Rs)*	1086	1215	18 000
	Cooking fuel (Rs)*	553	1138	5000
Participation	Social events	4.20	3.796	20
	Neighborhood/community events	2.38	4.117	48
	Ethnic/cultural events	1.50	1.533	8
	Friends gathering	2.49	3.104	24

* 1 USD = Rs. 120 (Nepalese rupees)

Table 4. Energy and environmental variables

Variables	Male (%)	Female (%)	Joint (%)
Minor Household	22	39	40
Health issues	22	24	54
Social involvement	27	27	46
Cooking fuel	25	33	42
Electrical appliances	25	15	60
Furniture/clothes	23	16	61
Property – Land/House	28	13	59

Table 5. Correlation of variables

Dependent variables with income	Correlation value (r)
Nos. of electric appliances Vs income	.48**
Monthly electricity bills	.35**
Monthly water bills	.32**
Total cooking hours	.31**
Monthly cooking fuel	0.43
Nos. of hours heating appliances used	.22**
Nos of hours cooling appliances used	.21**
Neighborhood events	0.068
Ethnic events	0.12**
Friends gathering	.088*

* p < 0.05
** p < 0.01

Economic Context and Energy Consumption

In this section, the economic condition was studied in terms of heating and cooling appliances uses and energy share of the household income.

Electrical heating and cooling appliances in the income group

The heating system's data in different expenditure groups demonstrated that the highest use of a heating system of electric and gas heater was found in the high-income group of outer-city dwellers by 68%. The lowest use of electric and gas heater was used in a low-income group of inner-city dwellers by 15%, as shown in figure 3. The dissimilarity trend was noticeable in the use of electric/gas heater among the high-income group of inner-city used by only 22% that was comparatively lower with middle-and outer-city layers (63% and 68%). The reason might be that the compact settlement pattern in the inner-city resulted in a warm environment and culture of clothing adjustment.

The data of space cooling appliances showed that electric fans were used extensively in all income groups in three city layers (Fig. 3). The highest percentage of electric fans were used (66%) by middle-income respondents of outer-city. The lowest use of electric fans was found in the low-income group of outer-city by 12%. The surprising trend of using

electric cooling appliances was noticeable, with a low correlation between using cooling appliances and income (r = .22) (Table 5). The high-income group of the inner and outer city used moderately less use of electric fans by 16% and 22%. Because of the lifestyle trend, they started to live in modern buildings with enough ventilations. The results showed that higher income had more significant use of heating appliances and less natural ventilation. The result revealed that income and heating appliances have a moderate positive correlation (r = .48, p < 0.01). The higher the income and broader use of appliances.

Use of electrical heating & cooling appliances use
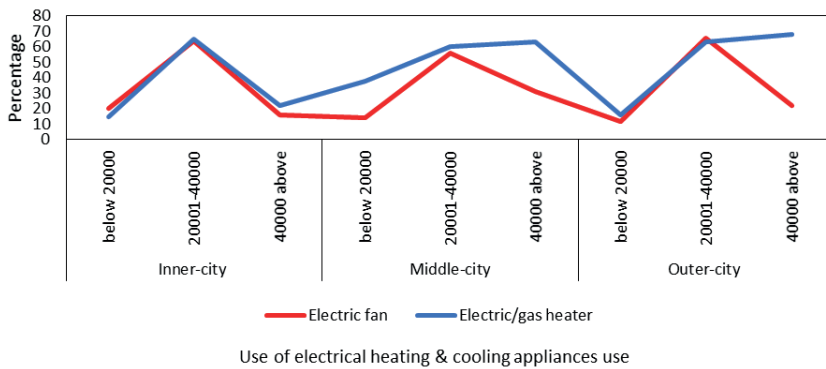
Figure 3. The relation between Heating and Cooling Appliances and Income

The data showed that the rental people used 6–7 number of electrical appliances, and people who had owned houses used more than 7 to 20 numbers of appliances (Table 1). The overall results demonstrated that the number of electrical appliances uses moderately correlated with the income group (r = .48, p < 0.01) that exhibited that lower the income, the use of electric appliances is lesser.

Clean Energy Use—Solar Energy

Solar Energy as a photovoltaic (PV) panels started to use in the last two decades in Kathmandu for lighting and bathing purposes due to the electricity crisis. The data showed that the higher use of solar panels was by the middle-income group of middle-and outer-city by 3.7% and 3.5% of total respondents (Fig. 4). of total respondents. It was due to higher installation costs that resulted in incredibly less acceptance in urban households.
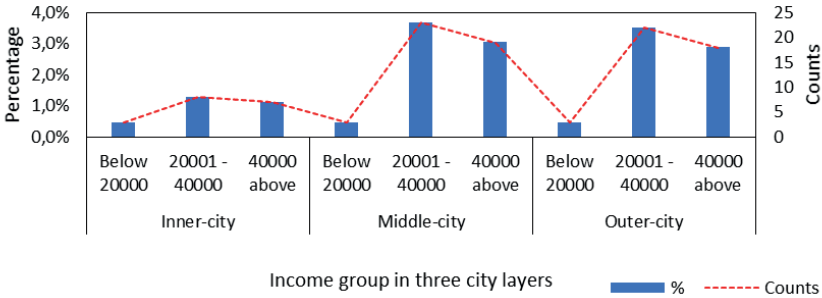
Figure 4. Use of solar use in different income groups

The data showed that 8% of Newar, 11% of male-headed families, 16% of modern households, and 15% of respondents who lived in their own house used solar Energy (Fig. 5). It represented that middle-income dwellers' Newar ethnicity demonstrated renewable energy knowledge and practiced with a quality of life even in the energy crisis. It implies that renewable energy as solar is influenced by headship, ethnicity, building types, and ownership variables. Simultaneously, female-headed families have low affordability for solar energy.
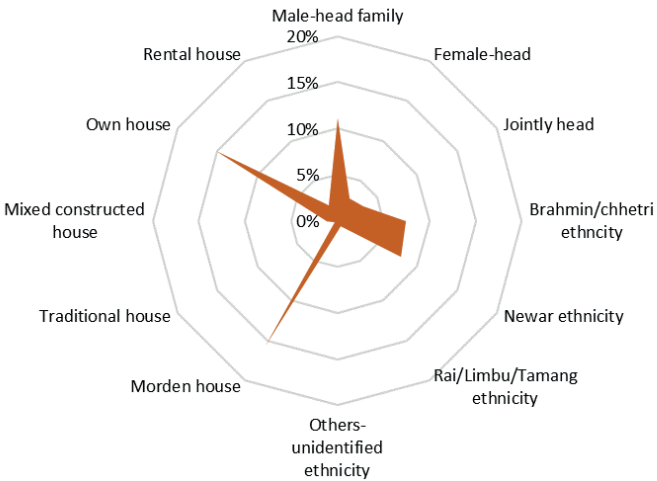
Figure 5. Solar Energy uses in different variables

Income and Energy Share in Urban Households

Figure 8 shows that energy use is an economic indicator from household expenditure on fuel and electricity in urban households. The indicator demonstrated that the affordability of energy uses that amplified disparity in the city. It illustrated the share of income spent associated with energy services at each level of income. The low-income group spent 13%, middle-income by 6%, and high-income group by 3% of their total share of income on household energy expenditure (Fig. 6). The results indicated that society segments with lower income used a larger share of their monthly income for household energy needs. The overall results showed that low-income women suffered from energy scarcity and spent more time in income generation activities. They had limited appliances and used human muscles instead of appliances.
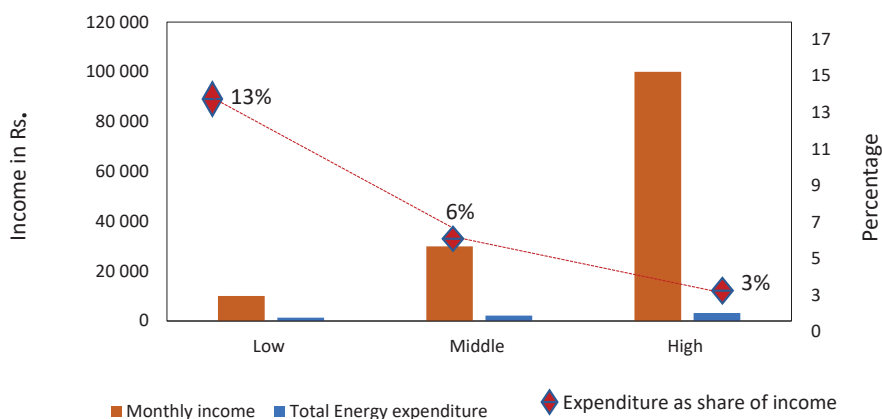
Figure 6. Average income and monthly household energy cost share

The Social Context of Energy Consumption

In this section, social sustainability indicators elaborate on a contextual way of life, customs, values, aspirations, knowledge, and participation of men and women in energy decisions. The twelve different micro indicators are analyzed under four categorized social indicators.

Contextual Culture of Energy Use

The social phenomena in terms of celebration of festivals, cultural activities have a crucial role in energy consumption. The data showed that Newars had higher energy-intensive activities of celebrating festivals and gatherings in-home; for instance, eight significant events—local, ethnic, and friends' gatherings occurred monthly at home compared to other ethnicities, as shown in figure 7. Additionally, Newars had a tradition of serving cooked food in social events, which usually ranged from five to fifteen items. It displayed that social gatherings and cultural festivals were the energy-intensive activities that had influenced the energy use pattern. It demonstrated that inner-city's Newars spent 20–25% more cooking hours per month than the average food culture. Rai/Limbu/Tamang ethnicity had low social events. The findings exhibited that the monthly energy bill of Newars was 18% higher than Brahmin/Chhetri of inner-city, 24% higher than Rai/Limbu/Tamang, and 13% than other groups.

Similarly, Newars of the middle-city spent 20% higher than Brahmin/Chettri and Rai/Limbu, and other groups. Simultaneously, Newars of the outer-city spent 1% lesser than other unidentified ethnicities; however, higher than the remaining groups (Table 2). In Newar culture, women were highly responsible for cooking foods. Newari women are highly involved in energy-intensive activities.
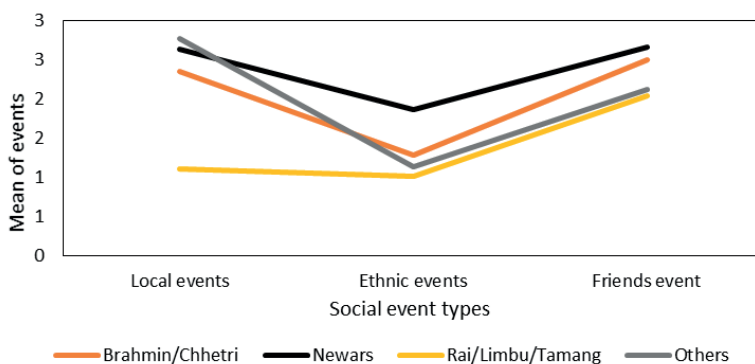
Figure 7. Average monthly social activities number at home

Gender Participation in Social Activities

The participation of men and women in different social activities varied in different ethnicities. The result showed that 42% of females from Brahmin/Chhetri, 33% of females from other unidentified ethnicities, were involved in social activities compared to males of the same group (Fig. 8). In contrast, 51% of males from Newars and 27% of males from Rai/Limbu/Tamang had higher participation than females of the same group in the social events. It also resembled that Newari women were less involved in outdoor social activities but busier on internal household activities.
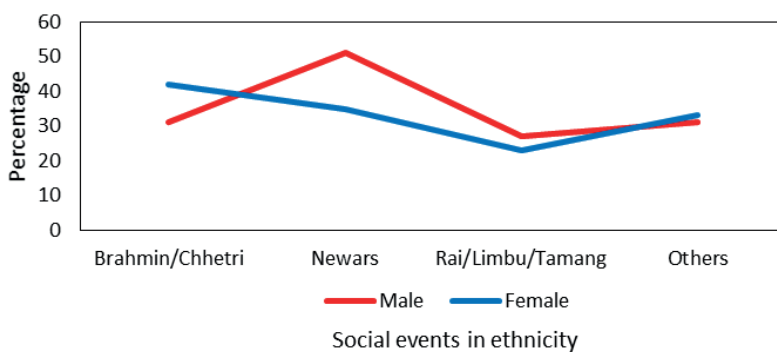
Figure 8. Gender Participation in Social Activities and Events in Different Ethnicities

The results of a higher percentage of Brahmin/Chhetri women in social activities demonstrated a broader social opportunity. Simultaneously, the observation findings showed that the venue of social activities had been changed. For instance, historically, all the festivals and gatherings occurred within the home, but later, the venues had been taken place to restaurants and party palaces. The results showed that the food vendors had gained a commercial market due to the celebration trend transformation. Besides, cleaner energy, for instance, LPG and electric cooking in households, reduced women's drudgery. However, only a limited number of women have gained this opportunity.

Knowledge and Perception

The knowledge of clean energy use and efficiency practice has a significant role in achieving social sustainability. The rainwater harvesting

trend was higher in the Newar group (13%), inner-city dwellers (8%), ma-
le-headed families (12%), modern houses (17%) living in their own ho-
use (16%) (Fig. 9). The lowest rainwater harvesting was found in rental
dwellers (5%), traditional houses (2%), and other unidentified ethnicities.
The reason for it might be that unidentified people were migrants living
in rental spaces, did not have built a rainwater collection system in the
building, and lived in a single room without a terrace. It revealed that resi-
dency type, headship, and building design construction method influenced
the rainwater harvesting trend and behavior.
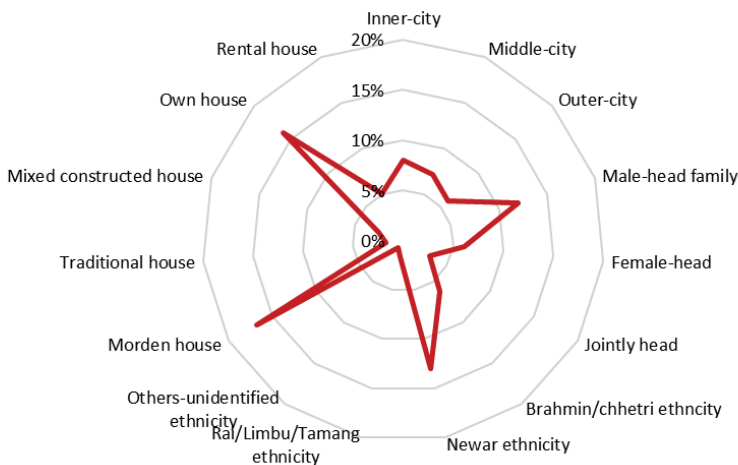
Figure 9. Rainwater harvesting in different variable

Women's Participation in Energy Decisions

In the participation of minor household decisions, joint decisions
scored a higher percentage in inner-and middle-city by 41% and 44%,
respectively. At the same time, female decisions were increased by 44%
in middle-city households. The increased number of females in house-
hold decisions as jointly and singly reflected the indicators of social re-
sponsibility. The electrical appliances and cooking purchase decisions
were increased in three city layers by 47% to 67% and 38% to 43%
(Fig. 10). The results showed that urban households had a trend of joint
decisions in most household decisions representing expanding social su-
stainability levels.
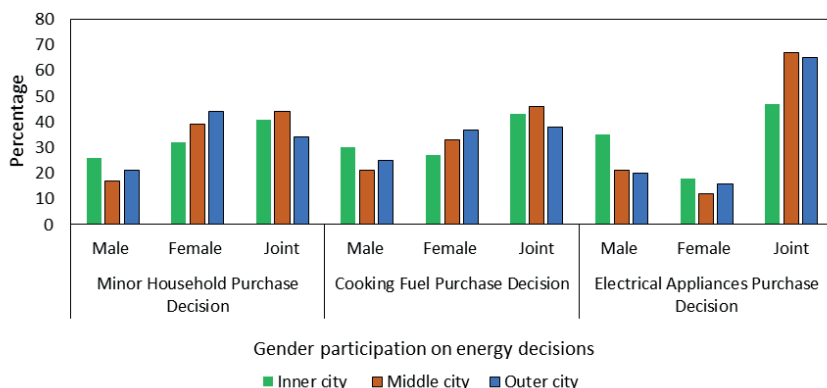
Figure 10. Decision participation in cooking fuel purchase—influences of various variables

Environmental Context of Energy Consumption

The environment context of urban households is described here as the kitchen environment in terms of ventilation and electric kitchen hoods to reveal space's air quality. The study showed that higher energy consumption in the households and women were highly involved in cooking activities. Thus, the kitchen was taken as a significant study place in the household in this paper.

Use of electric kitchen hoods and ventilation

The use of exhaust fans and chimneys were higher in modern buildings compared to traditional and mixed buildings. The data showed that 23% of modern buildings contained exhaust fans, and 22% consisted of chimneys, while the traditional building contained exhaust fans only by 0.3% and chimneys by 0.16%. Mixed buildings contained 2% of exhaust fans and 1% of chimneys (Fig. 11). The observation and findings indicated that most new buildings consisted of kitchen hoods and proper ventilation to achieve a healthy kitchen.

The inner-city respondents used exhaust fans by 5% and chimneys by 4%, respectively. The middle-city respondents used exhaust fans by 10% and chimneys by 11%, respectively. Similarly, outer-city respondents placed exhaust fans and chimneys by 10% and 11%, respectively (Fig. 11). Overall, the use of exhaust fan and chimney in the kitchen was found higher in the owned household by 20% and 21% compared to ren-
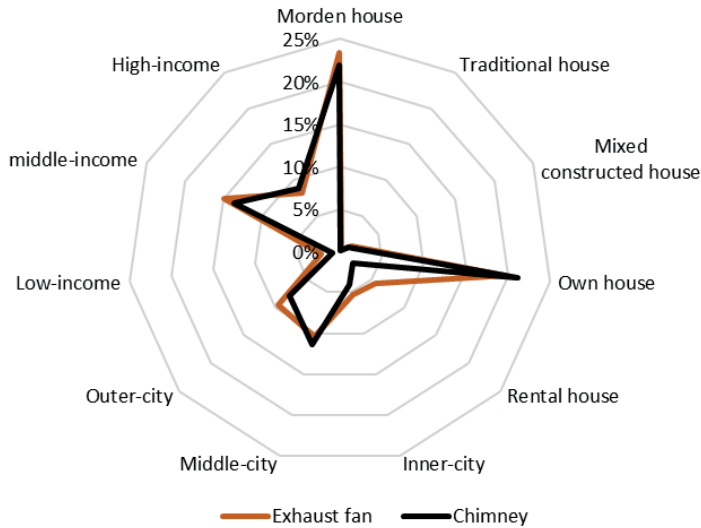
Figure 11. Use of exhaust fans and chimney in various building types

tal households' kitchens. Besides, natural ventilation is indispensable in cooking a person's comfort and maintaining hygiene. The results showed that urban kitchens without windows were found by 37%, in inner-city, and having a single-window by 71%. The results showed that women of inner-city neighborhoods were in unhealthy windowless kitchens. Only a single window contained cooking spaces that could ultimately result in health consequences in long-term effects.

Kitchen environment/air quality of cooking space

WHO standards and American Society of Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has provided ventilation standards to maintain a level of CO_2 and suggested to have windows open for fresh air flow and healthy air quality. Carbon dioxide level has potential health issues when it will be above 1000 ppm (Fisk et al., 2013) and impact human decision level.

The cooking culture and ventilation positions impact on air quality of the kitchen. The tested households had maximum air quality in terms of CO_2 level above 1000 ppm, and the highest was 3683 ppm in D12 (Fig. 12). The average level was 603 ppm, as shown in Figure 17. However, this household had an average (2–3) cooking culture but showed a high CO_2 level.
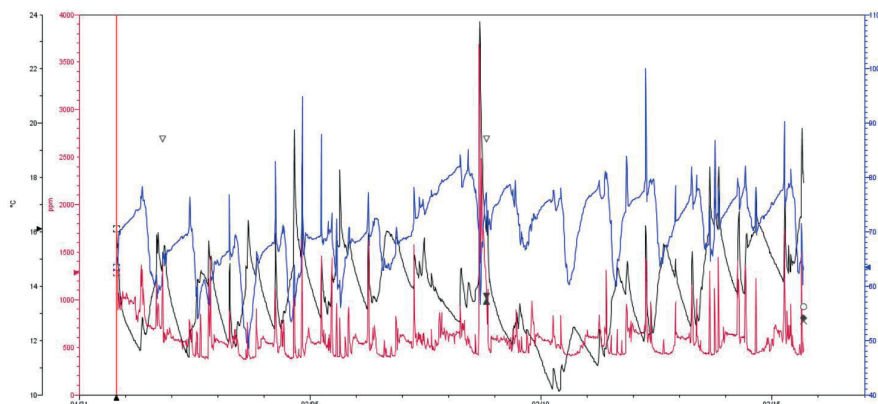
Figure 12. Indoor air quality in the kitchen of D12 household

It might be because of the cooking area's improper ventilation position, lacking kitchen hood, and exhaust fan. In comparison, the D6 household demonstrated a maximum of 1782 ppm and an average of 591 ppm. The lower value of CO_2 resulted from cross ventilation of two windows and a modern chimney (Fig. 13).
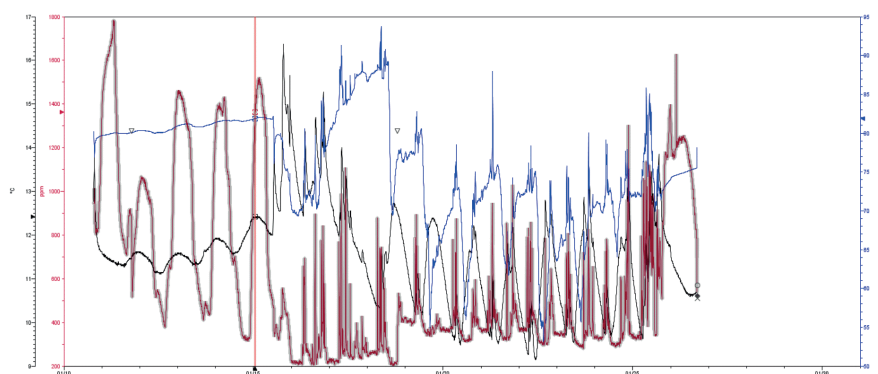
Figure 13. Indoor air quality in the kitchen of D6 household

The results demonstrated that cooking culture might impact increasing CO_2, but the kitchen's air quality can be improved, placing modern chimneys and ventilation room design. It was found that the kitchen's air quality was poor with high CO_2 in the windowless cooking area and lacking kitchen hoods. Women stated eye irritation and mild respiration

during cooking, but they considered normal during cooking. It showed that not only women, remaining family members, were less aware of the kitchen's air quality standards.

Sustainability Level

Comparing three study city-layers in three pillars of the sustainability concept of economic, social, and environmental with contextual indicators has been defined in the literature. The results showed that middle-city used higher energy use. The middle-and outer-city started using solar energy, and it had assisted in achieving a Sustainable Development (SD) value of 56 (Annex A1 & A2). Similarly, inner-city was prevalent in cultural activities and fuel stacking nature keeping extra cylinders. The female participation in EAP is higher compared to middle-and outer city layers. SD value of inner-city was 50. In contrast, joint participation in EAP and clean cooking were higher in the middle-city layer than in the rest of the study areas. Meanwhile, the awareness and knowledge of rainwater harvesting and female participation in CFP were higher in the outer city. It resulted in the middle-and outer city having gained social sustainability values of 56, and the inner-city achieved only 48 (Annex A1 & A2).

It was apparent that cooking culture influence the air quality of the kitchen in some context. The ventilated kitchen, use of exhaust fans/chimneys were extensive in the middle-city. While comfort feeling during cooking and clean energy use were expressed higher among outer-city dwellers, the presence of windowless kitchen. The sustainability values showed that the outer and middle-city households received the same SD of 70, and inner-city achieved 50 points (Annex A1 & A2). The low SD score of the inner-city was due to high cooking culture and a lack of ventilation and kitchen hoods. The overall score with additional values of economic, environmental, and social aspects of inner-city epitomize to low energy sustainability (49 points), outer-city (58), and middle-city (61) has ranked higher among three. The overall SD values of Kathmandu achieved 56 points combining three aspects in the gender lens. The middle-city achieved higher values. The reason for it underlined higher gender participation in energy decisions.

