



# An Overview of the Difficulties of Fostering Women Participation in Leadership Roles in Nigeria: A Study of Our Husbands Has Gone Mad Again By Ola Rotimi

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## **Abstract**

*In the development and post development era, issues of women participation in political offices and leadership roles have been the debate all over the place. There have been struggles, agitations, reflection calls for equity between the male and female counterparts in both elective and appointive positions in the political space. Women are the extra-creation of God, according to the Biblical account of creation. This makes the woman to be an extra-ordinary being which should be seen as such and should be treated as such. This paper takes a critical look at the issues associated with problems of women participation in politics, leadership roles in different parastatals and even at the home front by looking at the work of Ola Rotimi: **Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again**. In this play, Lejoka-Brown the main actor sees women as an instrument to be used and dumped. But the target of this paper is to increase the participation and influence of women at all levels of decision-making in public and political life. This paper induces on the society, the idea of the womanist perspective in which the African woman is given the total freedom to explore her world with her male counterpart. It is a wholesome recognition of nature and traditional*

*assignment to womanhood. Women want to see themselves taking their place beside men without feeling threatened. The thrust of this paper is to challenge the dominant ethos of the men's image over that of the women in political, economic or religious leadership. There is no doubt that the women too have some potential and rights to contribute meaningfully to the development of their society. In fact the role of women in terms of services cannot be under estimated. Therefore they should be given maximum support by their male counterparts.*

*Keywords: Overview Difficulties, fostering, Participation, Leadership Roles*

## **Introduction**

The struggle for freedom between the oppressor and the oppressed has been an issue which has generated strong debate of inequality and marginalization of people's rights in the society especially women and according to Rossi (1944) in Sociological Approach of Structural functionalism that 'A group may be said to suffer from inequality if its members are restricted in access to



*legitimate valued positions or rewards in a society for which their ascribed status is not a relevant criteria".* In view of this the theatre as an agent of mass mobilization and social consciousness has gone a long way in fighting against class oppression, gender inequality, social-political issues that has to do with seclusion and exclusion of women from public and political offices. Theatre is a social commentator, it reflect the image of the society back to the society itself so that it can know its beauty, flaws and ways of amending them. The theatre has been seen as a veritable tool to articulate the yearning interest of the women by penning issues on women and marginalization, theatre brings awareness to the needs of the people because without awareness there would not be changes in the society and not only that the process of reawakening the morbid social-political unconsciousness of the people through theatrical enactments leads to reformation and socio-political re-orientation of the society. Events in Nigerian history such as Colonization which was the can satire agent of women marginalization because then women were de-franchised and this caused a lot of advocacy on the involvement of women in politics but with the effort of activists, playwrights they make

these social maladies the thematic base for their works. We have playwrights like Ola Rotimi, J.P. Clark, Stella Oyecelepo, Bode Sowande, Femi Osofisan and the likes. All these took it upon themselves to agitate for the liberation of women through literary work of arts. They believe women are not weak and feeble according to some patriarchal assertion that women cannot participate in politics but the concept of participation is part of the culture of democracy.

In fact for development of any kind to be successful, a vantage position should be accorded the women, as they constitute larger proportion of the population. For this reason, they should not be left out in the issues of decision making that bothers even on their lives as a people.

The main focus of attention is the causality of low women involvement in leadership roles, at home, in education, employment and even in political participation. This would be examined under salient issues like heavy burden of domestic labour, poverty, patriarch notions of male responsibility for decision making and leadership role within the family, in the community and in the wider society, abuse and violence at home and the likes. Our Husband Has Gone Mad



Again by Ola Rotimi has been carefully chosen to look into some of the relevant issues addressed by Ola Rotimi in the text. Some literary works and quotes that will compliment this work from the feminist point of view.