Discussions

As asserted by Gatersleben (2001), Masera et al. (2000), Bisu, Kuhe and Iortyer (2016), and Muller and Yan (2018), multiple fuel use does not always ensure awareness about energy-saving compelled to use mixed fuels and resulted in the fuel stacking model in three city layers. It created a social gap between rich and poor within the same neighborhood due to the corrupted market. This gap has a greater impact on women for daily basics. Consistency with Barr & Prillwitz (2013), Gatersleben (2001), and Lutzenhiser (1992), social sustainability is strongly based on culture and practice. In Kathmandu, electric appliances had been increasing extensively, particularly in the middle- and higher-income groups, for instance, electric heater and fans, but it was used consciously for limited hours only. The natural ventilation and wearing clothes in layers were practiced as an adaptation model in Kathmandu for extreme weather. It had demonstrated that culture and belief still entrenched in Kathmandu urban dwellers in energy use and saving practice.

Aligned with Davis (1998), Gatersleben and Vlek (1998), Levett (1998), and Nasir, Murtaza and Colbeck (2015), ownership demonstrated a significant role in energy uses and saving behaviors. The results showed that joint decisions were higher in all categories except in female-headed families. Female-headed and low expenditure households had higher involvement of females in energy purchase decisions. It revealed that when the women had financial power in hand, they could decide to buy what they wanted for the home. The urban households, women's power in decision--making is still low due to low ownership in the property.

In contrast to Mills and Schleich (2012) and Rosenthal et al. (2018), the use of clean technologies as solar energy could not establish as remarkable energy-saving behavior in the Kathmandu urban households. However, at least, it had facilitated to achieve a quality of life in fewer households. The electricity crisis had edified solar energy knowledge and practiced to some extent. However, the inhabitants were found less eager to continue it. Rental and low-income respondents could not afford it because of the higher cost and inaccessibility to the sunspaces. Solar energy use remains only for the high-and middle-income group.

Clancy et al. (2016), Gatersleben (2001), Habtezion (2016), and Oberhauser (2017) claim that modern energy services with electric appliances use have improved women's socio-economic status by reducing the time and effort involved in households' chore and this is also perceived same

in Kathmandu. The increasing use of electric appliances was reinforced to reduce urban drudgery and enhance new kitchen culinary recipes in a limited time. Besides, men also started to help with the kitchen chores. Besides, environmentally, kitchen design and culture had been improved due to electric kitchen hoods for better air quality. In contrast, the air quality results showed the inner-city kitchen environment, especially in the rental spaces lacking ventilation, exhaust fans, and chimneys. Simultaneously, few studies showed that poor air quality of the rooms or increased CO_2 concentrations adversely impacts decision making performance. Fisk et al. (2013) study showed that people who stayed below 600 ppm have higher decision-making capacities. People living with less ventilation demonstrated health problems frequently with low decision capacity.

Sustainable development 2019 report showed that Nepal was ranked in 103 positions with 68 SD scores (Bertelsmann Stiftung & SDSN, 2019). In comparison, this study of Kathmandu city obtained 56 scores. This difference in scores might be because this analysis had combined only 5 and 7 SDGs goals in the integration approach rather than considering seventeen goals. The findings indicated that energy accessibility and gender equality are still challenging for both the city and national contexts. Most researchers' studies (Pokharel, 2004; Shahi, Rijal & Shukuya, 2020) showed that Nepalese households used electricity, only 50 MJ/household/ monthly or 90–100 kWh that is relatively lower than in developing and developed countries. It is worthy of using less energy. However, social sustainability suggested that it is equally critical to achieving the standard of quality of life, as discussed by Gatersleben and Vlek (1998), Carrera and Mack (2010), and Santoyo-Castelazo and Azapagic (2014). It is essential to balance quality of life using energy-efficient appliances in households holding habitual saving behavior. Women, particularly, have a lower quality of life, and it implies improving overall comfort to women, and they can participate in economic development.

Economic sustainability showed that high-income group spent more than low-income groups, but shares were low due to high-income affordability power. These conditions are perceived in most developing and in-lined with research by Harris (2003), Santoyo-Castelazo and Azapagic (2014), and Van der Kroon et al. (2013). It increased a disparity in society when there was no subsidy for low-income that continues a vicious cycle, creating a rich and poor gap. However, the use of appliances has been increasing compared to the last decades, but women are still lagged in technical knowledge, capacity development, and quality of life.

Conclusions

This study shows a strong relation of economic sustainability to energy use representing a moderately positive correlation (r = .48) between energy consumption and income. The lower-income group uses a larger share of their monthly income for household energy needs and use unclean cooking fuel. The most urban kitchen lacks a chimney, exhaust fan, and ventilation that directly impact women who used to cook every day. Female participation has been increasing in the form of joint energy decisions. However, females are still less vocalized in technology-related decisions, even in urban households. Environmental indicators demonstrate that lower-income groups' females suffer from unhealthy cooking space due to unawareness and unaffordability for the electric kitchen hoods. Kathmandu's overall score is quite low (56 points) and resembles that the city still so far to go on the sustainability goal on energy and gender integration concept. It suggests that women should be encouraged to participate in the technology movement. Proper information dissemination is essential for integrated energy policy to reduce gender inequality, maximizing clean energy to achieve a better quality of life. Gender-blind energy policies have resulted in women's low social positions and hinder sustainability goals. Women are still ignored for new technology awareness for upscaling household chores and capacity development and have a low voice in energy decision due to cultural and gender identity with different socio-economic conditions. Kathmandu urban women still subordinate status in society. Conclusively, gender and energy have a broader impact on sustainability than current research has shown so far, and it should be further investigated in different related variables.

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Annex

A1: Energy sustainability indicators checklist in three city layers

Economic aspects of energy consumption

SN.	Description	Inner-city	Middle-city	Outer-city
1	Proportion of income and electrical appliances use	Low-income – 7 (24%) Middle-income – 10 (61%) High-income – 11 (15%)	Low-income – 7 (17%) Middle-income – 9 (59%) High-income – 12 (25%)	Low-income – 6 (18%) Middle-income – 9 (60%) High-income – 11 (22%)
2	Electric fan	68%	61%	53%
3	Electric/gas heater	27%	39%	39%
4	Vacuum cleaner	28%	41%	36%
5	Solar use	17%	42%	41%
6	Income and share of energy cost proportion	Low-income – 13% Middle-income – 7% High-income – 4%	Low-income – 14% Middle-income – 7% High-income – 4%	Low-income – 11% Middle-income – 6% High-income – 3%

Social aspects of energy consumption

SN.	Description	Inner-city (%)	Middle-city (%)	Outer-city (%)
1	Context – Energy-intensive activities	30 (Nos)	12 (Nos)	10 (Nos)
2	Aspiration of new technology – shifting	50	41	44
3	Crisis management (extra cylinders)	22	20	20
4	Crisis management (Induction)	6	5	5
5	Crisis management (LPG + induction)	2	4	3
6	Crisis management (Kerosene +LPG)	3	2	1
7	Crisis management (fuelwood)	4	5	5
8	Knowledge of Rainwater Harvesting	15	22	24
9	Female Participation in CFP	27	33	37
10	Female Participation in EAP	18	12	16
11	Joint Participation CFP	43	46	38
12	joint Participation EAP	47	67	65

Environmental aspects of energy consumption

SN.	Description Use of electric kitchen hoods	Inner-city (%)	Middle-city (%)	Outer-city (%)
1	Exhaust fan	21	41	38
2	Chimney	17	49	34
3	Energy use (LPG + induction)	3	5	7
4	Energy use (LPG)	82	85	82
5	Gender role in kitchen work (Joint)	25	39	36
6	Cooking culture	73	62	63
7	No. of Windows (two windows)	3	14	9
8	Air quality of kitchen (CO2) based on test -poor	50	30	20
9	Comfort feeling during cooking -gender	31	36	33
10	Kitchen design without window	24	33	37

A2: Sustainability score in three city-layers

Economic Sustainability Checklist

SN.	Description	Inner-city	Middle-city	Outer-city
1	Use of electrical appliances	6	6	5
2	Electric Cooling system use	4	4	5
3	Electric heating system	8	7	7
4	Vacuum cleaner	3	5	4
5	Solar use	2	5	5
6	Number of appliances	5	5	5
7	Income and share of energy cost proportion	7	7	8
	SD Values Obtained out of 100 score	**50**	**56**	**56**

Social Sustainability Checklist

SN.	Description	Inner-city	Middle-city	Outer-city
1	Culture – Energy-intensive activities	4	8	9
2	Aspiration of new technology – shifting	6	5	5
3	Crisis management (extra cylinders)	8	9	9

4	Crisis management (Induction)	6	5	5
5	Crisis management (LPG+ Induction)	2	4	3
6	Crisis management (Kerosene+ LPG)	8	9	2
7	Crisis management (fuelwood)	1	2	2
8	Knowledge of Rainwater Harvesting	8	7	6
9	Female Participation in CFP	2	3	3
10	Female Participation in EAP	2	2	2
11	Joint Participation CFP	5	6	4
12	joint Participation EAP	5	7	7
	SD Values Obtained	**48**	**56**	**48**

Environmental Sustainability checklist

SN.	Description	Inner-city	Middle-city	Outer-city
1	No. of Windows	5	9	8
2	Exhaust fan	3	5	4
3	Chimney	2	5	4
4	Gender role in kitchen work	3	5	4
5	Cooking culture	7	8	8
6	Energy use (fuel use)	6	7	8
7	Air quality of kitchen (CO2)	5	8	9
8	Air quality comfort feeling	5	8	9
9	Social events	7	9	10
10	Kitchen design problem	7	6	6
	SD Values Obtained	**50**	**70**	**70**

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Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All? An Assessment of Gender and Energy Access in Peri-Urban Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT. Access to energy is a key pillar of human wellbeing, economic development and poverty alleviation. Electricity demand exceeds supply in Zimbabwe, necessitating severe load shedding and the use of alternative energy. Utilising 40 in-depth structured interviews, this paper examines evidence of gender differences on energy access and use by Zimbabweans living in peri-urban areas. The results show that energy poverty is prevalent, underpinned by widespread poverty, contributing to constrained economic development and poor social life. Poor women, especially bear much of the burden of energy access and use, including danger to their health. Governments and development partners need to priotise energy as part of aid distribution while there is need to appoint more women in positions that shape energy policy and enact more gender neutral/friendly policies. The situation on the ground suggests that access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all is still a long way off for these communities. The study contributes to the ongoing global debate on energy and gender by providing evidence and insights from a developing world context.

KEYWORDS: gender and energy, electricity access, energy poverty, economic development, women's empowerment

Introduction

Background

Access to energy is widely recognised as central to economic development and to the realisation of human and social well-being (UN,

2019). Productive applications of energy include cooking, heating, lighting, food production and preservation, education and health services, mobility and communication, industrial production and transportation (World Bank, 2015). In fact, the production, distribution and consumption of energy have a considerable impact on economies, people's daily lives, environments and industrial development in any country, suggesting a positive relationship between energy and economic development (Esen & Bayrak, 2017).

Achieving universal access to electricity is essential for solving many global development challenges (Daly, 2018). Consequently, the world has witnessed increasing attention to universal electricity access as a development objective (Osunmuyiwa & Ahlborg, 2019). However, more than two-thirds of Africa's population still do not have access to electricity (Schaltuper, 2018). Compare these statistics with the fact that over 1.1 billion people, consisting largely of rural populations in developing countries lack access to electricity (IEA, 2017). It then becomes clear, that with a share of over 50% of people without electricity in the world, access to electricity in Africa is a significant problem.

The women/gender/energy research agenda is widely viewed as a critical pathway for linking energy interventions to social and economic development (Cecelski, 2004). Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is a stand-alone goal-SDG 5, and integrated across the other goals, with many targets specifically recognising gender equality and women's empowerment as both an objective and part of the solution (World Bank, 2018). However, despite many efforts, energy poverty is widespread, and gender inequality exists at every level of the energy sector (Cecelski, 2004).

Zimbabwe had an operating capacity of 1,555MW, transmission losses of 4MW and a peak demand plus reverses of 1,724MW, implying an energy shortfall of 173MW or 11% (SAPP, 2019). According to SAPP (2019), the composition of the electricity generation mix in the country is coal electric power generation at 50.6%, hydroelectric power generation accounting for 44.4% and distillate (Heavy Fuel Oils) at 4%. The other forms of power generation accounted for just above 1%. The country has been plagued by severe power shortages attributed to a prolonged drought that has reduced output at its largest hydro plant and ageing coal-fired generators that keep breaking down, according to state-owned power utility ZESA Holdings (Banya, 2019). This energy shortfall in respect of installed capacity is an economic and social policy concern to the country.

The purpose of this paper is to assess gender and energy access and use for Zimbabweans living in peri-urban areas to appreciate their trajectory towards UN SDG goal 7- affordable and clean energy has progressed and to propose interventions that could improve their lives. This line of inquiry is necessary for a view of the prevailing energy deficiency, the pervasiveness of inequality between gender and the dearth of the empirical literature on the energy-gender nexus in the country. The paper fills an important void in the Southern African and Zimbabwe literature and contributes to the ongoing global debate on energy and gender by providing evidence and insights from a developing world context.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the key theories and empirical findings on the energy-gender nexus. Section 3 provides an overview of the research methodology used in the study, while Section 4 presents the study's findings. Section 5 discusses the results before providing conclusions and recommendations.

Theoretical perspectives on the energy, development and gender nexus

Energy and economic development

There is consensus that energy plays a critical role in economic growth (UN, 2019), human progress and development (Mandelli et al., 2016). To the extent that the UN General Assembly has a stand-alone goal on energy, SDG 7 calling for all to "ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable modern energy for all." Energy facilitates access to fundamental necessities such as clean water, sanitation and health care and advances development by the provision of reliable and efficient lighting, heating, cooking, mechanical power, transport, and telecommunication services (UNDP, 2001; World Bank, 2015).

Increasing access to energy is critical to ensuring socioeconomic development in the world's poorest countries (Grimshaw & Lewis, 2010). Lack of access to modern energy services severely limits socioeconomic development, an integral part of sustainable development (IEA, 2017). There is a need to improve the accessibility of energy by finding ways by which energy services can be delivered reliably, affordably, and economically viable, socially acceptable, and environmentally sound manner (UN, 2018). The inaccessibility of energy among the population has been recognised as negatively impacting health, education, and quality of life (Malonza & Fedha, 2015).

Energy and Gender

Gender issues gained prominence in the 21st century as efforts were made to understand the dimension of every aspect of social life to serve both men and women better. Cecelski (2004) attributes the awareness of gender issues to the pressure and lobbying that women from both northern and southern countries have applied to their governments and international organisations to have better recognition of their needs and rights. In the context of energy, from supply to end use, electricity is gendered, which means that women and men have different opportunities to engage in and influence the solutions for electricity provision and different opportunities to benefit from electricity (Winther et al., 2017).

Gender roles and responsibilities vary in different cultural and geographical contexts and over time (Van de Vijver, 2007). Within the traditional African family set up for example, it is the role of men to find food while cooking food for her family is one of the significant daily activities of a woman (Khamati-Njenga & Clancy, 2003) including finding the firewood to cook that food and cleaning the home. Women need sustainable energy services that address two recurrent problems in their lives: cooking and drudgery (Assmann, Laumanns & Uh, 2016). However, numerous statistics show that women are more affected by the lack of access to energy services (Malonza & Fedha, 2015).

Zimbabwe has always strived to achieve gender equality since its political independence in 1980 (Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009). The country's 2013 Constitution provides a strong legal framework for promoting and attaining gender equality and women's empowerment (UN, 2019). The country is also a signatory to important regional and international human rights instruments. The UN in Zimbabwe acknowledges that despite the legal commitment to gender equality at the international, regional and national levels, women and girls in Zimbabwe continue to face a myriad of challenges in the political, social and economic spheres as a consequence of gender inequalities and imbalances.

Energy Sources in Africa

The energy access situation in the least developed economies (LDCs) and sub-Saharan Africa is severest in these countries (UNDP, 2009). Energy sources in use in Africa include charcoal, petroleum-based cooking fuels (kerosene and LPG), biofuels, electricity (UNDP, 2005) as well as solar energy. The World Bank (2015) argues that for energy to be meaningful

for households, the energy source must meet the following attributes—adequate in quantity, available when needed, good quality, reliable, convenient, affordable, legal, healthy and safe.

Women in rural communities in developing countries rely on the traditional biomass fuels of wood and animal waste to complete their household tasks (UNDP, 2005). Although biomass is collected at zero financial cost, its major draw-back is its quality. In sub-Saharan Africa, air pollution from wood fuels in inefficient stoves or open fires is responsible for 1,100 respiratory-related deaths per day, primarily of women and children (AfDB, 2008). A less reported problem linked to firewood collection is that of sexual harassment (Patrick, 2007). The 2012 Census National Report confirms that 63% of Zimbabwe's population relies on wood as the main energy source for cooking and heating purposes (Nhambura, 2014).

Kerosene and LPG have the advantage that they are available through well-established commercial distribution channels (Assmann, Laumanns & Uh, 2016). Households in rural areas tend to use kerosene (paraffin) for lighting, which they usually purchase in smaller quantities (Tracy & Jacobson, 2012) to match household cash flows (Assmann, Laumanns & Uh, 2016). Urban and peri-urban households widely use kerosene for cooking. LPG is non-toxic and is considered clean because it can be burned very efficiently and emits few pollutants (Bailis, 2004).

Although grid electricity is often seen as an optimum energy source due to its cleanliness and convenience, it is not the cheap (Assmann, Laumanns & Uh, 2016). For those who have access to electricity in rural areas, lighting, and television use account for at least 80% of electricity consumption, while only 2% of the rural population use electricity for cooking (UNDP, 2009). The popularity of social networks has seen the charging of mobile phones increase in importance as an added use of electricity.

The use of solar energy is rising in worldwide energy markets as it becomes the cheapest source of electricity generation in many places, including China and India (IEA, 2017). The cost of solar panel modules has decreased significantly, while their efficiency has increased greatly with advances in technology, making solar power accessible to households in poor communities (Kabir, Kim & Szulejko, 2017). However, solar home systems cannot be used for cooking since their output is low (Assmann, Laumanns & Uh, 2016). They find ready use in lighting and charging of mobile phones.

People who use biogas speak highly of its controllability and cleanliness. On the negative side, the cost of a digester and the number of animals required to produce sufficient gas for the household's daily cooking needs

is usually beyond low-income households (Wisconsin Bioenergy Initiative, 2011). The collection of water needed as an input to a biogas system adds considerably to women's burden, i.e. (the time spent on fuel collection is switched to water collection).

Zimbabwe had slightly more than three million households in 2015, 44% of which were are electrified. As a result of the unreliability of national energy production, many citizens have turned to more alternative sources of energy: solar power and wood fuel. Sixty-two percent of households without electricity use biomass as the main source of energy for cooking, especially in rural areas where 90% live without access to energy (Mukeredzi, 2015). Rural communities meet 94% of their cooking energy requirements from traditional fuels, mainly firewood, while 20% of urban households use wood as the main cooking fuel, which they fetch from nearest forests (Mukeredzi, 2015).

Research methodology

The research adopted a phenomenological research philosophy as guided by the research objectives. The qualitative paradigm is useful at capturing narratives of energy access and use including any challenges that may be experienced through this process. The study utilised in-depth structured interviews with residents of peri-urban communities in Zimbabwe—Domboshava, Mt Hampden, Chishawasha and Cresta communities where issues of energy access, use and gender are topical.

Domboshava is a village in the province of Mashonaland East, located about 27 km north of Harare. Mount Hampden is a village in Mashonaland East province, about 18 km from the capital Harare. Chishawasha is a Roman Catholic Jesuit mission located about 25 km east of Harare, while Cresta is a farming area 5 km south of Harare. All these areas can be described as peri-urban settlements whose inhabitants are mostly poor and unemployed. The four areas have a population in excess of 30,000 people with prevalent poverty levels of 85%.

The research approach selected is consistent with a growing trend towards qualitative methods in empirical enquiries at the gender/energy/development interfaces (Chirau, 2015). In any case, adopting such an approach in peri-urban areas may be the only way of obtaining information from the residents, given their limited education to be able to competently complete the questionnaires. Ten focused interviews were conducted in

each area, for a total of 40 interviews. The sample size for interviews was based on the authors' subjective evaluation in terms of time frame, financial resources and availability of willing interviewees. In order to amplify the opinions of women, a ratio of 7:3 for women to men were interviewed. The rationale was that it is women and not men who bear the brunt of the problems and inconveniences associated with limited access to energy, because of their traditional roles in the home.

Each interviewee was requested to confirm residency in the area concerned before the interview could begin. The researchers went from door to door conducting the interviews. Participation in the interviews was voluntary and each interview lasted on average 20 minutes. A formal introduction was made outlining the aims of the research. Ethical considerations entailed adequately informing respondents on the nature and purpose of the study, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity, seeking voluntary participation and informed consent for participating in the research.

An interview schedule was used to collect data using in-depth one-on-one interviews. The local language, Shona, was used to gather information on the type of energy interviewees were using, the reliability of the energy type, perceptions on the type of energy interviewees were using, the cost of the energy type and the interviewees' ability to afford each particular energy type. In addition, the study sought to establish what impact the lack of energy or its interruption had on their lives in terms of eating habits, health, income generating projects and the schooling for their children. The authors are well-trained in interview techniques.

Qualitative data was fully transcribed on the same day to ensure all pertinent issues were captured correctly and on time. The Gender Analysis approach which interrogates variables such as gender division of labour, access to and control over resources, gender needs and interests, was used in analysing data. The transcribed data were classified and coded into different categories in order to identify emerging themes. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. A narrative by participants with participants' quotations in key sections is provided in the discussion.

Results, discussion and recommendations

Mt Hampden Area

Of the ten interviewees in the Mt Hampden area, the oldest was male, unemployed and 67 years old; whilst the youngest was female, unem-

ployed and 18 years old. The interviewees had an average age of 39.7 years. Only two interviewees (one male, one female) were formally employed, four (one male, three female) were self-employed while four (one male, three female) were unemployed.

One male respondent had a monthly income range of ZWL$2101 to $2800, one female had a salary range of ZWLS$1401 to $2100, four (one male and three female) were on a salary range of ZWL$701 to $1400 while the other four (three females and one male) were on a salary of less than ZWL$700.

a. Electricity supply

Six of the interviewees had grid electricity connected to their homes while four had no electricity connected. Of those connected, four said electricity supply was reliable while two said electricity supply was unreliable. Three said they experienced the loss of power once per week; two said once per day, while one said twice per day. Hence, in the Mt Hampden area, an electricity supply is considered reliable, and there is a power outage once per week.

Of those with electricity connected to their homes, three said they needed electricity especially between 6 am to 8 am for cooking, two said they needed electricity more between 4pm and 6pm while one said she needed electricity between 10 am and 12 pm for cooking. One female interviewee said, 'I need electricity between 6 am and 8 am for lighting and cooking breakfast for my family. In winter, it is pitch dark around 6 am and lighting is required in the house.'

Another female interviewee said, 'I need electricity between 4 pm and 6 pm to cook supper for my family after a long day's work at school and work. During this time, we can also listen to the news.'

Electricity outages were concentrated between 4 pm and 6 pm; according to four interviewees (all female), two respondents (one male and one female) said power outages occurred between 8 am, and 10 am. Hence, for the Mount Hampden area, power outages occur during the day between 4 pm and 6 pm.

All interviewees lamented the difficulties of recharging their mobile phones during electricity outages to communicate with their loved ones. Two male respondents raised the point that electricity outages were disrupting family time, while the four female respondents expressed concern over the fact that sometimes they could not iron clothes for their family,

that eating habits and times and the quality of food were being affected. The male respondents expressed displeasure at being unable to listen to the news or radio and keep abreast of current affairs.

b. Alternative energy sources

The four interviewees who had no electricity connected to their homes said they used firewood for cooking. Two of these said they used candles for lighting their homes, while the other two used kerosene lamps. For those with electricity connected (six), the alternative energy for cooking, in periods of power loss, was firewood (five) and solar energy (one). Of these, three used kerosene lamps, while the other three used candles for lighting. Hence, firewood was the main alternative to electricity for cooking, while candles and kerosene lamps were the main alternative to electricity for lighting. Interestingly, all interviewees said the burden and responsibility of fetching firewood rested on females because it was their traditional role.

All interviewees complained that firewood emitted too much smoke and some said they suffered from headaches and eyesight problems as a result, and in two cases, female interviewees complained of breathing problems and chest pains.

There was consensus that, although affordable, firewood was not reliable. The major drawback was that firewood was difficult to find. Said one lady, 'We walk long distances to go and fetch firewood'.

Another said, 'It is becoming increasingly difficult to get firewood as it is becoming more scarce. Sometimes all we have for cooking is cow dung.'

On lighting, both candles and kerosene lamps were deemed affordable but unreliable. Said one female interviewee, 'candles are unreliable because they give so little light, wind can extinguish their flame. To light a large room, you need two or three candles for effective light.' Another female said of kerosene lamps, 'their light is weak, you need two or more to light a standard room, but their major problem is that they emit too much smoke.'

c. Preferred energy type

Most interviewees said they preferred electricity for both cooking and lighting. They provided different reasons for their preference.

One female interviewee said, 'electricity is much better than firewood.'

A male interview said, 'when available, electricity is more reliable than firewood for cooking or candles for lighting.'

Domboshava

The oldest interviewee in Domboshava was female, self-employed and 40 years old, whilst the youngest was also female, 15 years old and still at school. The average age of the 10 interviewees was 25 years. While no interviewee was formally employed, five were self-employed, four were still at school while one was unemployed.

One female had a monthly income in the range ZWL$1401 to $2100, one male had an income between ZWL$701 to 1400, three females had an income of less than ZWL$700 while four (two males, two females) were at school while one female had no income.

a. Electricity supply

Four of the interviewees had electricity connected to their homes while six had no electricity connected. Of the four who had electricity, three said electricity supply was not reliable, with power outages occurring once per day. Hence, in the Domboshava area, electricity supply is unreliable and there is power outage once per day.

Of the three interviewees who had electricity connected to their homes, three said they needed electricity especially between 6 am to 8 am for cooking, two said they needed electricity more between 6 pm and 8 pm while one said she needed electricity between 6 am and 8 am for cooking.

A female student respondent said, 'I need electricity between 6 pm and 8 pm to study and do my homework.' Electricity outages were concentrated between 4 pm and 6 pm; according to all three interviewees Hence, for Domboshava area, significant power outages occur during the day between 4 pm and 6 pm.

One female interviewee said that sometimes they go to bed without cooking, 'we eat bread, taking it with drink and go to bed.'

Two female interviewees said, 'we are unable to watch television and keep abreast of current events, even communicate with our friends on social media'.

Three male interviewees said, 'they are unable to read the newspaper or other books in the comfort of their homes'.

b. Alternative energy sources

Of the six interviewees (all female) who had no electricity connected to their homes, four of them said they used firewood for cooking while two said they used kerosene stoves for cooking. Three interviewees said they used kerosene lamps for lighting, two said they used candles while one said she used an electric generator. Hence, firewood is the main alternative to electricity for cooking while kerosene lamps were the major alternative to electricity for lighting. All the female interviewees said the burden and responsibility of fetching firewood rested on them because it was their traditional and cultural role.

All interviewees complained that firewood emitted too much smoke resulting in running tears and headaches while cooking. Three female interviewees who used kerosene stoves for cooking said paraffin smell is unpleasant while one male interviewee who used a generator for lighting complained of too much noise.

c. Preferred energy type

Eight interviewees said they preferred electricity for both cooking and lighting. They provided different reasons for their preferences.

One female interviewee said, 'Electricity is more reliable for cooking and lighting when available,' while another female said 'lighting from electricity was more effective."

Chishawasha

In Chishawasha, seven women and three men were interviewed. The oldest interviewee was female, unemployed and aged 43 years old, while the youngest interviewee was also female, still at school and aged 19 years old. The interviewees had an average age of 33 years.

Two interviewees were formally employed, three were self-employed, four were unemployed while one was still at school. One male respondent had a monthly income of ZWL$1401 to $2100, three (one male, two females) had an income of $ZWL701 to 1400, four (three females) had an income of less than ZWL$700, while two (one male, one female) had no income.

a. Electricity supply

Five of the interviewees had electricity connected to their homes while the other five had no electricity connected. Of the five who had electricity

connected, four (two females, two males) said the electricity supply was not reliable while one female said the electricity supply was reliable. Three said they experienced loss of power supply twice per day, one said once per day while another one said more than twice per day. Both men and women were united in their position that electricity supply was unreliable. Hence, in the Chishawasha area, electricity supply is considered unreliable and there are power outages twice per week.

Of the three interviewees who had electricity connected to their homes, two said they needed electricity especially between 4 pm and 6 pm, while one said they needed electricity between 6 am and 8 am. One male interviewee said, 'I need electricity between 4 pm and 6 pm to do my school homework'. Electricity outages were concentrated between 4 pm and 6 pm; according to two of the three interviewees. Hence, for Domboshava area, power outages occur during the day between 4 pm and 6 pm.

One male interviewee said that, 'I need electricity to read my novels and school notes.'

A male interviewee said he needed electricity, 'to read and watch television.'

b. Alternative energy sources

Of the five interviewees (two males and three females) who had no electricity connected to their homes, all of them said they used firewood for cooking with one using a gas (LPG) stove when funds permitted. On lighting, three said they used candles, one said he used solar energy and the other one said she used kerosene lamps. It was interesting to note that the type of energy used was somehow related to their level of income-those with higher incomes tended to prefer electricity and LPG, while those with lower income tended to focus on kerosene and wood for cooking and lighting.

The interviewees were united in their agreement that firewood supply was unreliable, as it was difficult to find, although it was affordable. Said one female interviewee, 'We now travel longer distances to fetch firewood than we used to do some five years ago'.

Another female said, 'Most trees have been cut down and finding firewood is now a struggle.'

On lighting, both candles and kerosene lamps were deemed, affordable but unreliable. Said one female interviewee, 'we normally use one candle in the kitchen but because of the smoke from firewood, it provides inadequate light. Providing two candles would be expensive.'

On kerosene lamps, one female interviewee said, 'kerosene lamps emit too much smoke which is bad for our health and their light is too weak to enable effective reading for children's homework'.

c. Preferred energy type

All the interviewees said they preferred electricity for both cooking and lighting. They provided different reasons for their preference.

One male interviewee said, 'When available electricity is cheaper and reliable'.

Another female interviewee said, 'electricity is so much more convenient, there is no smoke and it is more effective.'

A female interviewee said, 'electricity does not cause damage to our cooking utensils in the way that firewood does, so in the long run firewood costs us more money if we factor in the cost of buying new pots to replace damaged pots.'

Cresta

The fourth and final set of interviews were held in Cresta, a farming community about 20 km south of Harare. The oldest interviewee was female, unemployed and aged 50 years old, whilst the youngest interviewee was also female, unemployed and aged 20 years old. The interviewees had an average age of 33.8 years.

Three interviewees (one female, two males) were formally employed, one female was self-employed while six (one male, five females) were unemployed. One male interviewee had a monthly income in the range ZWL$2101 to $2800, three (two males, one female) had an income of ZWL$701 to 1400 while six (females) had an income of less than ZWL$700.

a. Electricity Supply

Five of the interviewees had electricity connected to their homes while the other five had no electricity connected. Of the first five, four said electricity supply was unreliable while one said it was reliable. Three said they experienced loss of power supply once per day while two said once per week. Hence, in the Cresta area, electricity supply is considered reliable and there is a power outage once per week.

Of the five interviewees who had electricity connected to their homes, three said they needed electricity especially between 6 am to 8 am for

cooking while two said they needed electricity more between 6 pm and 8 pm. One female interviewee said, 'I need electricity between 6 pm and 8 pm to study and do my homework.'

Women worried more about the difficulties of cooking and cellphone recharge while men were concerned with radio, television, and cellphone recharging. Electricity outages were having an adverse effect on both men and women but in different ways. Electricity outages were concentrated between 4 pm and 6 pm; according to all the five interviewees. Hence, for Cresta area, power outages occur during the day between 4 pm and 6 pm.

b. Alternative energy sources

Of the five interviewees (four females, one male) who had no electricity connected to their homes, three said they used firewood for cooking while two said they used kerosene stoves for cooking. Three female interviewees said they used kerosene lamps for lighting while two said they used candles. Hence, firewood is the predominant alternative energy source to electricity for cooking while kerosene lamps were the major alternative for lighting. All the female interviewees said the burden and responsibility of fetching firewood rested on them because it was considered their traditional and cultural role. One male said, 'he buys firewood if he can it and he has money to reduce the pressure of fetching firewood on his wife.'

c. Preferred energy type

Eight interviewees said they preferred electricity for both cooking and lighting.

One female interviewee said, 'Electricity is more reliable for cooking and lighting when available.'

Another female interviewee said, 'electricity is more efficient than firewood'.

Discussion and way forward

Electricity supply in the four communities understudy is unreliable and characterised by frequent blackouts. Hence, a situation of energy poverty exists, which is a serious hindrance to economic and social development. The situation is further compounded by the fact that the communi-

ties' main alternative to electricity—firewood, is fast being depleted. Other sources of energy such as generators, biofuels and solar systems are either too expensive for these poor communities or detrimental to their health.

The average income for the 40 interviewees was less than ZWL$700 per month. With the country's Poverty Datum Line (PDL) for an average family of five at ZWL$3700 as at November 2019, all interviewees were living in poverty. This situation has serious negative implications on the interviewees' ability to access the energy type of their choice because the major constraint is affordability. Hence, they suffer two types of poverty, which incidentally are interconnected—poverty of resources and energy poverty.

Energy poverty creates significant social challenges for communities. Energy to light the home, energy to do homework, energy to cook, energy to warm the water or energy to listen to the radio or television is a daily struggle for these communities. Energy for incoming generating projects like chicken rearing, welding or growing mushrooms all depend to some extent on energy supply. Direct consequences of energy unavailability include afflictions for urban dwellers such as energy collection trauma, communication difficulties with loved ones, difficulties in keeping abreast with current affairs, skipped homework and multiple environmental burdens (Malonza & Fedha, 2015) as well challenges with income generating projects.

Male interviewees decried the fact that electricity outages were disrupting family time. They also expressed displeasure at being unable to listen to the news on the radio or watch television to keep abreast of current affairs. Female interviewees on the other hand, expressed concern over the fact that sometimes they could not iron clothes for their families, that eating times and habits had changed while the quality of prepared food was negatively affected. In all the four communities, female interviewees spoke about the negative impact the lack of energy was having on their children's homework. Clearly, electricity outages were having a negative effect on both men and women but in different ways. All respondents lamented the difficulties of recharging their cellphones so that they could communicate with their loved ones, during blackouts.

In the peri-urban areas under study, biomass and agricultural waste provided the bulk of the energy that is required in areas where there is no electricity or during periods when electricity supply interruption. Kerosene ranked as the next energy alternative after biomass followed by LPG (gas), which is used on a much smaller scale. Although firewood

was affordable, women said it was not reliable in terms of its performance (different types of wood burn differently—some more than others, wet wood is difficult to burn) and is increasingly becoming difficult to find. The smoke emitted from wood is damaging to their health. Candles and kerosene lamps provide weak lighting and in an environment of smoke, their use is rather limited. They also pose a danger of fire and burns. Although clean, solar energy costs are beyond the reach of many in peri urban communities.

Clearly, the above narrative shows that women suffer the brunt of energy poverty because of their traditional role in society. The problems caused by energy poverty are borne mainly by women and girls whose traditional role is to fetch firewood, cook the family meal and clean afterwards. These problems include significant waste of time on energy-related errands such as fetching firewood or biomass (drudgery), health problems from these kinds of energy sources, challenges in completing homework where it is little or no energy, communication blues—no WIFI or power for batteries, problems keeping abreast with current affairs either on radio or national television, compounded by the poverty of resources. This situation perpetuates gender inequality.

So, what is the way forward? Solutions lie in the government subsidising biofuels and or solar systems to make them readily accessible to these poor communities. Stoves that reduce the emission of smoke need to be made available to rural and peri urban populations. Governments, NGOs and aid organisations have done very well by distributing food aid in times of difficulty but none have had energy as part of their priority. They need to prioritise energy when they do their normal aid distributions.

Male policy makers dominate the African policy making landscape. Policy makers need to be sensitised to the energy challenges that their populations but more specifically, women face in energy access and use. This should enable policy makers to come up with gender friendly policies and energy frameworks that reduce the burden of energy access and use on women. In addition, more women are required in positions influencing energy policy. In addition, the inclusion of more women in energy policy making positions would help make energy polices help make energy policies more gender friendly.

Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all? This is a long shot for these communities, especially for the women. For a start electricity is neither reliable, affordable nor adequate as characterised by frequent blackouts. Alternative energy sources such as biomass

and kerosene are of poor quality causing health related problems mainly to women and children while electricity, solar and LPG are expensive. This situation continues to retard the development of these community, negatively affecting women more.

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Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of Pregnant Women of Antenatal Care (ANC) in Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State

ABSTRACT. Understanding maternal knowledge and practices of the community regarding care during pregnancy and delivery is very necessary and important. Hence, this study identified pregnant women's knowledge about antenatal care utilization, assessed pregnant women's attitude towards the use of antenatal care and determined the demographic, social and cultural factors that may contribute to the associated knowledge and attitude of pregnant women on antenatal care utilization in Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study was conducted in Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria, and the population consisted of the entire pregnant women with a sample of 89 pregnant women who were purposively selected as the subject for this study through snowballing. Primary data were gathered through the use of a questionnaire and were later analyzed using SPSS. The study found out that the majority of the participating women know the importance of ANC services although education level affected its utilization. The study also established that marital status did not influence service utilization in antenatal services. The study concluded that the main factors influencing the utilization of ANC are the respondent's level of education, knowledge, and attitude. In addition, low income, long-distance, insufficient or expensive transportation services are major obstacles to ANC access for pregnant women.

KEYWORDS: knowledge, attitude, perception, antenatal care

Background to the Study

Antenatal Care (ANC) is given different meanings by different scholars, among others the meaning that says, "Antenatal Care means care before birth and includes education, counselling, screening and treatment to monitor and to promote the well-being of the mother and fetus" (Adewoye et al., 2013). Antenatal Care is an opportunity to promote the benefits of skilled attendance at birth and to encourage women to seek postpartum care for themselves and their newborn. It is also an ideal time to counsel women about the benefits of child spacing (Ye, Harun-Or-Rashid & Junichi Sakamoto, 2010).

According to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, every year, at least half a million women and girls die as a result of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or the six weeks following delivery. Almost all (99%) of these deaths occur in developing countries. This shows that the Antenatal care activity is very weak in developing countries. The main reasons that hinder the use of antenatal care are different from country to country. Developing countries encounter hemorrhage, followed by eclampsia, infection, abortion complications and obstructed labor. Other issues are lack of knowledge and preparedness about reproductive health in the family, community and health provider (Ojo, 2014).

To alleviate such factors, Antenatal Care is the most important method for detecting pregnancy problems in the early period. Because antenatal care is the best mechanism to minimize maternal mortality and give a piece of good information for pregnant women about their birth and how to prevent related problems. The best and most advantage of Antenatal Care is to protect the health of women's and their infants as well as indicating the danger signals that will be occurred and needs to be further treated by advanced health professionals (Effendi, Isaranurug & Chompikul, 2008).

Several studies indicate that the Antenatal Care utilization rate is still low due to many factors that need to be examined such as sociodemographic factors, knowledge of social support. They conclude that eliminating such factors is important to increase women's participation in Antenatal Care. In Ethiopia, although, access to health care services is improving, the country has faced challenges in increasing health care utilization and the proportion of women who give birth with the assistance of skilled attendants is the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa (Regassa, 2011).

Proper ANC is one of the important ways in reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality. Unfortunately, many women in developing countries do not receive such care (Ye et al., 2010). Understanding maternal knowledge and practices of the community regarding care during pregnancy and delivery are very necessary and important. Since data on this very important issue are scarce in some communities, therefore, this study was carried out to evaluate the effect of ANC among women of Ago-Iwoye.

Statement of the Problem

Every minute, at least one woman dies from complications related to pregnancy or childbirth that means 529,000 women a year. In addition, for

every woman who dies in childbirth, around 20 more suffer injury, infection or disease approximately 10 million women each year. Studies reveal that the cause of maternal mortality in developing countries is mostly due to poor accessibility to maternal health services poor referral to appropriate antenatal and delivery care units, and inadequacies of available care. These studies suggested that most of the maternal deaths were preventable with improved coverage of antenatal care, safe delivery and postpartum care. There are regional variations in antenatal care utilization rate basically due to differences in the availability of health care facilities, among the regions during 1985–1990, the antenatal coverage rate for the whole of Africa was 60% compared to 99% for developed countries (Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey, EDHS, 2016).

Based on EDHS 2016 report, in Ethiopia, the maternal mortality rate has been estimated to be 676 per 100,000 live births. This is one of the highest rates in the World. In addition, women's reproductive health problems are a timely and serious matter of concern, for any health professionals, the government as well as society. Antenatal care related problem parameters are very sensitive because it is directly related with maternal morbidity and mortality, and loss of the fetus. It is a necessary component of maternal health to identify complications. According to the 2011 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), antenatal care coverage of Ethiopia was 43%. Regular Antenatal Care visits can provide some benefits for the women such as a care provider that can result in reducing complications during pregnancy the absence of this activity affects millions of mothers in the rural as well as urban areas. The Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) in 2013, however, stipulated that approximately 576 women per 100,000 live births die as a result of pregnancy and childbirth-related complications. In the same vein, in a study conducted by Fagbamigbe and Idemudia (2015), findings revealed that affordability, availability, and accessibility of ANC providers are the most common problems facing utilization of ANC in Nigeria. Government-owned health institutions in Nigeria are not being effective in encouraging women to attend antenatal care (Nwosu, Urama & Chigozie, 2012).

Many women from different studies have mentioned that women are embarrassed when visiting an ANC. With improved knowledge about the benefits of ANC and the importance of a positive attitude toward it, these women will come to understand that ANC's medical procedures and interventions will do much to save their lives and improve their children's health. In this way, they will be motivated enough to overcome their reluc-

tance. In many ways, changing attitudes and behavior are the most challenging tasks, but are also the least costly. Proper educational campaigns and the improved dissemination of information are investments for the long-term (Igbokwe, 2012). Most previous studies done on knowledge and attitude of women toward ANC were community-based done on general women of child-bearing age. Until now little has been known about the knowledge and attitude of women who are currently using ANC services. Therefore, this study will help to the percentage of women who benefit from this very important service of women's health and have a good attitude about antenatal care services. This study examines the extent to which pregnant women utilize the services of orthodox medicine both for care and delivery. Hence, this study was set out to assess knowledge, attitudes and the level and reasons of the utilization of antenatal care clinics by pregnant women regarding its benefits in Ago-Iwoye.

Objectives

  i. To identify pregnant women's knowledge about antenatal care utilization in Ago-Iwoye.
  ii. To assess pregnant women's attitude towards the use of antenatal care in Ago-Iwoye.
 iii. To determine the demographic, social and cultural factors that may contribute to the associated knowledge and attitude of pregnant women on antenatal care utilization in Ago-Iwoye.

Significance of the study

This study is significant and worthy of investigation to provide corresponding research into the impact of antenatal care on pregnant women in Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria.

The significance of this study will be helpful to pregnant women in various endeavors in an integrated and enthusiastic approach in tackling problems and challenges inherent in the conception period. However, it will contribute to academic knowledge in availing researchers to have a broad insight into the consequences of having sound antenatal care. However, the significance of this research study will also be a source of empirical framework for future researchers into this concept. This study

is intended to extract the knowledge and attitude of pregnant women on the benefits of ANC utilization during antenatal visits. The findings of this study in Ago-Iwoye will serve as a reference for giving intervention accordingly by the health care providers and others who are concerned; for conducting further researches; the findings of this study will have special importance for health care providers because it will serve as a baseline for filling gaps of the actual practices on antenatal care. The findings with relevant recommendations will be also submitted to the health care centers involved in the study for the implementation of the researchers' recommendation.

Literature Review

Knowledge of Women towards Antenatal Care

Health knowledge is considered to be one of the key factors that enable women to be aware of their rights and health status to seek appropriate health services. Studies conducted in different parts of the world have discovered that level of knowledge of mothers toward ANC is important for utilizing ANC service: The level of knowledge of pregnant mothers also varies in different parts of the world (Carroli, Rooney and Villar, 2014).

An institutional-based cross-sectional study conducted in north-central Nigeria to investigate knowledge and utilization of ANC service has revealed that 87.7% of women of childbearing age were aware of the benefits of antenatal care out of which 25.9% had fair knowledge about the activities carried out during the antenatal care services, 69.9% had good knowledge while only 4.2% had poor knowledge (Igbokwe, 2012).

Similarly, a study that was conducted in Tunisia to investigate mothers' knowledge about preventive care indicated that 95% of women knew the importance of antenatal examination (Ojo, 2014). Different to these findings a cross-sectional study conducted using two-stage cluster sampling at 24 selected villages in the Kham District, Nagoya, Japan found that most of the respondents 73.9%, lacked sufficient knowledge towards ANC (Maputle et al., 2017).

In another cross-sectional study conducted in Metekel zone, North West Ethiopia, 65.6% of women interviewed knew at least half of the knowledge questions on ANC and so labeled as knowledgeable (Tur, 2009).

Determinants of Knowledge of Women towards Antenatal Care

Different factors can influence the knowledge of the women towards ANC service. A study done on knowledge and practice of antenatal care in an urban area of India revealed that the primipara had more knowledge than the multipara although it was not statistically significant. This study also reviled that women having adequate knowledge of ANC were found to be statistically associated with their educational status, religion, age at marriage and house ownership. With an increase in the educational status, the adequacy of knowledge also increased correspondingly (Carroli, Rooney & Villar, 2014).

ANC Knowledge and its Utilization

In the study done in Metekel Zone, Northwest Ethiopia, among the socio-demographic factors; being in an urban residence, possessing radio and educational status of secondary school and above were more than 4 times, two times, and three times more likely to be knowledgeable about ANC (Tur, 2012). It could be in the realization that knowledge of pregnant mothers is a major factor in determining the extent of utilization of antenatal services. Reports from different parts of the world have indicated that the educational level of pregnant mothers toward ANC care service influences its utilization. A study done in the Copper belt Province of Zambia to identify factors associated with late antenatal care attendance in selected rural and urban communities found that inadequate knowledge about ANC resulted in 2.2 times high odds for late ANC attendance than women who had adequate knowledge in the urban district. The perception of no benefits derived from the commencement of ANC early was associated with a 4 times likelihood of late attendance in the urban district (Carroli, Rooney & Villar, 2014).

Attitude of Women towards Antenatal Care

"Attitude" is a state of readiness or tendency to respond in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli, is mostly dormant and is expressed in speech or behavior only when the object or situation is encountered (Banda, Michelo & Hazemba, 2012). It is a person's affective feelings of like and dislike. So in this study, attitude refers to the expectant mother's affective feelings of like and dislike to antenatal services. Thus, the pregnant women's personal experience with antenatal services can be positive or negative. A Pakistan community-based survey on the provision and utilization of routine antenatal care has described that attitude towards ANC at government health facilities was mostly negative. In another cross-section

study conducted using two-stage cluster sampling at 24 selected villages in the Kham District of Xiengkhouang Province, Nagoya, Japan, 61.9% of study participants had harbored a negative attitude towards the ANC.