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Gender Issues: Feminism or Womanism**

The concept of gender as we understood it means different issues about male and female sex in terms of behavioural, out play in masculine and feminine ability. In most cases, the bigger roles are ascribed to men while the smaller ones are for the women. Gender can be seen as the social orientation of sexual differences---gender is the knowledge that establishes meanings for bodily differences, these meanings vary across culture, social group and time. But over the decades the issue of sex inequality in various area of social life has been the bone of contention in education, employment, income distribution, political participation and in private sector especially in the home front where women became wards, wives and daughter instead of adult members of the society. But the question is which is which? Feminism or womanism. Both feminism and womanism are movement for the emancipation of women

from political, economic, cultural, social, physical and psychological dominant. There are diversities of these gender theories, feminism from the beginning, sees man as responsible for the inferior status of women in the society. Mary Wallstone Craft published a book in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. She argues that men and women must share true equality before either of them could be free. She again identified false system of education as one of the factors responsible for women's subjugation because through this system of education, false images of women are passed from generation to generation. Though many scholars have argued that womanism is peculiar to Africa woman. Africona Womanism is an ideology created and designed for all women of African descent, it is grounded in African culture and therefore it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of African women". Womanism is a gender theory that gathers together the peculiarities of black women's experience for cultural meaningfulness. It celebrates feminine qualities but does not uphold the neutralization of sex roles or outlook. Womanism is a holistic approach to women issues, a celebration of the totality of the



woman experience and being. It is a wholesome recognition of nature/traditional assignment to womanhood but as good as the theory is according to Maltical Marathon (1986) in Dennis (1987) says tradition has forced women to codes that restrict their behavior and make them subservient to men whether fathers, husband or brothers". This moral code in culture is not applicable to men or else how can a society that detests adultery be permissive over men's sexual escapes outside marriage. Kate Millett explains that it is because patriarchy thrives inequalities and negate the supposed inferior human being - woman.

This brings us to the issues of feminism. What is feminism? It is a movement that advocates equality of the sexes and this has engendered many works of arts from men and women like Alice Walker, Flora Nwapa. Ama Ata Aidoo. Ola Rotimi, Zulu Sofola. Oyedepo Stella, Molar-Ogundipe Leslie to mention a few. According to Alice Walker (1999) in Olorunsomo (2000), feminism is “...*the political theory that struggles to free all women...*” it is believed that women have some potential in them that can be explored if given the opportunity. The female gender is the center of life, the magnet that holds the social cosmos intact and active. Destroy her

and destroy life itself. The ideology of feminism is a system of ideas concerned with structuring concrete historical realities, of rationalizing action, of directing economic and political struggle, of guiding the destiny of a people it is also a “*psychological revolution*” by women, in their struggle to define themselves as individual.

### **Synopsis of the play**

Lejoka-Brown is a retired military officer and a successful businessman who ventures into politics with the aim of “*eating the national cakes*”, his aim has more to do with vanity than patriotism, he is selfish and self-centered. He inherits a wife. Mama Rashida, the wife of his late senior brother, and later marries Sikira the daughter of the President of the market women union. Madam Ajanaku, as part of his plans to achieve his political motive. Lisa, a nurse he married during the war in Congo comes home (Nigeria) without informing him before hand and her arrival disturbs not only Lejoka-Brown's political ambition but his control over the other women in the house. Lisa sensitizes these women on their rights as women and inspires them to challenge the chauvinistic rules of Lejoka-Brown and religious restrictions that they have

ignorantly followed for a longtime. Liza gave it to Lejoka-Brown more than he can swallow which sparks a conflict between Brown and Liza resulting in pandemonium that makes Lejoka-Brown go 'mad' he lost his temper and consequently lost his influence on his supporters and his candidature is revoked with Sikira flying the flag of his former party as the new candidate for the post.

### **Conceptual Analysis of the Characters in the play**

**Lejoka-Brown** - A retired military officer, a Cocoa business man with irrational mentality to exploit, he connotes our leaders in the pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial Nigerian, leaders who want to exploit and impoverish their subjects. He wants to prey on his subjects to achieve his selfish gain. This is seen in the statement he made.