Previous studies in rural areas of the developing world have shown an association of specific attitudes with the utilization of and access to health services. The attitude towards ANC at government health facilities was significantly associated negatively with ANC and shows low utilization of ANC. Studies have reported negative attitudes as a major barrier to ANC utilization (Effendi, Isaranurug & Chompikul, 2008). Based on the Kham District of Xiengkhouang Province, Nagoya, Japan women who had a positive attitude were 3 times more likely to receive ANC services than those who had a negative attitude. Other studies in Indonesia have also reported a similar finding in which respondent's attitude was a critical factor in. encouraging pregnant women to receive ANC service. The level of education has a significant influence on the attitude of pregnant women to antenatal services. Pregnant women with basic education usually manifest a positive attitude. Pregnant mothers with secondary and tertiary education qualifications had a positive attitude to antenatal services while the attitude to antenatal services by pregnant women with no formal education and primary education showed negative (Alam et al., 2016).

According to the study conducted in Nigeria attitude of pregnant women towards antenatal services was positive. It reveals the attitude of pregnant women with secondary school and tertiary education was positive while pregnant women with no formal education and primary educations were negative respectively.

Generally, different studies in different countries showed that there were similarities and differences in pregnant women's knowledge and attitude on the benefits of antenatal care. The study conducted in the same area found good knowledge and attitude, and other findings were the opposite. Therefore, this review helps to compare the finding of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Max Weber Action Theory

Max Weber conceived sociology as a comprehensive science of social action. His primary focus was on the subjective meanings that human actors attach to their actions in their mutual orientations within specific socio-historical contexts. Coser says, "In his analytical focus on individual

human actors he differed from many of his predecessors whose sociology was conceived in socio-cultural terms".

Max Weber began with the idea of social action to make sociology a scientific inquiry. Thus, the idea of action is central to Max Weber's s sociology. For Weber, the combined qualities of "action" and "meaning" were the central facts for sociology's scientific analysis.

Weber defined sociology is, "the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its courses and effects." Action in Weber's analysis is all human behavior to which an actor attaches subjective meaning. According to Weber "Action is social, in so far as the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual it takes account of the behavior of others and thereby oriented in its course."

Weber was particularly interested in how social action is often conceptualized by social actors in terms of means-ends chains. For instance, a large bureaucratic organization will organize the activity of social individuals by assigning each worker a particular role in a hierarchy.

The responsibilities associated with this role are rules, or norms, that serve as means to the ends served by the bureaucracy. These norms serve to make organized social action possible; that is they routinize and formalize social interaction among individuals who, for whatever reason are committed to serving the organization.

Application to this study

The primary task of sociology is the study of social action. Sociology studies the different aspects of human behaviour particularly the meaning, purpose and value of human behaviour. Max Weber observes that social action is that action of an individual which is somehow influenced by the action and behaviour of other individuals and by which it is modified and its direction is determined.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria. Ago-Iwoye is a town located in Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. It is the most populous town in the local government area because of the state university (Olabisi Onabanjo University) which is resident there. The population of this study consisted of the entire pregnant women in Ago-Iwoye. A sample of 89 pregnant women was purposively selected as

the subject for this study. This was done through snowballing. The snowballing helps to get a referral of pregnant women based on the antenatal appointments they have at the local health centers in Ago-Iwoye. Data was sourced from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were gathered through the use of questionnaire while secondary data were gathered through journals, textbooks, periodicals, symposia and seminal papers. Data were analyzed using SPSS.

Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

Data Analysis of Respondents Bio-Data

From table 1 below, data shows the age range distribution of the respondents and it is evident that 16 respondents who are 17.98% were between 16–20 years of age. 18 (20.22%) respondents were between the ages of 21 and 25 years 22 (24.72%) respondents were between the ages of 26–30 years old while the remaining 33 respondents (37.08%) were above 30 years old. The results again showed that majority of the 59.55% of the respondents were females while 40.44% were males. These implied that the study area was dominated by females. It can be inferred from the table that 12 respondents (18.48%) were primary school certificate holders. 39 respondents (43.82%) were SSSCE holders, 30 respondents (33.71%) were graduates from various tertiary institutions while the remaining 8 respondents (8.99%) had no formal education and dropped out from the primary schools. It can be inferred also that all the respondents either belonged to the Christianity religion or Islam while none of the respondents in this study was a traditionalist. The table reveals that 66 respondents (74.16%) were Christians while the remaining 23 respondents (25.85%) were Muslims. The table also shows that 24 respondents (26.97%) were traders. 9 respondents (10.11%) were civil servants, 21 respondents (23.60%) were self-employed. 19 (10.11%) of the respondents were artisans, 8 of the respondents (8.99%) were students while the remaining 8 respondents (8.99%) filled housewives. The table reveals that 26 respondents (29.2 1%) were attending the antenatal clinic with their first pregnancy; 23 respondents were there with their second pregnancy while the remaining 40 respondents (44.94%) were thereafter their second or more delivery. Finally, the table reveals that 12 respondents (13.48%) claimed that they had—their last delivery at home were 64 respondents (71.91%) had their last delivery at the hospital while the remaining 13 respondents (14.61%) had their last delivery at traditional midwifery.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Gender	Freq.	%	Age	Freq.	%	Employment Status	Freq.	%
Male	36	40.4	16–20 years	16	17.9	Trader	24	26.9
Female	53	59.5	21–25 years	18	20.2	Civil servant	9	10.1
Total	89	100	26–30 years	22	24.7	Self-employed	21	23.6
Religion	Freq.	%	Above 30 years	33	37.1	Artisan	19	10.1
Christians	66	74.2	Total	89	100	Student	8	8.9
Muslims	23	25.9	Educational Qualifications	Freq.	%	House wife	8	8.9
Traditionalist	–	5	Primary School	12	13.4	Total	89	100
Total	89	100	SSSCE	39	43.8	Number of Children	Freq.	%
Place of Last Delivery	Freq.	%	Tertiary	30	33.7	First pregnancy	26	29.2
House	12	13.4	Others	8	8.9	Less than 2 children	23	25.8
Hospital	64	71.9	Total	89	100	More than 2 children	40	44.9
Traditional Midwife	13	14.6				Total	89	100
Total	89	100						

Survey (2019)

Presentation of Data: Section B

The data collected in this section were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of (Mean) and inferential statistics of (z-test). The mean was used to analyze data relating to the research questions. The interpretation of each item of the questionnaire was determined based on the mean of the item relative to the real limits of numbers shown below:

Responses	Rating Scale	Limits of Numbers
High	4	3.50–4.49
Low	3	2.50–3.49

Survey (2019)

Any item with a mean score from 2.50–3.49 suggests "low" and any item with a mean score from 3.50–4.49 suggests "good". The z-test was the statistical tool used in testing two of the research questions.

Knowledge of Pregnant Women on Antenatal Care

Table 2 shows the pregnant women's responses to the question on knowledge regarding antenatal care. There were 12 items in the questionnaire on knowledge. Out of 12 items to determine the mean ratings of the respondents on the knowledge of utilization of antenatal clinic by pregnant women, one (1) item, was rated 'low'. The item rated low was: Can emotional disturbance affect fetal growth? (3.43). All the remaining 11 items were rated 'high'.

In all, the total mean was 3.65, which is rated high, this suggests that there is a piece of significant knowledge about antenatal care utilization of pregnant women in Ago-Iwoye.

Since the total mean of the knowledge score of the respondents was 3.65. The knowledge score was further divided into two levels which are good knowledge and poor knowledge using the total mean knowledge score as the cutoff point. The proportion of respondents with good knowledge was 22.72 (51.85).

Table 2. Knowledge of Pregnant Women on Antenatal Care

Knowledge on Antenatal Care	Mean	Remarks
Do pregnant women need to go for an antenatal check-up?	3.92	High
If yes is it required to go for ANC even if there is no complication during pregnancy	3.67	High
Should the first antenatal check-up be one in the first 3 months?	3.87	High
Does a pregnant woman need a vitamin supplement and iron and folic acid tablet during pregnancy?	3.54	High
Does a pregnant woman need to take extra food compared to a non-pregnant state?	3.52	High
Blood screening for HIV infection and hemoglobin level	3.59	High
Blood pressure and Blood sugar level examination?	3.55	High
Can high blood pressure affect the fetus growth?	3.66	High
Is ultrasound scan safe for the fetus?	3.73	High
Is antenatal class good to prepare expecting mothers mentally?	3.54	High
Can emotional disturbance affect fetal growth?	3.43	Low
Where is the ideal place a pregnant woman should deliver her baby?	3.87	High
Total mean	3.65	

Survey (2019)

Attitude towards Ante Natal Care among Pregnant Women

There were 10 statements to measure the attitude level of the respondents. Table 3 shows the pregnant women's responses to the items on their attitude towards antenatal care. Out of 10 items to determine the mean ratings of the respondents on the attitude of the utilization of antenatal clinic by pregnant women, all of the items on the questionnaire were rated 'high'.

In all, the total mean was 3.80, which is rated high, this suggests that there is a significant attitude of the pregnant women towards the utilization of antenatal care clinic in Ago-Iwoye. Since the total mean score on the attitude of the respondents was 3.80. The attitude score was further divided into two levels which are a good attitude and a poor attitude using the total mean attitude score as the cutoff point. For the individual questions, it was noted that there was a good response to the statement on going for an antenatal checkup when pregnant where the mean rating was 3.98. However, the proportion of respondents with a good attitude was 19.48 (51.30).

Table 3. Attitude of Pregnant Women towards Ante-Natal Care

Items	Mean	Remarks
Early antenatal booking is good for my pregnancy	3.85	High
I will go for antenatal booking before the third month of my pregnancy	3.69	High
Do you believe that vitamin supplement is good for the fetus?	3.68	High
I believe alcohol drinking will affect fetal growth	3.88	High
Do you go for an antenatal checkup when pregnant	3.98	High
Antenatal follow up is good to monitor the mother's and fetus' health	3.88	High
Will you allow the doctor to check your blood pressure and blood sugar level?	3.77	High
Do you plan to deliver in the hospital if you are pregnant again?	3.89	High
Would you do early preparation for the delivery	3.75	High
Are you ready to face any pregnancy and delivery complication	3.69	High
Total mean	3.80	

Survey (2019)

Factors Associated with Knowledge and Attitude of Pregnant Women

There were 15 statements to identify factors that are associated with the knowledge and attitude of the women who visited selected health centers for antenatal care. Table 4 presents responses of pregnant women to the items on these factors. Out of 15 items to determine the mean ratings of the respondents on these factors 13 items were rated low. The items that were rated high were: 'I don't like to visit the antenatal clinic because of the long waiting time' (3.55) and 'Did you took it as a normal thing to do to start antenatal' (3.77) all the remaining items were rated 'low'.

In all, the total mean was 2.90, which is rated low, this suggests that there are significant factors responsible for the knowledge and attitude of pregnant women on antenatal care use in Ago-Iwoye.

Table 4. Factors Associated with Knowledge and Attitude of Pregnant Women

Items	Mean	Remarks
I wait to get permission before visiting an antenatal clinic	3.34	Low
I am reluctant to visit the antenatal clinic because of long-distance	3.04	Low
I don't like to visit the antenatal clinic because I perceived it as showing off the pregnancy	3.02	Low

I don't like to visit the antenatal clinic because I fear that witches may terminate the pregnancy	2.21	Low
Were you forced to visit the antenatal clinic	2.12	Low
Do you have to visit the antenatal clinic because you coincidentally conceived	2.04	Low
Did you took it as a normal thing to do to start antenatal	3.77	High
I have the perception of being at high risk when I visit the antennal clinic	2.87	Low
I don't feel like visiting the antenatal clinic because there may be no midwife	3.11	Low
I don't like to visit the antenatal clinic because I am not satisfied with the services	3.05	Low
I don't like to visit the antenatal clinic because of the bad attitude of the health workers	3.11	Low
I don't like to visit the antenatal clinic because of the long waiting time	3.55	High
I cannot visit the antenatal clinic because of paying for ANC services	3.23	Low
Are you shy or embarrassed to visit the antenatal clinic	2.04	Low
Total mean	2.90	

Survey (2019)

Discussion of findings

Out of 100 proposed sample sizes for this study, a total of 89 pregnant women agreed to participate in this study making the response rate 89. The mean age for the study subject was 25.92 with the majority of them being greater than 25 years of age. The majority (72) were currently living with their partners and had an educational status of greater than senior secondary school education (77) grade. The largest number of the respondents 72 (80.90) were housewives. Sixty-six (74.16) of the women were Christians.

The present study has demonstrated that the majority of the participating women know the importance of ANC services, almost all respondents indicate they know the existence and importance of ANC. It would be expected that knowledge of the role played by ANC would have brought positive results in terms of the utilization of the ANC services (Nisar & White, 2014).

In this study education level did affect utilization of ANC, Regassa (2011) demonstrated that low utilization of ANC is associated with low ed-

ucation. The lack of effect of education on utilization of ANC In this study may be due to high levels of low education among the participating women making it hard to show a difference. Moreover, Ye et al. (2010) argue that education assists in adequate utilization of ANC services.

However, education has no direct influence on the utilization of ANC as argued as utilization may be determined by several factors. The study has established that marital status had no influence on service utilization in antenatal services. This finding differs from Au et al. that unmarried status influenced less uptake of antenatal care services.

The same factors were used to identify factors that are associated with the knowledge and attitude of the women who visited selected health centers for ANC checkups. Some studies claimed that the educational status, partner support and health facility visit for ANC during the most recent pregnancy were found to be associated with the attitude of the women.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study confirmed that the utilization rate of ANC services was high in Ago-Iwoye area of Ogun State, Nigeria. The main factors influencing the utilization of ANC are the respondent's level of education, knowledge, and attitude. In addition, low income, long-distance, insufficient or expensive transportation services are major obstacles to ANC access for pregnant women.

Recommendations

It is recommended that health education programs should be undertaken by communities to improve women's awareness of ANC and that the Ministry of Health should provide ANC services such as mobile health care and home care visits for remote villages or those difficult to reach. At the same time, ANC services should be affordable, especially for poor pregnant women.

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Challenges of Bangladeshi Women Working in the National Security Institutions

ABSTRACT. This study attempts to find out the challenges faced by the Bangladeshi women serving in the national security institutions from three broad spheres. Furthermore, it explains the challenges based on the liberal feminist theory, which talks about gender equality in the workplace and society. This paper critically analyzes the masculine nature of the security institutions and the existing gender power disparities within these institutions in Bangladesh.

KEYWORDS: masculinity, militarization, national security institutions, gender perspective, Bangladesh

Introduction

Gender is a socially constructed identity where masculinity has privilege over femininity. Historically, masculinity has been dominating over femininity in the societal structure and institutions. Therefore, women in society still must face various challenges. The gender-stereotyped fixed roles for women do not allow and often discourage performing certain activities and serving in certain job sectors. "Historically gender power imbalances rooted in society, and it could also be found in military and police institutions" (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 194). Therefore, it can be stated that the Military and Police are gendered institutions hence gender power imbalances are seen in the highest form within these institutions. Thus, it is certain that women face challenges while serving in these institutions. The percentage of male serving in the Bangladesh Army is higher than any other public services in Bangladesh. Therefore, the proportion of female serving in the Bangladesh Army is the lowest (Mouri, n.d.). Like the other military and police organizations of the world, the functions of security institutions in Bangladesh are shaped by gender power imbalances. Not only the institutions but also the traditional societal, cultural, and religious

norms in Bangladesh do not support the engagement of female in the security institutions as it is believed activities associated with these institutions are only for men. In addition, there is a lack of understanding of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 at the national level hence there is no national action plan or policy to implement it efficiently. To recruit more competent Bangladeshi females into the national security institutions, the challenges they face must be identified, acknowledged, and addressed appropriately through both policy and institutional level. It is important to find out the challenges as the security sectors would require more female security personnel to deal with the multidimensional and complex security issues in the future. Given the contexts mentioned above, this study aims to find out the fundamental impediments faced by the Bangladeshi women serving in the national security institutions. This research followed an interpretive method by using qualitative research on collecting and analyzing data. Overall, a policy-oriented desk research method has been followed to conduct this research. For collecting qualitative data and related information, secondary sources of data collection such as books, journal articles, newspapers, policy and strategy papers, websites, government reports were reviewed. Liberal feminism has been used as the theoretical framework to comprehend the challenges, underrepresentation, and exclusion of women in security institutions.

Challenges from National Security Institutions

Military culture and organization are male-dominated and therefore increased presence and inclusive participation of women in the military pose challenges to its culture in different ways (Davis, 2009). According to Beardsley and Karim (2017), the major challenges for women have its root in the hierarchical gender power structures and relations in their respective national security institutions. Thus, it can be said that security institutions are gendered (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). It is no different in the case of Bangladesh since its security institutions are also male-dominated and thus its rules, customs and practices are influenced by gendered norms and culture. In the security sector, national military and police organizations are known as the formal institutions and in most cases, historically these institutions are created by men (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). Beardsley and Karim (2017, p. 29) describe the institutions in their writing as "institutions are social creations, which means that their rules, practic-

es, and customs reflect the preferences and values of those who created them." In the writing of Beardsley and Karim (2017, p. 183–189), Louise Chappell (2010) explains "gender is embedded in institutions through ongoing practices, values, and expectations of appropriate behaviour and that institutional rules and norms privilege certain forms of behaviour and certain actors over others." Nurturing and caring are the works that have been associated with women traditionally and historically, whereas works involving rationality and authority have been assigned to men (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). Therefore, the idea of men in the dominant position and women in the subordinate position has been historically and traditionally incorporated in the organizations (i.e., military and police institutions) established by men where hegemonic masculinity is prevalent.

According to Beardsley and Karim (2017, p. 30), the reason behind gender power disparities within security sectors can be explained by three processes which are—"the idealization of warrior identity, the emergence of a gendered protection norm, and the pursuit of militarized cohesion."

Challenges faced by the Bangladeshi female personnel from their respective security institutions can be identified in different spheres which are described below:

▪ **Challenges from Policy and Doctrine:** Claire Duncanson (2013) in the writing of Beardsley and Karim (2017, p. 32) argued that "the dominance of warrior masculinity shapes policy priorities, privileging combat over other activities that may be better for those on the ground." Therefore, politicians are prone to spend more on the military to respond to any threats involving force, referred to as "manly" (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 32). Such idealization in institutional, policy, and doctrinal level influence the recruitment and selection process where less manly attributes are unfit to serve in military and police or in the areas of these institutions. For example, in Bangladesh Army, female officers are not recruited in the Armored Corps and Infantry Regiment. Furthermore, there is no existing national framework or policy to implement and integrate the Women, Peace and Security agendas at both national policy and institutional level up till now. Colonel Mustafizur Rahman, Senior Instructor at Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) said in the interview with the author that a draft of National Action Plan (NAP) had been finalized, but it is yet to be approved. In an interview with the author, Lt Col Md. Rabiul Alam (Retd), Associate Professor and Chairman, Department of International Relations, Bangladesh University of Professionals said that the Bangladesh Armed Forces have no such concrete policy or doctrine

to increase the number of female personnel in their respective forces. It is worth mentioning that female recruitment in the Bangladesh Armed Forces as regular recruits in the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) long course as officers have only begun in 2000 from the 47th BMA long course. On the other hand, female soldiers are started being recruited very recently. However, female soldiers are not eligible to participate in UN peace-keeping missions. Therefore, the participation of female military personnel in UN peacekeeping missions is comparatively much lower than female police personnel. Furthermore, Bangladesh Police has its own Female Police unit, whereas Bangladesh Armed Forces do not have such a unit. Contingent troops in UN peace operations are mostly comprised of Artillery and Infantry units. Therefore, women get fewer chances of going to UN peacekeeping missions since they have very few representations in these units. There is no such policy or doctrine to make inclusion or increase the number of females in these units. Unlike Bangladesh Armed Forces, Police Headquarters and Bangladesh Policewomen Network (BPWN) have taken initiatives through policy and actions to increase the effective participation of women in the Police force. Therefore, an All Women Armed Police Battalion (APBn) was established as the 11th battalion of its force on 21 June 2011 (Basak, 2018). Moreover, "gender neutrality" was identified as the core value for the Strategic Plan of 2008–2010, where women police and gender equality were taken as the strategic direction to develop a gender policy as well as to increase the representation of women in Bangladesh Police force (Basak, 2018, p. 191). Therefore, the number of women in the Bangladesh Police has doubled from 2007 (1.87 per cent) to 2013 (4.63 per cent) (Basak, 2018). Other than the warrior identity, the idea of protection norm also creates a challenge at the policy and doctrinal formulation. The norm to protect women, together with the fear of facing political backlash for sending women to dangerous peacekeeping missions, often influences policymakers to be reluctant to send women in large number to these missions (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). The highest-ranked female officer in Bangladesh Armed Forces is Dr Susane Giti, who became the first female officer in the Bangladesh Army to be promoted as Major General in 2018 (bdnewsnet.com, 2018). Therefore, it is apparent that only a handful of female officers are at the highest ranks of the military, which results in fewer participation in decision-making and policy formulation. The situation in Bangladesh Police is the same where policies regarding recruitment, training and transfer are not gendered sensitive (Basak, 2018). According to Basak (2018, p. 197), "65.3 per cent male police officers and

58.9 per cent female police officers agree that there is a lack of adequate thana-level station facilities for female officers."

▪ **Challenges from Training:** To ensure operational effectiveness, the military generates and supports the dichotomies of masculinity and femininity to support military culture (Davis, 2009). Likewise, to sustain military culture and operational effectiveness such tendencies of maintaining differences between masculinity and femininity are practiced in the military training as well. Therefore, in a military setting, women continuously must negotiate their identities (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). Consequently, "more often than not, military women tend to be subject to discrimination in their military careers, passed over for promotions and opportunities—including deployments in Peacekeeping Operations—or assigned to menial tasks that do not correspond with their training" (UN Women, 2015 cited in Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 33). The militarization process which begins from the training period is another reason behind the gender power dichotomies in the security institutions (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). The process of militarization creates "in-group" and "out-group" to be effective in the combat which is achieved through cohesiveness of the men in the in-group by strengthening their bonds (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). That sense of cohesion which motivates the soldiers to fight together is created and sustained through cultivating shared masculinity in the training period, and subsequently cherished throughout a soldier's military career (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). Anything outside the understanding of militarized masculinity is deemed as feminine, and thus Ann Tickner (1992, 2001) in the writing of Beardsley and Karim (2017) has criticized militarization by arguing that promoting a culture of militarism is done by devaluing femininity. A certain form of training is followed in the military academies where men are socialized to become militarized as well as to develop military effectiveness through emphasizing on certain characteristics such as "toughness; rationality; discipline; patriotism; courage; endurance; avoidance of fear, uncertainty, guilt and remorse; and heterosexuality" (Whitworth, 2007; Woodward and Winter, 2007 cited in Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 39). In interviews with former female military cadets from Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA), above-mentioned militarization process based on militarized masculinity is found. Amina Alam, a former BMA female officer cadet from 75 BMALC said in an interview that during their military training period at BMA the female cadets were often given instructions like "don't show that you are a lady"; "be always prepared like a male"; "you shouldn't look pretty." She further added that

she felt like during her training that her female identity is being surpassed. In addition, the female cadets are trained to be loud, rude, tough, and instructed not to laugh to deal with soldiers. By evaluating these examples of training method and instructions it can be easily understood that these are following the idea of militarized masculinity to build military culture. Furthermore, training uniforms and equipment used at BMA are the same for both male and female cadets and as a result, it causes physical harm to the female cadets due to their biological constraints. For this reason, many female officer cadets suffer from physical injury and often cannot continue their further military training. Therefore, it can be said that while military academy or institution claim themselves as gender-neutral nevertheless, they follow militarized masculinity in their training programs. Besides, they do not take the feminine traits, requirements, and identity into account in their military culture and training program. Moreover, they fear if those are allowed then their in-group cohesion within the military will be destroyed therefore it is evident that the militarization process systematically excludes women (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). Subsequently, after getting commissioned as the officer, the female military officers still must go through military culture and training programs dominated by the militarized masculinity. According to Mouri (n.d.), the male officers are less cooperative during the in-service training towards their female colleagues. Furthermore, she gave example in her writing that in DSCSC-39 course each syndicate consisted of only one female and ten males where the female faced less cooperation from her male syndicate members (Mouri, n.d.). In the survey conducted by Mouri (n.d., p. 48) shows that "78.57 per cent female officers and 60.64 per cent male officers from Bangladesh Armed Forces agree that the training environment in various military schools including DSCSC is not favorable for female officers." After reviewing the websites and courses offered by the major training institutes of Bangladesh Armed Forces such as Defence Services Command & Staff College (DSCSC), National Defence College (NDC) and Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT), it can be identified that none of these institutions except BIPSOT offer gender-related courses. The gender-related course is also absent in the training module for the officer cadets. The grooming process is sometimes gendered biased at BMA which is confirmed from the interviews with the former BMA cadets. BIPSOT, a premium institute of Bangladesh to train the peacekeepers, offers Women, Peace and Security (WPSC) Course as part of pre-deployment training which is a five days long residential course. Additionally, it also offers Con-

flict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) Course to the potential peacekeepers (Courses at BIPSOT – BIPSOT, 2019). On the other hand, Bangladesh Police Academy offers a fifteen days long Course of Reproductive Health and Gender Issue as a specialized course although they do not have any separate training institute like BIPSOT for peacekeepers from Bangladesh Police (Offered Courses Bangladesh Police Academy, 2019). The police culture and training are also dominated by the male-dominated culture like military institutions (Basak, 2018). Basak (2018) further argues that training on gender awareness in Bangladesh police is not enough.

▪ **Challenges from Institutional Culture and Practice:** Mouri (n.d.) argues that there is a lack of congenial interpersonal relationship between male and female officers in Bangladesh Army which creates lack of confidence, trust, and understandings between themselves in their working environment. Therefore, such a working environment within the institution creates impediments for female officers to work efficiently since they are less in number and underrepresented. Army Headquarter (AHQ) project study (2014 cited in Mouri, n.d.) showed that "49 per cent Commanding Officers (COs) are facing difficulties regarding the female officers conduct." COs are less confident about assigning tasks to female officers and sometimes they assign a junior commissioned officer as acting company commander rather than assigning the duty to a female officer (Mouri, n.d.). Female officers often receive negative attitudes and sometimes come across bad comments and criticism from their male colleagues (Mouri, n.d.). Since the importance of gender perspective and sensitivity are not being taught to the military officers at the military academy or in during other basic training, therefore, male officers are not aware of the female gender role and perspective in the military. One of the male responders in the writing of Mouri (n.d., p. 44) responded that "female officers should not be treated as a female rather they should be addressed as officers; it will solve many of the issues." For this type of ignorance and misunderstanding about gender perspective among the male officers, it becomes extremely challenging for the female officers in Bangladesh Armed Forces to demonstrate their leadership role (Mouri, n.d.). Gender blindness and discriminatory attitudes are also found in Bangladesh Police Force where sometimes male police officers show discriminatory remarks, attitudes, and behaviour to their female colleagues (Basak, 2018). In addition, there are not enough facilities such as transport, accommodation, washroom, daycare centres for children, and moreover, there is an absence of supporting working environment for female personnel in Bangladesh Police

(Basak, 2018). Additional SP Joyita Shilpi who went to UN Peace Operation in 2013 as a Platoon Commander told in an interview that male officers in Bangladesh Police often think that female officers are less qualified and sometimes Officer in Charge (OC) cannot accept the leadership of a female officer. Therefore, female officers are less interested in field job and more interested in the desk job at the Police HQ. Shipli further mentioned that at present there are only two female officers are being appointed as SP, one in Jhalokati and another one in Gazipur. Up till now, there have been only 70 female SP served in Bangladesh Police and there have been only 60 female Addl. Deputy Inspector General (BPWN, 2019). According to BPWN website at present, the percentage of female officers serving in Bangladesh Police is 7.10 per cent and the percentage of cadre officials is 10.26 per cent (BPWN, 2019).

Conclusion

In recent times, Bangladesh has achieved significant success in advancing women's rights. Therefore, women's participation in economic activities through joining in industrial and manufacturing sectors has increased in good proportion. However, in terms of joining and working in the security sector, Bangladeshi female still face challenges since this sector is highly male dominated. Therefore, the number of women working in the security sector is low. Less representation of women in the domestic forces creates impediments to contribute female peacekeepers in UN missions. Therefore, Bangladesh might fail to meet the certain proportion of female peacekeepers demanded by UN to send to UN peace operations. Inclusion of women in the security sector faces challenges from national culture, religion and society, national policies along from national security institutions itself. A gender-biased preconceived notion of understanding gender role plays the major part in all the above-mentioned spheres of Bangladesh which create challenges for Bangladeshi women to join and work in the National Security Institutions. To tackle these challenges and to achieve success a systemic change is required not only in security institutions but also in the society, work, and policy level. Gender mainstreaming and sensitivity must be incorporated not only at the policy level but also in the military academy, training institutions and military culture etc.

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Reconstruction of Women Identity and Vision of National Development in Zaynab Alkali's *The Descendants*[1]

ABSTRACT. African female writers across the generations are interested in the reconstruction of the battered images of women associated with African male writers as well as creating a new road map through which women could contribute meaningfully to the development of their societies. This paper focuses on the reconstruction of women identity in connection with their roles in national development using Zaynab Alkali's *The Descendants* as a text of reference. The study examined various brands of feminism in African literary scholarships such as Womanism, Black Feminsm, Africana Feminism, Stiwanism, Motherism, Nego-feminism, Snail-sense feminism and Femalism. Thus, the paper resolved and embraced Womanism as its theoretical framework because of its relevance to the present study.The study delves into character development in the text and the deployment of appropriate techniques by the author towards the actualisation of her thematic thrusts. It is discovered that African literary scholars have contributed a lot to the growing gender discourse as revealed in their theorisation. The study also discovered that education and economic empowerment play predominant roles in re-defining and reconstructing the new images of women. It helps to erode the previous stereotypes and patriarchal dominance, which have hitherto hampered women's contributions to national development. The paper concludes that functional education and economic independence, on the parts of women, are the prerequisites for the promotion of an egalitarian society and national development.

KEYWORDS: Zaynab Alkali, women identity, national development, womanism, patriarchal dominance

Introduction

Zaynab Alkali was born in Tura-Wazila, Borno State, Nigeria in 1950. She is a renowned novelist in Nigeria and one of the leading female novelists from Northern Nigeria. She bagged a BA degree from Bayero Uni-

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[1] This paper was first presented at the International Conference organized by the Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University, Kaduna between 9th and 12th November, 2015.

versity, Kano in 1973 and obtained a MA in African Literature in English in 1979. She had worked at the University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, Bayero University, Kano and Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Her works always focus on the predicaments confronting women at the developmental stage of their lives. She employs her art to agitate for the education of a girl-child. Some of her publications include *The Stillborn, The Virtuous Woman, Cobwebs and Other Stories* and *The Descendants.* She won the Association of Nigerian Authors award in 1985 with her 1984 publication *The Stillborn.*

Most of the previous African works written by men focused more on male characters while women are mentioned at the periphery. Sometimes, women are wrongly represented in male authors' works as depicted in the works of writers such as Chinua Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart* and Camara Laye in *The African Child*, Amos Tutuola in *The Palmwine Drinkard* and Ferdinand Mbia *The Old Man and the Medal*. In all the texts listed above, male characters occupy the centre while women are assigned supportive and inconsequential roles by the male authors. The presence of female writers in African literary production has played a major role in the reconstruction of the images of women in response to the previous works of male authors mentioned above. The story of the female writers now focuses more on the peculiar challenges confronting women in African societies. Therefore, this paper focuses on the female theorisation in African literary study with a view to examining how the female writers project the female characters in literary productions as an instrument of positive change in their society with a focus on Zaynab Alkali's *The Descendants* as a text of reference.

To achieve this, the paper will take a look at the contributions of African female writers in redefining the authentic image of women in African societies. Efforts will also be made to look into the various theorisation on gender discourse in order to ascertain and acknowledge the noble contribution of women to scholarship in general and the narration of women story in particular.

References will also be made to Zaynab Alkali's previous works to link her previous works to its present ones. Zaynab Alkali is an advocate of the education of a girl-girl, and her strong belief is that education is capable of obliterating the gulf and social chasm between men and women. It also serves as a tool for economic empowerment and social engineering.

Reconstruction of women identity
in African literary scholarship

Omotayo Oloruntoba-Oju and Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju (2013, p. 6) in their joint paper entitled, "Models in the construction of female identity in Nigeria Postcolonial Literature," argued that the construction of African women in the colonialists and Senghorian works as "naked" and "mothering" view women from sex perspective and subject them to the whim of the supreme male. They forge ahead to argue that "...the body image and social classification of the African female in both the colonial narratives and the African narratives of the Senghorian and negritude tradition entailed the sole identification of *women* with essentially biological, or sex-related roles." (Oloruntoba-Oju and Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju, 2013, p. 6) Such classification according to Omotayo and Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju on sex engenders the inferiorisation of women and privileges men over women.

It is against this backdrop that older and contemporary female writers strive to reconstruct such images of women constructed based on sex. Mary Ebun Modupe Kolawole (2004, p. 141) wrote, "The older generation of women writers of the continent now present women not only as symbols of social change: their heroines are more radicals". This trend, which started around the 1980s, had gathered momentum in the 1990s and taken centre stage in contemporary women writings. Mariama Ba's characters in So Long a Letter negotiate a new identity for themselves in a strictly patriarchal Islamic society. The two leading female characters in the epistolary novella, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou, are caught in-between the triangle of traditional African culture, the Islamic religious tradition and modernity. The novelist, therefore, projects how the female characters negotiate themselves despite the cultural and religious encumbrances confronting them. The two central female characters are presented as the new face of African women who are agents of social change in their society. Aminata Sow Fall's The Beggars' Strike, another literary text from Senegal, West Africa, parades more radical female characters. For instance, in The Beggars' Strike, Sagar Diouf, the secretary of Keba Dabo, challenges her boss over the issue of beggars roaming on the streets of Dakar. Sine, the new wife of Moure Ndiaye, is also a liberated radical feminist who wears trousers and smokes cigarettes to the annoyance of her husband. Another attractive female character in the text is Salla Niang who marries Narou, a weakling. Salla Niang, the de facto leaders of the beggars at the Slum Re-

sentment Area, defies Mour Ndiaye's instruction that the beggars should return to the street. This singular act of confrontation later leads to Mour Ndiaye's downfall, a patriarchal figure in the novella. Tambudzai (Tambu) is another enviable female character in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Condition. The novel depicts the constraints of women in post-independence Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe (South Africa). The novel also depicts how Tambu overcomes her challenges associated with patriarchy in her society. Other writers such as Amma Darko in *Housemaids* and *Faceless* parade women who are determined to succeed in men dominated world. The reconstruction of the female figures in the texts has helped to redeem the battered image of women in our society as well as serving as the impetus for women collaboration in moving the society forward. The female characters of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie are also admirable; Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus*, Olanna in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Ifemelu in *Americanah* are exemplary women. The character development is the author's vision for the new identity of women.

In Zaynab Alkali's previous novels, *The Stillborn* and *The Virtuous Woman*, the novelist presents female characters who acquire western education and contribute meaningfully to the development of their families and their societies. Li, in *The Stillborn* and Nana Ai in *The Virtuous Woman* are two of such enviable characters and the representations of the new identities of African women projected as the harbinger of positive change in the two texts by the author.

Alkali remains at the forefront of female education, empowerment, and national development. She always agitates for the collaborative efforts between men and women, with the consciousness of the society she is coming from, i.e., a patriarchal Islamic society, to move the society forward. The northern part of Nigeria, over the decades, has been regarded as an educationally disadvantaged region and women education is minimal if compared with what is obtainable in the southern part of the country. It is against the above backgrounds that this paper seeks to examine the reconstruction of women's identity in *The Descendants* with a view to discussing how it has helped the author add her voice towards the development of her society.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the womanist literary theory approach in the analysis of Zaynab Alkali's *The Descendants*. Womanism is a home-grown brand

of feminism that pays particular attention to the roles of women in African society. The theory seeks a collaboration between men and women in the development of the society. To start with, feminism as a literary theory is always associated with the works of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Simon de Beavoir's *The Second Sex* and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own.* The basic preoccupation of the feminists is to challenge patriarchy, women subjugation and oppression. Womanism as a literary theory was originally carved out to cater for the peculiarities of black women in the West. Womanism is a brand of a non-radical feminist ideology, which seeks a mutual collaboration between men and women towards the development of the society. Alice Walker, the author of *The Color Purple*, coined the term "womanism" as a counter-discourse to the mainstream Eurocentric feminism. Alice Walker used the term in his work entitled, *In Search of Our Mothers.* According to Alice Walker, the term "womanism" was derived from the adjective "womanish." She argued further that a womanist is, "A woman who loves other women sexually and/or non-sexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture…and women's strength… committed to survival and wholeness of entire people male and female. Not a separatist… Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender." (Walker, 2003, p. xi). Womanism transcends the concerns of the second wave's feminists who were predominantly concerned with the issues of "gender-based oppression and violence." (Davidson & Davidson, 2010, p. 241).

Maria D. Davidson and Scott Davidson in their paper entitled "Perspectives on Womanism, Black Feminism, and Africana Womanism" submitted that scholars and writers like Anna Julia Cooper, Jessie Redman Fauset, Zora Neale Hurston, Gwendolyn Brooks and Toni Morrison are always regarded as womanists and their works are regarded as womanist literature (Davidson & Davidson, 2010, p. 239). Womanism from its inception is an all-inclusive theory that seeks collaboration among women of all categories including men. The involvement of men in its theorisation is a noble and novel departure from the mainstream white feminism. In the opinion of Alice Walker, white feminism exclusively focused on gender oppression without consideration for oppression of women based on their race or colour, which the womanists try to rectify. (Davidson & Davidson, 2010, p. 242). The opinion of Alice Walker and other advocates of Womanism like Bell Hooks in her work entitled *Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre* is that the white feminism has failed to address the peculiar concerns of the black people. The concern being referred to here is the issue of colour discrimination.

Other category of gender discourse scholars are the Black Feminists. One of such scholars is Monica A. Coleman who in one of her essays entitled, "Must I be a Womanist?" claimed that, ".... I've also been shaped by black feminists, and I believe that I'm a part of a generation of women who have grown up (intellectually) during a time that takes womanism as a given. I'm not sure I'm a womanist." (Coleman, 2006, p. 85–86) Womanism is a theory that takes care of all categories of women. However, Coleman argues that womanism has failed to address the issue of Homophobia, (Coleman, 2006, p. 88). However, the words "Womanism" and "Black Feminism" are used interchangeably as noted by Patricia Hill Collins, "...Many African women see little difference between the two [i.e., Black Feminism and Womanism] since both support a common agenda of black women's self-definition and self-determination." (Collins, 2001, p. 10). Davidson and Davidson, in their parts, believe that "Womanism" is an "internal Discourse" that addresses the black women alone while "Black Feminism" seeks a collaboration or synergy between the blacks and whites' women (Davidson & Davidson, 2010, p. 245–246). The concern of Walker "...is thus rooted in the unique, embodied, irreducible experiences of Black women and their relationship to Black culture" (Davidson & Davidson, 2010, p. 246). The strongest tie that binds Womanism and African Womanism together is Black Women. The two theories are agitating for the rights of black women. It is observed that Womanism speaks from the agency of individuality, i.e., individual woman, while Africana Womanism speaks through the agency of family and community. In the words of Hudson-Weems, the proponent of Africana Womanism, she argued that the concerns of Africana Womanism are to speak to "...uphold the Africanist womanist agenda and priorities within Africans historical and cultural contexts. Such contexts are reflected in our ongoing struggle for the human rights of our entire family—men, women, and children" (Hudson-Weems, 2004, p. 8). Africana Womanism preaches women tie with their family and community. Africana womanism places emphasis on the significance of community over the interest of an individual woman.

In Nigeria, West Africa, Mary Kolawole in her ground-breaking seminal entitled *Womanism and African Consciousness* further espoused what womanism entails from an African perspective. It is therefore, crucial to acknowledge her huge contributions to the promotion of the Womanist theory in Africa. The womanist theory is highly supported by other renowned scholars such as: Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, Catherine Acholonu, Ama Ata Aidoo, Chikwenye Okonjo-Ogunyemi among others. In a paper entitled "Re-Conceptu-

alising African Gender Theory: Feminism, Womanism and Arere Metaphor," Mary Kolawole argued that cultures play significant roles in the construction of gender and sex. Kolawole further asserts that,

> There has been a consensus that culture has to be taken into account in development issues and that a close affinity exists between gender and culture. One area of culture mediation on gender is the traditional belief in the muting of women's voices in many African societies which is justified by proverbs and traditional ideologies that shape the mind –set of men and women. It is considered culturally incorrect for women to be a focal participant in social structures. Such ideologies and beliefs call for decoding of culture to unpack gender myths and philosophies that keep women in liminal places as well as recording of new ideologies (Kolawole, 2004, p. 255).

Furthermore, Irene D'Almeida identified "culture of silence" as a debacle to women empowerment especially the francophone African women. Mary Kolawole frowns at the poor representation of women in the struggles against colonialism especially as depicted in *Things Fall Apart*. Kolawole affirms that,

> *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe… institutionalizes male heroism and women's marginalisation but this is a contradiction of history. Igbo women mobilized themselves in the early part of the twentieth century to fight against colonial rule, oppressions and taxation that affected women and men (Kolawole, 2004, p. 257).

In her introduction to her text entitled *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*, Oyeronke Oyewumi attempts to clarify the difference between, feminism and feminist, Oyeronke posits that,

> The term feminism usually refers to a historically recent European and American social movements founded to struggle for female equality. Feminism by this designation has become a global political project. But the adjective feminist has a broader reach in that it needs not be confined by history; infact it describes a range of behaviour indicating female agency and self-determination (Oyewumi, 2004, p. 1).

Oyewumi added that gender roles in Africa are fluid and social categories are not necessarily based on gender. She cited the example of a female husband among Igbos. (2) In the opinion of Oyewumi, western feminism

is "entangled with the history and practice of European and North American imperialism and the worldwide European colonialism of Africa, Asia, and the Americans" (Oyewumi, 2004, p. 3). Oyewumi advocates for "Sisterhood" which according to her proclaims, "…the equality and homogenization of position of women worldwide" (Oyewumi, 2004, p. 3) Oyeronke Oyewumi claims that the term "Sisterhood" connotes solidarity among women. (Oyewumi, 2004, p. 7) She further submits that:

> Sisterly relations emerged out of the family heritage as the only viable model: the mother-daughter relationship was hierarchical, but sisters were equal. Sisterhood, which developed to signal the gender exclusivity necessary for white women to escape male control, also symbolised common victimhood and shared oppression, which made for equal relations and solidarity. Here in lies the historical and cultural roots of sisterhood (Oyewumi, 2004, p. 8).

Oyeronke further asserts that most of the African brands of feminism are tied to kinship because of Africans' emphasis on family ties (Oyewumi, 2004, p. 10). This opinion is in tandem with that of Africana Womanism, which has already been discussed.

The need to domesticate the feminist literary theory in relation to the African realities has necessitated the formations of various alter-Native feminist theories such as "Womanism". The theory was first coined by Alice Walker and supported by Okonjo Ogunyemi and Mary Kolawole. Apart from Womanism, other scholars have formulated their versions of home-grown theories, which practice aligns with the postulations of the Womanist theory. Some of these theories include Molara Ogundipe-Leslie's "STIWANISM." Stiwanism is an acronym for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. It is a theory that seeks cooperation between men and women in the development of society. Molara Ogundipe-Leslie advocated for women self-expression, and she theorizes STIWANISM as a brand of feminism based on social transformation. Ogundipe-Leslie further stated that,

> I have since advocated the word "Stiwanism" instead of feminism to bypass these concerns and to bypass the combative discourses that ensure whenever one raises the issue of feminism in Africa. The word feminism in Africa…. The word feminism itself seems to be a kind of red rag to the bull of African men. Some say the word is very nature hegemonic…. "Stiwa" is my acronyms for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994, p. 229).

Obioma Nnaemeka advocated for "Nego-feminism" which calls for negotiation between men and women for the goals of an egalitarian society to be achieved. Nnaemeka's Nego-feminism is hinged on "…the principle of negotiation, give and take, compromise and balance." (Nnaemeka, 2003, p. 369). Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo advocates for Snail-Sense Feminism. Adimora-Ezeigbo is of the opinion that women need to adopt the techniques of snails in negotiating difficult terrains without being injured. She also encourages women to adopt snail's withdrawal tactics to avoid danger. She further submits that the snail-sense is "… what women do in our society to survive in Nigeria's harsh patriarchy culture" (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2012, p. 27). Chioma Opara brands her feminist theory "Femalism" which places emphasis on the concept of "Africaness." As a contradiction from Walker's Womanism. Femalism, therefore, is more concerned with the peculiar challenges of African women. Catherine Acholonu propounded "Motherism" which emphasises the roles of rural women in the struggle for the emancipation of women.

Some of the major thematic foci of the womanist literary critics are, motherhood as the pride of womanhood, support for the marriage institution, opposition to the discrimination against women, seeking mutual respect and collaboration between men and women, identify the need for women's education as an instrument of liberation and national development, etc. It is against the backdrop of the above that this paper shall examine the reconstruction of women's identity in Zaynab Alkali's *The Descendants* using womanism as a theoretical framework.

Synopsis of Zaynab Alkali's *The Descendants*

The Descendants (2005) begins with a supplication by Magira Milli, the matriarch of the Ramta's family. In her prayer, Magira Milli seeks for the success of the Ramta's family, her surviving child, Aji, her grandchildren: Abbas, Seytu, and Peni; her great grandchildren, Hawwa and others. The Ramta's family led by Magira Milli has migrated to Makulpo, from a village called Ramta, in Borno, North-East, Nigeria followed the death of Magira Milli's husband, Lawani. She also prays for Duna and her male children: Abdullahi, Madu, Umar, Ilia and her grandson Shaibu who have all been taken away by "Azreel the Angel of death" (Alkali, 2005, p. 18).

At Makulpo, Magira Milli occupies the position of the head of the family. She ensures that all the members of her household have access to west-

ern education and guides them to be successful. Seytu, the daughter of Ilia, is trained to become a paediatrician. Abbas, the son of Abdullahi, attends a university at Gamma and becomes a highly successful engineer. Hassan, the son of Sulayman, becomes a colonel in the army while Hawwa, the daughter of Seytu, becomes the Minister of State for Justice in the country.

Magira Milli, assisted by Aji Ramta, her son, builds the Ramta's Holdings. She deals in vegetables, grains and later mechanised farming (Alkali, 2005, p. 153). Meanwhile, the good relationship between Dr. Seytu and Prof. Aiman Zaki, the Chief Medical Director (CMD) of Garpella Specialist Hospital, pays off when the Professor donates a modern Community Health Centre to the Ramta community. All the successful members of the Lawani Duna's family and their friends contribute generously to the establishment of the hospital. The entourage of the Hon. Minister of State for Justice, Justice Hawwa Lawani later besieged Makulpo on a condolence visit and celebration of the life of the departed Magira Milli who died at the age of ninety-two.

The Reconstruction of Women's Identity in Zaynab Alkali's *The Descendants*

The emerging African women writers have committed so much efforts to the reconstruction of the images of women as a prerequisite to meaningful contributions of women towards the development of their various societies. In reaction to the previous images of women in male-dominated works such as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* (1966), where women are silenced or treated as goddesses; the new emerging womanist writers create female characters that have voices of their own. The new created female characters are also different from the previous female characters found in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* or Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* in the sense that they are highly educated, modern, and cosmopolitan.

In addition, many literary artists have conceived the notion of national development in relation to the roles of women in achieving it using different paradigms. Zaynab Alkali, through her artistry, reminds us of the needs to reconstruct the image of women in our society in a view to repositioning them better in modern society so that they can contribute meaningfully to national development. She projects her viewpoints by parading highly enviable female characters in her texts which serve as the standard-bearers

and exemplary characters worthy of emulation by other women. They are also portrayed as agents of positive change in their society.

In *The Descendants,* the writer creates Magira Milli as an enigma and a family head. Her character dwarfs the male characters in the text. She is focused and visionary. She envisioned that if she continued to stay in Ramta, it could spell doom for her and her family. As a result, she migrates to Makulpo to start a new life. The narrator captures her vision and mission of migration thus:

> By fleeing with Aji to Makulpo, she had uprooted the grand children from their ancestral home with the hope of giving them a fresh start. The least she could do for them was encourage them to go to school. That way, later in life, they could make the choice on their own, either to remain where they were, or to reconnect to their homeland, Ramta (Alkali, 2005, p. 18).

This migration of Magira Milli and her surviving family members is highly connotative and symbolic. It represents a migration from bondage to freedom, from ignorance to enlightenment and from the periphery to the centre. At another level of interpretation, it suggests that there is an urgent need for women to embrace the opportunities provided by modernity. Women need to brace themselves up and accept the needed changes that will make them take their rightful positions in society. This is the author's vision of an ideal woman who is prompt to take a life-saving decision towards the growth of her family and, by extension, society. Magira Milli is the most dignified and the most conspicuous character in the text. Her commanding and indomitable powers resonate across the family's generations: "Magira Milli had, for ages, commanded everyone in the house. She was the field Marshall, so what was new?" (Alkali, 2005, p. 152). As earlier mentioned, African female writers, though they claim that they differ from western feminists who are radicals, they always create strong and enviable female characters with overpowering powers. Examples of such characters abound in African literature, Efuru in *Efuru* by Flora Nwapa, Nnu Ego in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, Salla Niang in *The Beggars' Strike*, Olanna in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chira in Ifeoma Okoye's *The Fourth World*, among others. In *The Descendants*, Magira Milli is presented as an embodiment of womanhood, resilience, and vision.

Magira Milli is pivotal and instrumental to the establishment and the sustenance of the Ramta's Holdings. She encourages her children to ac-

quire western education and abhor indolence and early marriages. She scorns infidelity and condemns immorality. She goes against all forms of traditional beliefs that hinder development. She is the epitome of vision, power, and authority. In fact, she is an institution in her own right. According to the writer: "Over the years, Magira Milli had become an institution like an ancient monument. She had become part and parcel of the Makulpo landscape." (Alkali, 2005, p. 258) Most African fictions portray social realities. Zaynab Alkali speaks through the character of Magira Milli to condemn the inadequacies of her society. She particularly advocates for the importance of female education as well as economic empowerments. Alkali has identified these two factors as the bane of women underdevelopment in Northern Nigeria. If women are educated and financially independent, it will put them in an advantageous position to be relevant and meaningfully contribute to their societies' social-economic and political development.

The text also parades other amiable female characters such as Seytu, the daughter of Ilia and granddaughter of Magira Milli. Seytu is the key factor that necessitated the relocation of Lawani Duna's family from Ramta to Makulpo when she was struck by measles in her early life. As a young child of thirteen, Seytu was violated by a man called Lawani Dam. Their unholy relationship begot, Hawwa with a serious damage to her body system. Despite the abuse, Seytu strives to become an accomplished medical doctor. Even in her workplace, she is highly revered and respected; men sometimes beg her favour. Her vision is presented thus: "Seytu wanted to make an impact in her society, wanted badly to be a role model for a younger generation and was prepared to do anything to achieve such a life." (Alkali, 2005, p. 59) At this point, Zaynab Alkali is speaking for the oppressed women or those that are socially stigmatised. Social stigmatisation is a major factor that prevents many women from achieving their life goals. At another level of analysis, it could be stated that, the character of Seytu serves as an encouragement to women that there is no limit to what they can achieve in life with focus, vision and resilience. The past life story of a woman, no matter how dark, should not be allowed to constitute an encumbrance to the attainment of their life targeted goals.

This vision of becoming an accomplished woman motivates Seytu at home and her work to be hardworking and focused. She must prove herself through perseverance before Prof. Aiman Zaki, the Chief Medical Director of Garpela Specialist Hospital, could accept her as a member of his staff. This is highly significant in the sense that it encourages women to be

meticulous and up to the task in whatever capacity, they found themselves. Again, it is an admonishment to all aspiring women that, the African society is male and any woman that intends to succeed must be ready to prove herself. In compensation for Seytu dedication to work, Prof. Aiman constructs a community health centre, in Ramta, her place of birth. The writer sums up the characters of Seytu, her travails and success stories thus:

> Here in Ramta, she stood for something more important than just the daughter of Ramta, and a successor to the great medical chief. She was a model for young and aspiring men and women, a symbol of growth and progressive womanhood. She had left Ramta a young disabled girl with little hope, and had come back a conqueror (Alkali, 2005, p. 267).

Seytu, therefore, represents the author's vision of a modern woman. The inequality and disparity between men and women will vanish when women begin to acquire the necessary education and empowered economically.

Another female character in the text is Doctor Glo Medina Kayes, a renowned obstetrician gynaecologist (p. 143). She is the daughter of Prof. Kayes, a Professor of Economics. Her endearing and well-bred characters make her a good match to Engineer Abbas, Seytu's cousin. Also, Hawwa Lawani, the daughter of Seytu, is trained and tutored under the enigma Magira Milli. She grows up and becomes a lawyer, a judge and a junior minister in the Federal Ministry of Justice. The characters mentioned here are all well brought up and highly educated. Therefore, with proper education and a good upbringing, a woman could attain the same feat with men as found in the female characters enlisted in *The Descendants.*

 In summary, *The Descendants* is a celebration of enviable and highly successful women. Such women are, independent minded, courageous, vibrant, focused, highly educated, enterprising, and successful. It is through their character development that the writer foregrounds her central thematic thrusts i.e., the issue of women participation in community and national development. The ideas that are espoused in this text are interwoven; to contribute meaningfully to the community and national development, one must be endowed and self-sustained. To be self-sustained; one needs to be well educated. To have access to quality education, the parents, such as the great Magira Milli, must have a clear vision and plan for the good of their children and those coming after them. In fact, we must plan for the tomorrow of our "descendants".

Education as a Veritable Tool for Women's Liberation and National Development

One of the major contributions of Alkali to the development of Nigerian Literature is her agitation for women empowerment as a prerequisite for their contributions to national development. She recognises education as an instrument of liberation for women. She also seeks a mutual understanding and collaboration between men and women in moving society forward. Hence, for both men and women to contribute to the community and national development, they must be well educated. This same theme is prevalent in *The Stillborn* and *The Virtuous Woman*. *The Descendants* is a story about an extraordinary woman who builds a strong and powerful dynasty through her vision, supplication, and passion for the acquisition of knowledge and western education. It is widely believed that education serves as an antidote to the suppression and marginalisation of women. Oriaku affirmed that: "...Education affords the woman who has acquired it a good professional position; it is the sledgehammer with which the shackles of patriarchy are broken. With her education, she can create for herself the paradise the patriarchy had denied her" (Oriaku, 2012, p. 142).

In *The Descendants* the success of the female characters begins with a vision of a woman the matriarch, Magira Milli who prayed for the success of her family.

'O God, once more Milli is before you calling you to look down and have mercy on her children, her children's children and their children.

'Lord, I come without a gift, except a long record of requests over a number of years. You took my sons away – Ramta boys are all gone, except for Aji, but as you know, from a child, a dynasty is built. I want Ramta dynasty here in Makulpo, descendants of Lawani Ramta […].

Seytu, the daughter of Ilia, her affliction pulls at my heartstrings. Grant her a successful operation and cure her. Let her read and become educated. I want her to compete with the doctors in Makulpo Hospital, protect Hawwa, her little girl […].

Let each and every one of my descendants acquire education and become great […]. Let my descendants triumph over their enemies […].
(Alkali, 2005, p. IX–X).

The above supplications by Magira Milli suggest that the matriarch is convinced that for her descendants to be successful they need to be properly educated. Again, Magira Milli wants her daughter to be cured of her ailment so that she can "compete" with those doctors she comes across at Makulpo hospital. The word "compete" is significant here because it speaks directly to the struggle for equality, which is a hallmark of feminists. It also foreshadows what will happen in the later parts of the text. In the earlier part of the text, Aji Ramta assumes the position of a local teacher saddled with the responsibilities of teaching others how to read and write. His effort is encouraging and motivational. It affords the members of his household, who are less privileged, has access to western education; his efforts produce the like of Colonel Hassan.

Still on the question of the significance of education and the need to have a vision geared towards achieving one's mission, Magira Milli, though an illiterate, is better-informed and prioritised education. She mandates her children to acquire western education. The writer reveals her viewpoints thus:

> Magira Milli might be a yesterday's woman but she was a wise one, not blind to the changes in society [...]. She was a good listener who constantly turned in to her small transistor radio. She was also a watcher of events. She knew education is the master key to opportunities for a better life. Education opens doors and gives an individual options (sic) in life (Alkali, 2005, p. 18).

Magira Milli pursues the above goal to a logical conclusion. She rebukes Peni, her granddaughter for chosen to get married at an early age to the village butcher. She knows, right from the outset, that for Lawani Duna's children to become pillars in Makulpo, they need to acquire western education. The matriarch surveys her surroundings inundated with sick people seeking medical attention from the Makulpo's hospital and concludes that it is only through education that people can be better informed on how to live a healthy life and be successful. The above excerpt also indicates that access to information by women is significant for them to live a meaningful life and impacts positively on their society.

It is obvious that Magira Milli's prayers are eventually answered. Her children are properly positioned and successful because of their education. Seytu becomes a paediatrician and later the Chief Medical Director (CMD) of Garpella Specialist Hospital. Through connection and exposure, she can

attract philanthropists who build a Community Health Centre in Ramta. The same gesture also brings electricity generating sets and public toilets to the village of Ramta. The health centre serves as evidence of a carefully planned community development and modernisation. The construction of the Community Health Centre and the Public toilets in Ramta is a symbolic representation of women's contribution to the growth of their community. It is also evidence that women with proper education, vision, exposure, and determination can also achieve what a man can achieve.

After roaming the world, the descendants of Lawani Duna and Magira Milli are able to bring civilisation to their natal home, Ramta's community. This is the power of education. It liberates those who have it and puts them in good positions to contribute to the development of their society.

The writer suggests that all those who embrace western education in the text become successful. Engineer Abbas "established a prosperous Ramta Construction Company in Garpella" (Alkali, 2005, p. 153). Hawa Lawani becomes the Minister of State in the Ministry of Justice. Seytu, also becomes a successful medical doctor.

However, the author, through foil characterisation, warns us that illiteracy breeds ignorance, poverty, regret and failure. Through the point of view of Hawwa, Seytu's daughter, the writer says:

> [...] Hawwa unable to sleep, thought about the glum-faced suffering Mero, compared to her mother, Seytu, the good-looking vivacious woman with an appealing condition. She also compared Seytu with her sour-tempered, thin--lipped aunt, Peni (Alkali, 2005, p. 82).

Mero is the child-bride and wife of Usman and Peni is Seytu's cousin who chooses marriage over the acquisition of western education against the wishes of Magira Milli, her grandmother. Having failed in her marital life, Peni lives with Seytu, her successful cousin. Her latter life is characterised by regret and frustration. The writer, through the stream of consciousness technique, states that:

> [...] Peni lapsed into painful memories. She considered herself unlucky one who never got an education. She blamed this on her father's early death. Her uncle Aji, she thought unkindly, concerned himself only with acquiring money and building his business empire. He had encouraged Abbas, the male and Seytu Ilia's daughter but for her, she was encouraged to marry that lousy village butcher (Alkali, 2005, p. 193).

If Peni had gotten western education, her life would have been different. Education could have made a huge difference in her life. Those who have access to education in the family: Seytu, Abbas and Hawwa, are all successful. They are not only successful but they make meaningful contributions to the development of the Ramta community. The descendants of Magira Milli bring her vision to fruition through their new statuses made possible by education. Zaynab Alkali's position on her society makes her a major voice speaking for the reconstruction of women's identity and the rebuilding of the society through women's emancipation, functional education and economic empowerment.

Conclusion

Alkali's novels always emphasise the needs to empower women through the acquisition of western education. She believes in the marriage system and the development of society through a functional family system as the smallest unit of a nation. She holds the belief that education will make women make the right decision about their marital life. Our individual family is bestriding with infirmities, which, of course, need to be extirpated if our vision of a new nation is to be realised from the existing diseased and collapsed society. To achieve this feat, women must be properly educated. Both men and women must work together to move society forward. The age-long system of denigrating women needs to be condemned. The collaborative efforts between Magira Milli and her son, Aji Ramta brings about the success of the Ramta's family business outfit. The collaboration between Seytu and Glo Medina brings about solutions to their marital problems. Prof. Aiman Zaki can achieve his age-long project of giving back to the society through the construction of the community health centre in Ramta in conjunction with Seytu. All these are achieved because the people involved have flair and access to western education with clear vision and dedication. The acquisition of education, therefore, puts them in a good position to develop their society. In summary, Zaynab Alkali's female characters in *The Descendants* are highly enviable and sophisticated women who deploy their knowledge acquired through western education to contribute to the development of their natal home and humanity in general. The acquisition of education by the female characters in the text and their collaborative efforts with men towards the development of their society make the text a quintessential Womanist novel.

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Musical Narratives of Conversance between Mother and Child in Sonny Okosun's Music

ABSTRACT. In African traditional settings, the role of women in the development and growth of the family is more than giving birth to a child. In addition to being a vehicle for procreation, they contribute immensely to the child's training, thus playing significant role in the growth and development of family and the nation. Therefore, this paper investigates the connection between mother and child using the music of Sonny Okosun's, "Mother and Child" as a case study. The paper adopts a narrative method to explain salient issues raised in the song on the conversance between mother and child also, a musical score of the song is done for a documentary purpose. Secondary sources include a review of articles in journal, books, and internet sources. Findings reflect that mothers have served as the foundational source of indigenous knowledge acquisition and informal education for a child. The study concludes that a mother is not just a channel for a child to the world but also a veritable agent of education, socialization, and civilisation.

KEYWORDS: narratives, conversance, mother and child

Introduction

Music-making in African societies happen every day, this addresses diverse situations such as marriage, admission into puberty stage, burial and other community festivals. Apart from this, music is used to create riddles, solve riddles, narrate past and present situations or incidences, for educational functions, expression of emotions, or to influence emotions. Though, mother's role in the training and molding counselling of a child has been documented in literature cutting across diverse subjects and fields, few studies have delineated the mother and child relationship from a musicological point of view. In African melodic culture, the drums, gongs, woodwinds, and different instruments are used as channels of communication.

Agawu (2007, p 1) asserted that:

Ritual, narrative, dance, singing and the beating of drums and other instruments are typically motivated by an awareness of a primal togetherness, the (imagined) presence of others and a sense that the meaningfulness of an activity depends ultimately on the constraints imposed by its participatory framework.

Music serves a dual purpose of entertainment and communication of vital messages; we listen to music purposefully and accidentally considering the way that music is normal all the time around us and our listening openings are different. Through music, between basic relations are strengthened, as systems associate and offer regards with neighbouring systems. There are motivating factors that are also responsible for music making as pointed out by Hallam (2002, p. 212) stating that:

The extent to which an individual is motivated to pursue musical activity will depend on the interactions between their characteristics, self-concept and goals and the characteristics of the immediate environment, including cultural and historical factors, the educational environment, and the support they receive from family and peers.

Historically, Rentfrow et al. (2011, p. 1140), stated that music has also been used for social bonding, comfort, motivating or coordinating physical labor, the preservation and transmission of oral knowledge, ritual and religion, and the expression of physical or cognitive fitness.

From these diverse functions of music in Africa, this paper is greatly concerned with the role of mothers in the shaping and guiding of an African child as expressed in the music of Sonny Okosun's *Mother and Child.*

Contextual Narration of the paper

Music provides a powerful example of a situational narration without words, both in terms of musical form and content. According to Imberty (1979; 1981):

it is not only inherently sequential, it begins, progresses and ends and its modulations of tension and energy are its very fabric, but it can also be related to things outside itself because it is situated in and itself contains historic, remembered and imagined time.

A musical narrative could either be in the form of vocal with instrumental accompaniment or just instrumental music. Malloch (2000, p. 5) explains that communicative musicality consists of the elements pulse, quality, and narrative as those attributes of human communication, which are particularly exploited in music, it gives rise to coordinated companionship. A narrative is a story that you write or tell to someone, usually in great detail. A narrative can be a work of poetry or prose, or even song, theatre, or dance (*vocabulary.com*). The narrative is the very embodiment of human friendship and correspondence. Malloch (2000, p. 18) further explains that

> Narratives of individual experience and of companionship are built from the units of pulse and quality found in the jointly created gestures of vocalizations and bodily movement. Narratives are the very essence of human companionship and communication. Narratives allow two persons to share a sense of passing time. and to create and share the emotional envelopes that evolve through this shared time. They express innate motives for sharing emotion and experience with other persons and for creating meaning in joint activity with others.

Schroeder (2014) describes musical narration as "an event that has been in play from the beginning of human existence". This was further buttressed to have started from "antiquated root fantasies to films and TV, Greek catastrophes to Broadway, and papyrus looks to softcover books" The practice of narration could be closely observed in and around every African society as being appreciated in books, films, and theatrical creations.

In another instance, Nattiez (1990, p. 253) was quoted by Kramer (1991, p. 143) in a compelling argument that "in itself, music is not a narrative and that any description of its formal structures in terms of narration is nothing but superfluous metaphor". At best, Nattiez suggests, music "has the semi logical capacity of imitating the allure of a narrative, a narrative style or mode" that historical hermeneutics may connect to "[the] reservoir of philosophical, ideological and cultural traits characteristic of a particular epoch" (pp. 250–253) Kramer (ibid). Contrary to this opinion Nicholls (2007, p. 300) however, opines that:

> music can become part of narrative discourse, either in those instances where it is ascribed extra-musical meaning through association with an object or a concept that is, where it acquires a leitmotiv function or where it interacts with one or more other media.

In line with Nicholls' view, Jeffress (2013, p. 8) states that the concept of narrative is, for our purposes, inextricably interwoven with that of meaning. The investigation of narrative discourse in music is a means to the determination of possible meaning to the listener in that music.

About Sunny Okosun

Born in Enugu, Nigeria, on January 1, 1947, Okosun was the child of artists, even though his central developmental impacts were rockers like Elvis Presley and the Beatles. As a high school student, he learned the guitar, and in 1964 established the Postmen, a British Invasion covers band. In the wake of the mid-1966 government overthrow that prompted the Biafra strife, he and his family settled in Lagos, where he fashioned a profession as a TV on-screen character. Okosun came back to music in 1969 as an individual from Victor Uwaifo's Melody Maestros, a gathering noted for its contemporary popular way to deal with customary Nigerian music. In the wake of visiting Japan and Europe with Uwaifo's band, he framed his hallucinogenic stone unit, Paperback Limited, which he helmed until 1974. After dissolving the gathering, Okosun again rehashed his methodology, this time diverting impacts like soul, funk, and reggae—the subsequent gathering, named Ozziddi, solidified the dynamic melodic and expressive way he followed all through the rest of his vocation. Ozziddi scored its first significant African hit with 1976's "Help", and after a year reggae mammoth Eddy Grant blended their LP Papa's Land. Follow-up Fire in Soweto was recorded in London and scored through the title track, which fought politically-sanctioned racial segregation maltreatment in South Africa. Okosun by and by evaded the activist legislative issues of peers like Afro-funk symbol Fela Kuti, advancing African solidarity and dark pride over radical broadsides. In the wake of the 1978's Holy Wars, Okosun visited Nigeria with reggae greats Jimmy Cliff and Toots and the Maytals. In 1985 he arrived at the summit of his universal distinction as the solitary African craftsman to add to the top pick against politically sanctioned racial segregation collection "Sun City", and after a year his Highlife which was highlighted in the Jonathan Demme-coordinated element film "Something Wild". By the late '80s Okosun's seemed to be dwindling, yet in 1994 he re-emerged with the rebound vehicle Songs of Praise. In all, he recorded over three dozen LPs through the span of his vocation, with meetings cut in regions

extending from the U.S. to France and kept up prominent appearances at performances over the globe. Sunny Okosun passed on in Washington, D.C., on May 24, 2008 after battling colon disease for many years (Jason Ankeny [Accessed: 20 April 2020]).

Popular music

With the emergence of different musical genres emanating from folk music through individuals and collective creativity, a brand of music evolved. These creativities could either be instrumental or vocal or both. These have become generally accepted in society beyond the local/traditional settings. This generally acceptable brand of music is popular music, which is a mix of verities of classifications from various social, societal orders. A portion of these incorporates Juju, reggae, Apala, gospel, hip-hop, and highlife among the Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba. Quite a several researchers such as Ojukwu, Obielozie, and Esimone (2016, p. 117), Adedeji (2017, p. 75) have given a descriptive definition of popular music differently. Though, the contents are somehow similar. Popular music has been used by various artiste for self-expression of feelings, either towards a situation that may be personal or general in the society.

Adegoke (2011, p. 154) opines that popular music could be defined based on particular terms such as appropriation, syncretism, hybridization, and creolization. They simply mean borrowing or combining from other sources to form new cultural forms and spaces. Nigerian popular musicians cut across the geo-political zone in the country with recognition and acceptance within and beyond. In this connection, Adedeji (2017, p. 75) states that:

> popular music has generally been regarded as the type of music form or practice that is targeted towards audience satisfaction; it comes with crowd appeal and encompasses several styles.

In a further argument, Adedeji (ibid) opines that "popular music is readily comprehensible to a large proportion of the population and its appreciation requires little or no knowledge of musical theory". Despite the various intercultural influences on the Nigerian music scene, one discernable thing is that popular music output remains deeply rooted in the indigenous Nigerian tradition through an appropriation by artists to project

their cultural identity. Jegede (1987, p. 61) uphold that during the slave era when many Africans were carried off to the New World, music was one of the ways through which aspects of their culture found boisterous expression. Shuker (2006, xii) opine that the term 'popular music' defies precise, straightforward definition. Culturally, all popular music consists of a hybrid of musical traditions, styles, and influences. At the same time, it is an economic product invested with ideological significance by many of its consumers. Barton (2018, p. 25) mention Radocy and Boyle (1979, p. 27) who stated that "culture clearly affects musical behaviour [and that] music may influence the culture [in which it is produced]". Barton (Ibid) pointed out that:

> Views such as those expressed by Feld (1984), Lomax (1976) and Merriam (1964) highlighted the impact that culture can have on music and in some cases music on cultural expression with each author concluding that music is, in fact, culture and cannot be separated from life experience (p. 27).

Popular music, under different nomenclature has emerged and flourished in Nigeria over the years. Omojola (2006, p. 23) as cited by Abiodun (2018, p. 3) points out three factors that are responsible for the growth of popular music; the emergence of western and African elites, the eventual frustration of the western African elite who had hoped to gain more political and economic power and a spirit of cultural awakening. These three factors founded, and sharpened popular music and its history can be traced through these factors. Abiodun (Ibid) argues further to describe the present form of the Nigerian popular music as a result of different inputs of early Nigerian popular musicians who were influenced by one culture or the other and by one musical form or style or by one musician or the other. Popular music is indeed found everywhere all over the world. As a compliment, Abiodun (2018, p. 62) writes that:

> from a preliminary survey, early popular musicians in Nigeria such as Bobby Benson, Victor Olaiya, Rex Lawson, Victor Uwaifo and so on. In the early juju we have Ayinde Bakare, Tunde King, I.K. Dairo, Daniel Ojoge, Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey while the old Fuji music featured Barrister Ayinde and Kollington Ayinla. The Apala scene was dominated by Alh. Dauda Epo Akara and HarunaIshola and Waka (female popular music) was dominated by Salawa Abeni, Fela Anikulapo Kuti dominated Afro beat with the inclusion of the pre-war palm-wine and highlife groups: These were the first set of Musicians who created the musical styles.

Several musicians in Nigeria draws from the various musical genres that make up what is known as popular music today have at one time or the other sang about the relationship between mother and child. Eulogising mothers through popular music has been a practice by different generations of musicians in Nigeria. Themes from these albums depict or show appreciation to and praying for mothers in general. Table below is the survey of selected popular musicians with musical theme on mothers.

Table. Survey of selected popular musicians with musical theme on mothers

S/N	Name of Musician	Genre	Title	Interpretation
1	King Sunny Ade (Sunday Adeniyi) Juju	Juju	*Iya mi Edumare Oba ma pa Iya mi lekun Iya rere*	My mother God do not make my mother cry Good mother
2	I.K Dairo (Isiah Kehinde Dairo)	Juju	Iya mi Iya	My mother my confidant
3	Jesse King Highlife	Highlife	Mummy o, w ape laye	Mother, you will live long
4	Funmi Adams	Gospel	Omo laso	
5	Alhaji (Dr.) Sikiru Ayinde Barister. Fuji	Fuji	Orisa bi Iya kosi	
6	Jambo Express	African Calypso	Mother Africa	Mother Africa
7	Prince Nico Mbarga High life	Highlife	Sweet mother	My mother
8	Tunde Ara	Juju	Iya mi	Sweet mother
9	(Tosin Olakanye (Ayanbinrin	Juju	Iya rere	My mother
10	Sonny Okosun	Highlife	Mother and child	Good mother
11	Majek Fashek - Mother	Reggae	Mother never cry	
12	Sharon Ifedi		Sweet mama	Mother never cry
13	Ali Jita		Mama Na	Sweet mama
14	Prince Gozie Okeke	Highlife	Mama	My mother

Among Nigerian music giants who also sang about mother and child is Sonny who doles out his mark of contribution through the combination of reggae, highlife, Afro-funk, and customary tunes and rhythms.

Theoretical framework

This paper applies the "attachment theory" as postulated by Ainsworth (1973) and Bowlby (1969) which states that attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time. Bowlby (1969) points out that children are born with a psycho-biological system, the so-called attachment behavioral system that motivates them to seek or maintain proximity to an attachment.

"Mother and Child": The Lyrics, the Content and the Context

Mama, you are my soul
(you are my soul)
Mother teach me how to smile
Because am still a child
Mother, you are my light
Mother, you are my sight
(you are my sight)
Mother teach me how to see
Because am still a child

Mama show me the way
(show me the way)
Am afraid to walk in the dark
Because am still a child

Mother, you are my angel
(you are my angel)
I love you more than anything
Oh yes I am a child

Mother and child (4ce)
La la la la la la (7ce)

Musical value

Music is used as a communication medium in mother and child through which the message of motherhood is passed to show the bond relationship between mother and child. This is another way to communicate in African musical culture. This form of communication could be through chants which are usually done by a Marable, or through instrument playing which also can be traced to various African instruments like the *Oja* from the eastern part of Nigeria, talking drum and *kalangu* from the western and northern part of Nigeria respectively. The vocal and instrumental sessions of the song *mother and child* have a defined rhythmic pattern from the instrumental introduction all through to the end of the song. Schroeder (2014) states that all interactive musical communication has a regular implicit rhythm, called the pulse of the interaction. It presents also a sequential organization whose units are most often shapes or melodic contours. Finally, it transmits something like content that can be described as narrative. The song mother and child has five (5) verses having the same melody but different text.

Mo - ther   you are my soul

Figure 1. Mother you are my soul

Cultural Value

The first lines of the five verses in the musical narration of the song mother and child is evidence of the inseparable relationship as expressed through music that exists between mother and child.

First-line in verse one (fig. 1) Okosun points out that the mother is his soul. In the light of this statement (fig. 1) Emotional bonding theory or attachment theory as jointly propounded by Ainsworth (1973) and Bowlby (1969) which states that attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space is an indicator

that the mother is the soul of a child. Bowlby considered the importance of children's relationship with their mothers in terms of their social, emotional, and cognitive development. The theory explains why parental relationships have such a powerful impact on the personality of children. This is an affirmation that the soul is the engine of life which is a reason or justification for existence; it also symbolizes the source of human existence, its significance, and tenacity. The soul is the first and most important aspect of any Human-being and gives room for all other activities to take place.

Figure 2. Mother teaches me how to smile

The second line which states that "Mother teaches me how to smile because I am still a child" is a pointer that explains the immediate position of mother to child and child to mother. It presents mother as the teacher while the child is the student pleading to be taught. The learning process starts from here which is a step into learning socio-cultural engagement or interaction with the child's immediate environment. To smile is a nonverbal behavior that communicates or expresses intimacy. Andersen, Guerrero, and Jones (2006, p. 3) point out that nonverbal expressions of intimacy include a wide range of behaviors that reflect both positive affect and involvement, such as gaze, smiling, forward lean, and affirming head nods. A smile can be an expression of approval, love, or acceptance. In the case of a mother and child, it expresses love and gives confidence of approval of behavior. Teaching a child how to smile is teaching the child how to love. This will help in his or her relationship with others and it will help to build his confidence as he learns about the world.

Figure 3. Mother you are my life

The second verse presents the mother as the life of the child and the child needs to learn how to live. This is dealing with moral engagement in life. Socially and culturally, a good moral life distinguishes personality from one another. Culturally it is the responsibility of the mother to teach a child the societal moral values to be a good representative of the soul which gave the child human existence, its significance, and tenacity. In addition to learning moral lessons, a child develops emotional intelligence as well as literacy. One of the several ways of teaching a child is through folk tales. Tshiwala-Amadi (1980: 92) as cited by Amali (2014, p. 91) who claims that:

> Folktales serve many functions in African society. In addition to providing entertainment, they have certain didactic qualities. They are used to educate the young; they help to establish social norms.

Amali (Ibid) cited Achufusi (1986: 1–2) as she holds that these folktales:

> serve as a means of enforcing conformity with social norms; of validating social institutions and religious beliefs and they help to provide psychological freedom from some society imposed restrictions.

This is also a biblical injunction from a religious ground that states that train your child where he will do so that when he grows he will not depart from it (Proverb 22:6). This is also linked with Yoruba proverbial statement that *Omo ti a o ba ko, lo ma ko ile ti a ko ta* meaning that the child that we did not build will end up destroying those things we built in life.
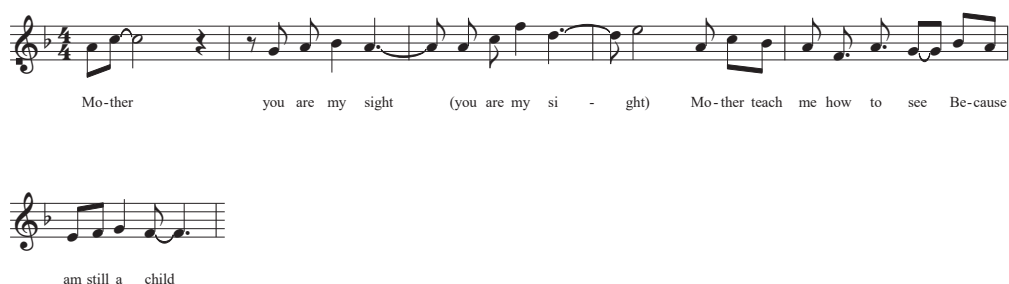

Figure 4. Mother teach me how to see

Figure 4 above points out the importance of sight far beyond just see-ing. The child in this context is asking to be taught how to see the world from the wealth of experience of the mother. This is also compared with the African proverbial saying that that "what an elderly person sees while sitting, a child cannot see even if a child climbs the tallest tree". Another Af-rican proverbial saying from the Yoruba ethnic group states that "*bi omode ba ni aso bi agba ko le ni akisa to agba*" meaning the child may have enough good cloths like the adult but surely cannot have enough rags as the adult. The wealth of knowledge in an adult about life is much more than that of a child. Okosun in this song opines that the child is asking for direction, guidance, skills, etc. on how to face the uncertainties of the world. This continues to the next verse in which the child is asking the mother to show him the way (fig. 5).
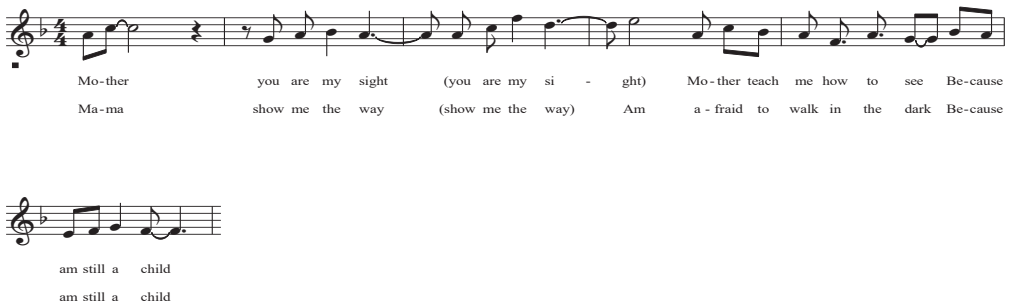

Figure 5. Mother you are my Angel

It is a general belief that an Angel is seen as a protector or a guiding terrestrial being. McLeod, (2017, 1) cites Bowlby (1958) who propos-es that attachment can be understood within an evolutionary context because, the care-giver provides safety and security for the infant. The mother is a child's angel who provides the child with the necessary plat-form for survival. The attachment preserves up passionate strength, cre-ating inspirational perspectives toward self as well as other people, and shaping adult, commonly fulfilling cozy connections. Cassidy, Jones, and Shaver (2013, p. 15) in line with Bowlby attachment theory pointed out that Children grow and thrive in the context of close and dependable re-lationships that provide love and nurturance, security, responsive inter-action, and encouragement for exploration, with all these lacking, such

relationship and development is disrupted, and the consequences can be severe and long-lasting". Cassidy, Jones, and Shaver (Ibid) better express in the lyrics below:

Lyrics	Interpretation (Yoruba)
Mother, you are my angel	*Iya ni Angeli mi*
I love you more than anything	*Mo n'ife e re ju ohun gbogbo lo*
Oh yes I am a child	*Looto, Omode ni mo je*

Conclusion

His early intimacy can have a successful influence on the child's development during his/her lifetime, like the Hindus will say, "the mother's lap is the child's first classroom." The lesson learned in this classroom will not only affect the life of a child but the societal life at large. The narratives in the song "mother and child" point out the necessary training and care that a mother should give a child for life challenges. It is the very first aspect of education for a child that leads to some better achievements in formal education; this relationship empowers a child to comprehend the past and add to the molding of the present and future. This paper concludes that mother and child relationship is a necessary tool for the sharpening of a child's future is usually found in the intimacy that exists between mother and child. Beyond breastfeeding, the power of intimacy between mother and child will either help to structure the society towards positive growth or otherwise, if such intimacy is lacking.

Discography

Year	Album	Records Label
1981	3rd world	Ivory music/Shanachie
1983	Which way Nigeria	Jive Afrika
1984	Liberation	Shanachie
1991	African Soldiers	Profile
1996	over the years' collection	Celebrity
2000	Ultimate Collection	Ivory
2000	Celebrate and worship in Caribbean	Rhythm Orchard

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The Discourse of Girl-Child Abuse from the Prism of Nigerian Drama: Julie Okoh's *Edewede* and *The Mannequins* as Paradigms

ABSTRACT. The study examines the engaging and topical discourse of girl-child human rights abuse and violations from the lenses of contemporary Nigerian drama. It utilizes drama as a tool for advocacy in the global fight against the infringements on the fundamental human rights of girl-children in such developing countries as Nigeria. The primary source materials are drawn from Julie Okoh's plays namely: *Edewede* and *The Mannequins*. The study adopts the qualitative approach to research whereby the two plays under study are used to represent other contemporary Nigerian plays that address the same subject. Among others, the study observes that women (whether as adults or girl-children) are endangered species in Nigeria when it comes to exercising their fundamental human rights. The study also notes, regrettably that girl-children in Nigeria, suffer incessant and severe sexual abuses, violations and domestic violence by the hands of their parents, extended relatives and acquaintances yet the perpetrators of these crimes hardly face justice. The study is significant to the extent that it serves as a clarion call for the protection of the fundamental human rights of girl-children in Nigeria. The study also recommends capital punishment for perpetrators of girl-child's sexual molestation and domestic abuse. The study beckons on the Nigerian government, at all levels, to implement laws and decrees that protect girl-children from serial abusers.

KEYWORDS: discourse, girl-child, human rights abuse and drama

Introduction

The discourse of girl-child human rights has attracted global scholarship since the institutionalization of gender studies in most institutes of learning around the world. Propelled by the communiqué of the Beijing Conference in 1995, there has been a rekindled interest in the advocacy for the protection of the human rights of girl-children. Such rights include indivisible, interdependent and interrelated human rights: i.e., the human rights to freedom from discrimination based on gender, age, race, colour,

language, religion, ethnicity or any other status or on the status of child's parent. Other manifestations of human rights of the girl-child include the rights to a healthy and safe environment as well as the rights to protection from all forms of physical and mental abuse.

Scholarly enquiries as well as direct observational experiences reveal that there are various shades of abuses, violations and violence against the girl-child in Nigeria. These include being denied the right to inherit her father's or family properties; being denied the right to education; being forced into early marriage and many more. In Nigeria, the girl child is considered a second-class citizen and is mostly relegated to the background in the family and society when serious decisions are about to be taken. Largely due to the preponderance of patriarchal ideologies in most African societies, women are conceived as men's properties as well as objects of men's sexual gratification. From the bizarre experiences of widowhood practices where women are subjected to wear rags without having their bath all through the period of mourning their late husbands, to the quell idea of widow inheritance whereby women are being passed on to the younger brothers of their late husbands, women in Nigeria and by extension, Africa, suffer a reasonable degree of molestation, abuse, violation and violence. In Africa, education is assumed to be the prerogative of the male because the girl-child will be given out in marriage, hence, she is meant to contribute to the training of the male (Okoli, 2011).

Ironically, Nigeria is a signatory to the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* and other world's major treaties on the protection of women's human rights, yet issues of girl-child rape, girl-child labour, girl-child domestic violence and girl child-molestation continue to rise on a daily basis even as the perpetrators are treated with kid gloves. Although the demonstration of harmful practices against girl-children in Nigeria is more pronounced in the rural societies, there are footprints of same practices among urban settlers. While such harmful practices as female genital mutilation, clitoridectomy, excision, infibulations, widowhood rites and teenage pregnancy are predominant in rural environments, girl-child labour, rape, girl-child domestic violence and girl child trafficking are more pronounced in urban societies. The fact is that both the urban and rural societies in Nigeria make collaborators in the act of infringing on the fundamental human rights of girl-children. It also shows that the abuse and molestation of girl-children in Nigeria are entrenched in the cultural practices of the people.

The discourse of girl-child education and abuse in Nigeria is highly intertwined with the cultural practices and traditions of the pocket cultures

in Nigeria. Discussing gender issues of any society implies discussing the cultural institutions of such society. On this premise, the study finds theatre and drama as not just vehicles for the transportation of cultures but also as veritable tools for social interventions, advocacy, and re-engineering. Since its early manifestations in ancient Greece down to its multi-functional dispositions in contemporary times, drama has remained an aggressive weapon deployed by playwrights to interrogate developments and experiences in human society. Drama serves various purposes depending on the vision of the playwright. It can be used to document history, to express a worldview, to disseminate crucial information, to canvass an opinion, to educate the society and to create social consciousness among others. It is for the foregoing that the paper interrogates the thorny issues of girl-child rights abuse and domestic violence in contemporary Nigerian drama with particular focus on Julie Okoh's dramatic pieces namely, *Edewede* and *The Mannequins*.

The Concept of Human Rights

The term human rights have been conceptualized over time to have different connotations. What is, however, permanent across all the concepts, is the position that it is strictly tied inalienably to the individual i.e. human right is what belongs to an individual. It is the right of an individual to become who and what they want to be. It is also the privilege human beings enjoy in a given society or gathering on account of their humanness. According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

> Human rights are norms that aspire to protect all people everywhere from severe political, legal, and social abuses. Examples of human rights are the rights to freedom of religion, the right to a fair trial when charged with a crime, the right not to be tortured, and the right to education (Nikel, 2019, p. 1).

The philosophy of human rights, as enshrined in the *Sanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* above, addresses questions about the existence, content, nature, universality, justification, and legal status of human rights. When we state that human rights are universal, we mean to express that all living humans or perhaps, all living persons have human rights. One does not have to be a particular kind of person or a member of a specific nation or religion to have human rights. "People have human rights inde-

pendently of whether they are found in the practices, morality, or law of their country or culture" (Nikel, 2019).

History has it that the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, was the first legal document to set out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected. This document which has spanned seventy-two (UDHR, p. 72) years, continues to be the foundation of all international human rights law. Its 30 articles provide the foundation and principles of current and future human rights conventions, treaties and other legal documents. According to the UDHR:

> Human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings— they are not granted by any state. These universal rights are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. They range from the most fundamental—the right to life—to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health and liberty (UDHR, p. 2).

The true precursor to the human rights discourse was the concept of natural rights which appeared as part of the medieval natural law tradition that became prominent during the European Enlightenment with such philosophers as John Locke, Francis Hutcheson and Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui and which featured prominently in the political discourse of the American Revolution and the French Revolution (Moyn, 2010). From this foundation, the modern human rights arguments emerged over the latter half of the 20th century, possibly as a reaction to slavery, torture, genocide, and war crimes as well as a realization of inherent human vulnerability and as being a precondition for the possibility of a just society (Weston, 2014).

Children's Rights in Nigeria: Overview

Available records indicate that in Nigeria, children's rights are protected by law and held sacred. Not only does the law protect the child, it also stipulates punishment for adults who take advantage of children or seek to negatively influence them. The law seeks to prevent cruelty against children while stating the rights and obligations of the Nigerian child (Onibokun, 2014). Onibokun informs further that prior to the 2003 Child Rights Act, Nigerian child protection was defined by the Children and Young Peo-

ple's Act (CYPA), a law relating primarily to juvenile justice. The cardinal principle behind Nigeria's adoption of the Child Rights Act in 2003 was to domesticate the Convention on the Rights of the child as stipulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which culminated in an international treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights. Apart from the stipulation that no Nigerian child shall enter into any contract, except as provided by the provisions of the Act, the Child Rights Act enshrined some rights of the Nigerian child, namely:

> Right to survival and development; right to name, right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to private and family life, right to freedom of movement, right to freedom from discrimination, right to dignity of the child, right to leisure, recreation and cultural activities, right to health and health services, right to parental care, protection and maintenance, right of a child to free, compulsory and universal primary education, etc, right of a child in need of special protection measure, right of the unborn child protection against harm, etc. (Onibokun, 2014, p. 2).

The Act prohibits child marriage as no person under the age of 18 can contract a valid marriage. In addition, parents and guardians are precluded from arranging or facilitating child betrothals and any person who marries a child. It is also unlawful under the Nigerian Child Act to have sexual intercourse with a child. Any person who contrives this provision commits an offence of rape and is liable on conviction to life imprisonment.

Ironically, the full enforcement of the Child Rights Act in Nigeria still suffers series of setbacks occasioned by obnoxious cultural practices within the pocket cultures and the obvious lack of leadership will on the part of government to enforce the provisions therein. Akolokwu and Nwauzi (2019) observe that the rights of the girl-child in Nigeria continues to be violated despite the very many provisions of the law guaranteeing such rights in domestic and international instruments. Akolokwu and Nwauzi's argument in this paper is that the violations of the rights of the girl-child in Nigeria persist largely as a result of several militating factors namely:

> The obnoxious nature of the patriarchal social system in Nigeria; the very high illiteracy rate of the Nigerian public especially in the rural areas; customary laws that treat the girl-child and in fact women generally as subservient to the

man and with limited opportunities under the custom to maximize potentials; the various religious beliefs that insist that a woman's individuality should be subject to the man who is superior (Akolokwu & Nwauzi, 2019, p. 1)

The culture of silence on the part of girl-children for fear of stigmatization and the obvious lack of enforcement of justice is also cardinal reasons why the violation of girl-child rights is on the increase in Nigeria. For the foregoing, Akolokwu and Nwauzi (2019) beckon on the judiciary to be proactive in insisting that perpetrators of violations of the human rights of women, especially girl-children, are brought to book in order to serve as deterrence to others. The study also canvasses regular human rights education and sensitization of Nigerian girl-children especially for purposes of counseling them out of the culture of silence.

Similarly, Eguagie (2015) in her article titled "Human Rights for the Nigerian Woman and Girl-Child", expresses her detest for the negative portrayal of women especially girl children in the entertainment industry especially in music videos. Like Onibokun, Akolokwu and Nwauzi, Eguagie acknowledges that there has been one form of violence or the other against women and girl-children in Nigeria. She identifies such violence to include sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, child marriage, child trafficking, physical assault, acid attack, wife battering, molestation and other negative cultural practices. According to Eguagie:

It is now a common trend in our entertainment industry, to see women and girls dancing half-naked for the entertainment of their audience. The Nigerian society is gradually degrading the dignity of women and widening the gap of gender inequality indirectly. In an attempt to make more money and fame, you see even educated artists encouraging and featuring young girls to dance half-naked while their male counterparts cover their bodies. It is disgusting and disheartening, and this is modern day abuse against women. The most annoying part is the so-called Home video (Nollywood); the Nigerian movie is indirectly encouraging some forms of violence against women and this includes physical, sexual, psychological and other forms of abuse. You can watch five Nigerian movies and four will feature one form of violence against women such as women or the girl-child being raped, having witchcraft, possessed of evil spirits, physically assaulted in the community or school, subjected to psychological torture and degraded as second-class citizens, not allowed to speak and all these are seen as normal in a typical Nigerian society as portrayed by the movie producers and directors (Eguagie, 2015, p. 1).

Eguagie's outburst in this article seem to be an outright condemnation of the entertainment industry without taking cognizance that the movies are sincere reflections of the day-to-day happenings in society, hence, the catchphrase that arts mirror society either in the present, past or future.

The thrust of the review has been to underscore the fact that even though Nigeria is a signatory to major world treaties and declarations on fundamental human rights, there is a high rise in the violations, molestations and sexual violence of women especially girl-children.

Bio-Data of Julie Okoh

Julie Okoh is a native of Esan Ethnic Nationality in Edo State, Nigeria. Born at Ubiaja town on August 5, 1947, Okoh had a humble beginning. Julie Okoh is a retired professor in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Port Harcourt with specialization in playwriting, gender studies and dramatic theory and criticism. She is one of the few prominent voices in Nigeria in feminist dramaturgy and literature. Most of her works advocate for women liberation from the clutches of patriarchy. Some of her plays include: *Edewede, The Mannequins, In the Fullness of Time, Who Can Fight the Gods?, Mask, The Trials, A Cry for Democracy, Closed Doors, Aisha, Our Wife Forever, We Are Rivers* and *A Haunting Past* among others.

Synopses of Selected Plays

As earlier mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the two plays under study are Julie Okoh's *Edewede* and *The Mannequins*. The play *Edewede* is set in a fictitious community known as Otoedo—a remote village of the Esan speaking people of the Niger Delta Region in Nigeria. It x-rays the issue of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is termed as cultural practice in the society of the play. The heroine of the play, Edewede champions the struggle against women oppression and subjugation through the machination of female circumcision. Contrary to the tradition of the community, Edewede refuses to surrender her daughter, Oseme for circumcision because she sees in the act an inhuman treatment meted on the girl-children to demonstrate men's domination of the female folk. To make

matters worse, Edewede inherits a husband, Ordia, who does not have a mind of his own relies on the decisions of his highly traditional mother, Ebikere. Edewede also inherits a mother-in-law. Ebikere, who pitches tent with the men on insisting that Edewede provides her grand-daughter Oseme for the circumcision.

The tension in the play heightens when Edewede mobilizes her fellow women of like-minds in the community and together they stage a protest by going on exile to a far away land, leaving the men (their husbands) to take care of domestic chores and the children. At first, the men see the women's gimmick as mere child's play but when the pangs of family errands hit them hard, they run to the King for intervention. In the end, the men unanimously agree to jettison the idea of female circumcision so they can be at peace with their wives. On their part, the women become assuaged by the men's decision and so return to the community to continue their domestic and complimentary role in the family. The play ends on the note of celebration and reconciliation as the men and women engage in a dance of agreement to live at peace with each other.

The Mannequins is set in a more urban society where industrialization has occasioned the engagement in white collar job. The play portrays the patriarchal drunkenness of Mr. Adudu, a prosperous entrepreneur who runs a contracting company and takes advantage of his exalted position as the manager to molest and defile young girls in his neighborhood. In his randy disposition, Adudu encounters Iyere, a teenager of 13, who has come to seek financial assistance in his office. Rather than assist Iyere genuinely, Adudu decides to take undue advantage of her by promising to give her plenty of money if only she can meet him up in a hotel room. Iyere obliges innocently in desperation because she needs the money to save her brother who is gasping for breath in the hospital as a result of a deep cut in his throat. There in the hotel room, Adudu cunningly forces his way in Iyere and in the process forcefully breaks her virgin knob. Some days later, Iyere in the company of her mother, Mrs Odibei, storms Adudu's office to show her mother the man behind the forceful breaking of her virginity as well as the man behind her contracting the deadly Vagina Vesico Fistula (VVF). Upon seeing Adudu, Mrs Odibei resigns to fate and weeps as she introduces Mr. Adudu to Iyere as her biological father. The drama takes a different twist as Adudu breaks down in tears and regret for being the architect of his own daughter's irremediable health condition.

Girl-Child Rights in *Edewede* and *The Mannequins*

Our analysis so far reveals the preponderance of the abuse of girl-child rights in the plays under study. In *Edewede*, the issue of girl-child rights abuse is portrayed through the means of forced circumcision on Oseme, a teenager. By virtue of being part of the human community, Oseme is imbued with some inalienable rights. Such rights include the right to be protected from harm or torture. Ironically, her rights are flagrantly abused at the altar of primordial cultural values that insist on female circumcision. As a teenager who is capable of making choices, Oseme is opposed to the idea of female circumcision just like her mother, but rather than respect her views, her father, Ordia, propelled by her grand-mother, Ebikere, persuades her to present herself for circumcision regardless of the risk involved in it.

The imperativeness of girl-child rights in the play lies in the fact that, as a teenager, Oseme is expected to enjoy socio-cultural protection from her parents. One would expect that her family, which is her first constituency, should be responsible for the protection of her human rights. Ironically, her entire family except her mother, deny her such protection. It is actually her grand-mother, Ebikere that instigates the entire process of subjecting her to circumcision. Quite early in the play, Ebikere reminds her of the need for her to submit herself to be circumcised, thus:

> **EBIKERE** :Circumcision is part of our culture. My mother was circumcised. So also were her grand-mothers, great grand-mothers and great, great, great grand-mothers. It is a rite that every woman in this land goes through (Okoh, 2015, p. 2).

Ebikere's trail of thought above clearly indicates that culture and tradition remain weapons deployed by men in most African societies to consistently cage and suppress women. She does not advance any reasonable logic or benefits of circumcision to drive her point but only begs the question that her forbears did it and so it is justified.

Whereas Ebikere's insistence on circumcision can be understood against the background that she represents age long tradition, Ordia's position appears quite absurd considering that he has had a fair taste of modern life on account of education and exposure. Besides, as Oseme's father, he is naturally bound to protect his daughter from any form of harm be it cultural or religious. Ordinarily, Ordia is expected to be proactive in

the protection of his only surviving daughter, Oseme given that he had lost his first daughter, Ize to health complications occasioned by circumcision. Edewede recounts the horrible experience of circumcision, thus:

> I was seized with fear, and my fear increased as I matured in age. Then came over turn to face the evil blade we all walked to the initiation camp but some never walked back from there. Akalo died to death; Denowe died few weeks later. As season rolled by, many more maidens passed away for the same cause, others remain destroyed for life" (Okoh, 2015, p. 18).

Ironically, Ordia prefers to sing the circumcision song along with his aged mother as he beckons on Oseme to surrender herself to be circumcised. Overwhelmed by the gory imageries she has of circumcision, Edewede rises to the occasion and stops Oseme from being circumcised. Characteristic of most African men, Ordia deems it proper to intimidate His wife, Edewede by reminding her of the patriarchal cliché that he is her superior by virtue of being her husband. As he puts it:

> **ORDIA**: Wede! I am your husband. It is my duty to protect you too. So, listen to my advice. Do not allow that painful experience to becloud your reason. Give up this suicidal idea of yours (Okoh, 2015, p. 23).

Ordia's patriarchal boast as the man of the house above smacks of infringements on the fundamental human rights of Edewede since he thinks that he is the only one capable of thinking and therefore must be listened to against all odds. The abuse of women's human rights in the play trickles down to the point where Edewede engages Ebikere, her mother in law in a slug fest. Amidst their heated verbal exchange, Ebikere reminds Edewede that her place in society is in the kitchen. "You don't even know that you are only a wife in this house. And as such, your place is in the kitchen (Okoh, 2015, p. 7).

In the play *Edewede*, circumcision is used as way of checkmating women since it is believed that if a woman is not circumcised, she stands the risk of being flirtatious. Without any form of medical examination, the traditional society also conjectures that uncircumcised women would experience difficulties in childbirth. Some extremist novices in traditional African reproductive health claim that the protruded clitoris is capable of compressing a baby's head during delivery. The playwright presents circumcision as one of the means through which men unleash violence and trample upon the pride of womanhood. An uncircumcised woman is ad-

judged impure and imperfect. Ebikere reminds Oseme that "The peanut is very delicate. It is the source of confusion, impurity and imperfection" (Okoh, 2015, p. 5). Another argument put forward by the advocates of female circumcision is that the removal of the clitoris is meant for the sexual enjoyment of men and not women. Meaning women have no right to enjoy sex. This, again, is another manifestation of the abuse of the girl-child who is also a potential woman. Through the character of Edewede, Okoh educates the society on the health risks and complications associated with female circumcision. This is expressed in her monologue below:

> **EDEWEDE:** Vesico-Vaginal Fistula. According to Mama Nurse during circumcision, when the clitoris is being removed, the labia and the surrounding tissues are damaged. The girl suffers from stenosis that is healing with narrowing of birth canal. This process makes the muscles surrounding the vagina and the urethra to become very tight. Later in life, during labour the narrowed birth canal makes it difficult for the baby to come out easily. The baby's head is forced to create an opening between the walls of the bladder, urethra and the vagina. If the woman survives, she begins to leak urine because the damaged bladder, urethra or vagina outlet can no longer control. the urine (Okoh, 2015, p. 29).

The play also portrays the desecration and defilement of the girl-child. The pain inflicted on the girl-child during circumcision is the type that hurts her so deeply that she undergoes torture and sometimes, death just as we find in the case of Ize, Edewede's first daughter. Eriala (Mama Nurse) makes conscious effort, out of her medical expertise, to expose the adverse effects of circumcision on the girl child, thus:

> **ERIALA**: You all already know what circumcision is. You have all gone through it. In this society, many young girls have lost their lives because of circumcision. Many women are suffering from different types of diseases because of circumcision. Tetanus, urinary infections, V.V.F, HIV/AIDS are all dangerous afflictions contacted through circumcision. Yet they see nothing wrong with it... (Okoh, 2015, p. 36).

Eriala sensitizes the women further by charging them up to see themselves as equals of men. As she puts it:

> **ERIALA:** ...First of all you must know that God created man and woman in his own image. If the image of God is one then man and woman were created equals. But society made one master and the other slave. Circumcision is a form of slavery imposed on woman to dominate her (Okoh, 1997, p. 37).

It is Eriala's charge above that spurs the women into action as they abandon their homes and go on a compulsory exile as a way of protest against female circumcision in the Otoedo Community. At first, the men feel undaunted but when the pangs and paroxysms of marital companionship stare them in the face they begin to get agitated over their wives' absence. It is the desperation to have their wives back that propels them to succumb to the women's demand for the abolition of female circumcision. Okoh's *Edewede* is more of protest literature in the dramatic mode of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and J. P. Clark's *Wives Revolt*.

Human Right Issues in *The Mannequins*

The predominant human rights issue in *The Mannequins* is that of sexual molestation and abuse. This is seen in the conduct of Adudu who goes about sleeping with any women that comes his way including his own thirteen-year-old biological daughter, Iyere. Iyere is portrayed in the play as a victim of girl-child rights abuse by her own biological father. In a bid to survive as well as attend to her brother's health challenge, Iyere looks in the direction of Adudu for assistance unknown to her that Adudu is her father. Quite characteristic of Adudu, he accepts to help her on the condition that he would have carnal knowledge of her. On their first meeting, Iyere exposes her poor background to him, thus: "Sir, we don't have money to pay the bill. We are poor and fatherless" (Okoh, 1997, p. 50).

Iyere's revelation of her poor background above tells a great deal of Adudu's recklessness and irresponsible disposition as her father. Iyere has parents but because she lacks parental protection and love, she is quick to admit that she is fatherless. Ironically, it is her own biological father that she confesses of her fatherlessness to. Iyere's resort to begging, in the first instance, is as a result her poor background. It is the desperation to survive that compels her mother to send her begging. She bemoans their fate, thus:

> **IYERE:** She doesn't know where I am right now. You see, yesterday, she sent me to many people in our village. They could only contribute fifty naira. This morning, she sent me to another person in this city. He only gave me five naira. So instead of going to the hospital, I decided to come to you because people say you are very kind (Okoh, 1997, p. 51).

The lines of Iyere above raise serious indictment on her mother, Mrs Odebo for parental negligence and irresponsibleness. The lines also portray her mother as a morally-bankrupt character who is heartless and inconsiderate to the point of sending her thirteen-year-old daughter into street begging. The action of the mother raises serious breach of the fundamental human rights of Iyere. By sending her into street begging, Iyere's mother has inadvertently exposed her to sexual abuse, violence and molestation. Little wonder, she plays into the hands of Adudu, the agent of sexual abuse. It can be argued therefore that Iyere did not bump into Adudu's office by intuition but by her versatility and dexterity in begging which she has perfected over time from her series of begging adventure initiated by her mother.

Another round of girl-child abuse can be found in Iyere's encounter with Adudu. It is a crime to humanity for anyone to engage in sexual intercourse with a minor be it on consent or not. Adudu is fully aware of Iyere's age bracket but he throws caution to the wind and goes ahead to make highly irresistible advances on her. He takes undue advantage of the poor little girl who confesses that she is ready to do anything for money because of her brother's critical health condition. Adudu capitalizes on her desperation and asks her again, thus: "And you are ready to do anything to save his life? (Okoh, 1997, p. 51). This question from Adudu has high malicious undertones because he desires to extract Iyere's commitment and acceptance to sleep with him.

Iyere is a product of an informal union with Adudu and Mrs Odebo. Adudu had impregnated Mrs Odebo and abandoned her in the process and so Mrs Odebo is constrained to giving birth to the baby and raising her as a jobless single lady. It is Adudu's earlier decline in taking care of Iyere from birth that translates into the tragedy of abusing her sexually and making her to contract the dreaded Vagina Vesico Fistula (VVF). The logic therefore is that if Adudu has taken full responsibility of Iyere from her conception to delivery and upbringing, the latter wouldn't have been exposed to the point of being desperate to raise money for her brother's treatment i.e., she wouldn't have encountered Adudu in such a helpless situation.

It can therefore be submitted that Iyere, like most Nigerian girl-children are exposed to sexual abuse and molestation as a result of parental negligence and broken family structures. It can be argued that Iyere would have had a better upbringing if only her parents were cohabiting, and her welfare made the concern of both of them. Mrs Odebo recounts the episodes surrounding the birth of Iyere, thus:

MRS ODEBO:(*Falling on her knees*): Good heavens! Wretched woman! What have you done to merit this? I was fifteen, he defiled and abandoned me. As if that was not enough. Now again, my own daughter…She is hardly thirteen, a mere baby. (*Pointing at Adudu*) You have destroyed her beyond repair. Do I blame you? It is our society that gave you the whip to flog every woman you come across…I curse you! May the anger I've borne against you all these years turn into fire to consume you hopelessly should you ever look at another immature woman again. You deserter of women! Assassin of womanhood! A woman brought you into this world. Through the hands of a woman shall you depart from it…Ferocious kite that devours his own young (Okoh, 1997, p. 85).

Mrs Odebo's lamentation above sounds more like the proverbial "medicine after death" since she had every opportunity to protect her daughter Iyere from Adudu (men) which she refers to as "Ferocious Kite". She sucks in her poor status and allows her condition to override her sense of reason such that she sends her "adorable" daughter of barely thirteen years to go beg money from men even when, out of the experience, she knows the ways of men when it comes to sexual drives and libido. However, Adudu's recklessness with women especially young girls are called to question by Ebiaye, his new secretary who turns down his several advances and rebukes him to desist from his promiscuous lifestyle. Ebiaye confronts Adudu and charges him to show some respect to womanhood rather than treat young girls as his sex toys, thus:

EBIAYE: Sir, I am neither a pet nor a toy, but a person. A person with flesh and blood. A person with a soul searching for growth and fulfillment. I can't let you tie me down with your wealth (Okoh, 1997, p. 43).

The two plays under study have portrayed the conscious and flagrant abuse of girl-child human rights even though they differ in techniques, characterization, and thematic engagements. In *Edewede*, Okoh uses the anomaly of female circumcision as a tool for the interrogation of human rights issues. Here, the heroine, Edewede is portrayed as the amazon and defender of the inalienable rights of the girl child. She stands firm against primordial and outmoded patriarchal traditions that insist on female circumcision and, in the end, she emerges victorious as the King of the Otoedo community proudly pronounces the abolition of female circumcision in the land. Generically, Edewede can be seen as a tragicomedy as good seems to triumph over evil in the end.

The Mannequins also follows the tragi-comic dramatic structure as Adudu, the perpetrator and harbinger of corruption and sex abuse is brought to book and subjected to public pillory. However, the play subjects us into some form of mixed feelings. While we rejoice over the humiliation of Adudu, we cannot help but feel the tragic fate of Iyere who is not only abused by her biological father but contracts the dreaded VVF in the process. Okoh's *The Mannequins* raises critical concerns bothering on the thorny issue of girl-child abuse, molestation and violence. Iyere suffers terrible consequences largely due to irresponsible parenting. She is a product of a broken family and union and so she is denied the right to quality education and social welfare. The porous upbringing bequeathed Iyere is a clear infringement on the portion of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that stipulates that every human person, regardless of sex, age, race, religion, and social status is imbued with the right to quality education and right to improved social welfare.

Conclusion

The major finding of the study is that parental negligence and weak family structure are key factors in the rampant cases of girl-child rights abuse in Nigeria and many other developing nations. The study has observed that most girl-children who are victims of human rights abuse are either products of parental negligence or broken home just as we find in the character of Iyere in Okoh's *The Mannequins*. It has also been observed that most Nigerian societies hide under the umbrella of patriarchal cultures and traditions to unleash terror on the women. Most of the ill treatment meted on women in the name of upholding culture and tradition are largely vague as there has not been any medical proof to buttress their claim. For instance, the claim by patriarchal traditions that uncircumcised females are impure and are bound to be promiscuous does not have any medical backing. The deduction here is that circumcision is one way through which men maintain their domination and subjugation of women. It has also been observed that there is a dearth of research materials on the issue of girl-child human rights in Nigerian drama. The Nigerian drama industry cannot boast of a harvest of plays that address the issue of girl-child human rights. Most gender sensitive play's dwell more on such other harmful practices against women as widowhood practice, wife inheritance, wife battering and so on.

The study, therefore, strongly recommends the activation of an effective judiciary in Nigeria. This judiciary can bring to justice perpetrators of violence and abuse on girl-children and women in general. The need for consistent social awareness programmers on the need to protect the rights of Nigerian girl-children is highly canvassed. Traditional governments in Nigeria are also urged to be dynamic by checkmating obnoxious patriarchal traditions that humiliate and dehumanize the women folk beginning with the girl-child. Nigerian writers (male and female) are encouraged to devote more creative ink in the direction of crafting works that address the abuse of girl-child human rights just as Julie Okoh has done in *Edewede* and *The Mannequins.*

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BOOK
AND JOURNAL
REVIEWS

Łukasz Pakuła (ed.). (2021) *Linguistic Perspectives on Sexuality in Education: Representations, Constructions and Negotiations*. Palgrave Studies in Language, Gender and Sexuality (e-book). Pp. 444.

Linguistic Perspectives on Sexuality in Education: Representations, Constructions and Negotiations edited by Łukasz Pakuła is a timely publication that provides a linguistic perspective on the current debates surrounding global struggles over gender equality and sexual minority rights. In the light of a new political configuration (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022) that puts the anti-gender rhetoric at the core of contemporary far-right populisms reigning across the globe, from Eastern Europe to Brazil, the book aims to disrupt the status quo by presenting evidence from socially engaged research in educational settings. By critically recognising causes of oppression of LGBTQ+ communities in education, the book reminds us about the importance of forging pedagogies 'with not for the oppressed' (Freire, 1970) and constitutes an important step in the struggle to transform the current situation in language teaching settings.

The publication is an edited volume that brings together scholars working on sexuality topics in education in Anglocentric contexts such as the UK, USA or Canada, other 'Western' European states such as Spain or Germany and (semi-)peripheral Poland, Brazil and China. In the introduction, Pakuła situates the book within discussions on necropolitics (Mbembe, 2019) that regulate who has the right to live and who does not in the light of the resurgent homophobic attacks in Poland and other parts of the world. He reminds us that uncontested educational practices serve as tools of biopolitics that control sexuality and through their institutional power, normalize particular—dominant and heteronormative—practices. At the same time, educational discourses erase nonheterosexuality at both global and local scales. The introduction thus sets the tone for the whole book in a powerful manner reminding the reader about the significance of pre- and in-service teacher education and a necessity of a close analysis of teaching materials and educational policies. It also underlines educational sites' ability not only to raise awareness, but also to interrogate one's own beliefs and values, which in turn may lead to reflexive action, more inclusive politics of change and transformation.

The volume is divided into five sections: *Heteronormativity in Learning Materials*, *Welcoming Marginalised Voices in the Classroom*, *Beyond the Binary*, *Exploring Interventions: Theory vis-à-vis Practice* and *Beyond academia: Recommendations for practitioners*. The first section opens with Sunderland's chapter that provides a useful overview of debates on gender representation and flags up the concept of

degrees of heteronormativity that will help a reader new to the topic understand key debates and problems surrounding LGBTQ+ visibility and queer resistance discussed in later chapters. The chapter also urges us to confront 'extreme heterosexuality of the textbooks' and to start examining reception and use to better understand how implicit assumptions about the family, sexuality and gender are (re)produced, taken up and contested.

The whole book highlights the role of silences in a powerful manner. After Foucault, many authors present various types of evidence in which presences are shown to legitimize heteronormativity and absences exclude sexual minorities in various language teaching materials. The qualitative analysis of interview data, digital ethnographic observations or EFL textbooks allows the authors to present complex ways in which the status quo favouring heteronormativity is maintained. For example, highlighting the power of multimodal analysis, Motschenbacher warns us that the visual may shape exclusionary practices even if the verbal seems inclusive. He points out that in the German series of EFL textbooks that he analysed, all texts about love and friendship are to some degree heterosexual in the visual domain, which does not allow students to fully develop sociocultural literacy, including sexual literacy. As a result, a fundamental part of knowledge production is missing.

A variety of educational resources are analysed: from EFL textbooks through dictionaries to observations made in TESOL programmes in Britain or China. Various alternative routes for inclusion are also discussed in most chapters, with Section V even giving explicit recommendations, an aspect of the book which will be highly appreciated by practitioners and scholars alike. For example, Pakuła examines how dictionaries silence queer voices and offers avenues to confront this through active citizenship, petition writing or joint research projects. DePalma critically analyses educational policies in Spain and urges us to not only uncover hegemonic dynamics and exemplify counterhegemonic routes, but also to seek 'stretches of meaning' in educational policies; echoing Anzaldua's (1987) famous assertion that 'spaces between contradictions' constitute places of 'the untethered possibility.'

An important point is also raised by Baynham, who touches upon a 'culture of silence' in TESOL pointing to both invisibility and inaudibility of queer students and suggesting that queering the classroom should not be confined to LGBTQ+ educators and students, but should also be taken upon by the so-called allies. By bringing evidence from his own research in the context of migrations and asylum seekers in the UK, Baynham breaks with state-level observations reported in many chapters, and stresses that in order to create more welcoming spaces, language teachers need to pay close attention to what people on the move bring with them and how issues of race or ethnicity intersect with sexuality. A similar point is also echoed in O'Mochain's chapter which reports sociocultural differences in accounts of male-directed sexual violence. It is Power's chapter however that shows us how such encounters at intersections of positionalities lead to relationship building.

Drawing on her work in Canada, Power demonstrates that transgendering the academic writing led to a student-led antiracist trans project. Her observations hence allow us to see that teaching initiatives may in fact result in what in a different publication, Dabiri calls not just allyship, but a coalition that may potentially change attitudes and enable the emergence of communities of care.

One of the strongest contributions of the volume, Fabricio and Moita's chapter on queering timespace, is also a rare piece to explicitly employ a decolonial lens. The authors focus on the ways in which social fascism in contemporary Brazil is confronted by young bloggers in micro school encounters reminding us of the colonial history of erasure of queer bodies. Building on Mignolo's call to 'think otherwise' and discussing colonial chronotopes' ability to freeze people in time and space, Fabricio and Moita turn to online spaces in which young people engage and position themselves in relation to colonial discourses of difference. Providing qualitative analysis of non-participant observations of interactions between a history teacher and a group of young people online, the authors remind us that time, space and interactants are always on the move, and when difference is not erased from educational settings, students may actively engage in reflexive thinking to creatively contest dominant personal and sociohistorical chronotopes, and themselves cause rupture and resist exclusionary discourses.

Fabricio and Moita's chapter underlines a further need for creating space for contributions from the Global South, and inclusion of voices of scholars working in postcolonial contexts in academic publications on the topic of language and sexuality. It also points to the urgency of interrogating and challenging the internalized white gaze, which could be further analysed in all contributions. Weaving larger stories together and critically reflecting upon 'which stories tell stories' (Haraway, 2016) could help us better understand third cultures emerging in the interconnected world. It must be remembered that the new political configuration is deeply invested not only in anti-gender rhetoric, but also in the active erasure of whiteness as a racialised perspective and lack of proper attention to economic advantage and penalty. It is argued here that a coalition between linguists, language teachers and other practitioners may only bring us closer to dismantling existing power structures, if we focus on interconnections between systems of oppression in more explicit ways.

It is thus hoped that Pakuła's book will open up space for a further close analysis of the unearned privilege and perspective, and its capacity to transform silence into language and action in its full complexity. Future publications may hence further challenge the nation-state logic also by paying close attention to the poetics of resistance that does not conform to Eurocentric monolingual norms. It might perhaps be of value to employ long-term ethnographic methods to unpack how actors in intercommunication engage in unruly visions through mixing or translanguaging practices in the classroom itself, and by doing so, build communities of care that allow to fully see 'difference as a crucial strength' (Lorde, 2017) and go beyond the hierarchy of oppression in all its forms.

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