*.....politics is the thing now in Nigeria, mate. You want to be famous? Politics you want to chop life? --- No, no. you want to chop a big slice of National cake? Na politics (p.4)*

From the above statement by Lejoka-Brown, he identifies the political landscape of the

country as a veritable field to perpetrate his obnoxious desire for financial gains. Lejoka-Brown's marriage to Sikira is equally done for financial and economic gain. Sikira's mother is the president of the market Women Union and the contracted marriage with Sikira is intended to help Lejoka-Brown get the votes of the market women.

*--that woman's case is only for necessity, any way, temporary measure. We need woman's vote's man, if we must win the next election (p.6)*

By implication, the marriage will position him to gain control of the economy that will strengthen his exploitative intent. Temporary measure he said that is to say that women are to be used and dumped when you are through with them. This dehumanization is of the highest order, he is heartless and has no feeling for women and their right. This is also seen in Liza statement:

*Liza: .. Mr. Rahman Lajoka Brown does not have any respect whatsoever for my feelings. Why I believe a woman must try to be a loving, loyal wife and all that .....*

This is to tell the world that he has no iota of love for the women but just for his personal ambition. Even the so call Liza, he wanted her so as to add to his fame. This is applicable to men in the wider society, ask them why they have harem of women, no tangible reasons but just because they see them as an instrument to achieve their selfish interest.

Lejoka-Broan introduce his chauvinistic rule in the home so as to be able to be in control of the social life of the women, he placed them on the religious law of purdah (ELEHA) in which the women will not be expose to social life of education, free movement and association. This restriction affected Mama Rashida and her business she was just a member of the market women an paper, no place was mentioned in the text to tell us, she ever attend any of the women's meetings. Lejoka-Brown is an autocrat, someone that will want to be ordering people around. Sikira made mention of this in one of her statement:

*Sikira: Do as you say, do as you say! It is always do as you say. Always command, command, command.....*

From all indications it is obvious that Lejoka-Brown sees women as somebody

that cannot think for themselves, that they don't have the right of their own, in fact, it is this type of attitude that he is exhibiting even in his party, we can see that in his "surprise and attack' plan, he want to impose it on the party members

*Lejoka-Brown: ...surprise and attack gentleman, is to catch the enemy off-guard and wipe out his power before he can mobilize enough forces to lauch a counter-attack...(p.50)*

Despite the fact that the party member refuses his suggestion, he insisted on going ahead with his plan.

**Mama Rashida** - Mama Rashida represents women that has been placed under cultural/religious law, these restrict her behavior, movement and exposure. She has been placed on Purdah practice (ELEHA) in which she has to cover her face, her body even when she is in the house especially when male visitor is coming. She had no formal education which contributed to her compliance to her marriage with the Junior brother of her late brother, had it been she is educated she would have been able to object to such barbaric act and because there is no social exposure to things happening around



her, she has become docile, it takes the intervention and sensitization of Liza for her to realize her inner potentials as a business woman and because she is not adequately funded by her husband, it makes it difficult for her business to expand. This is also a crucial hindrance to her active participation in outside politics even as a market woman union member she is not active, she does not go for meeting nor contribute actively to the activities of the Union, she is just a member on paper.

**Lisa** — An African-American woman who studied in USA, met Lejoka-Brown in Congo and got married to him but joins him in Nigeria unexpectedly only to discover that two marriages has been contracted without her with knowledge, her husband, it takes two to tangle, she takes it upon herself to educate the women on the right for emancipation, she enlighten them on the fact that **men and women are created equal** and women should be given the right to think and plan their life to support the home progressively. The sensitization produce results because Mama Rashida was able to increase the scope of her sale to include egg sales. The docile behavior of these women towards their husband changed, they were able to talk with him eye to eye. letting him

to know that they too can go outside there and make something out of life. Liza also made Lejoka-Brown see reason why he has not allowed the women to be free to explore their world.

**Sikira:** Sikira is the daughter of the president of the market women union, her mother gave her in marriage to Lejoka-Brown to foster unity but to Lejoka-Brown the essence of the marriage is to win more votes from the womenfolk because Lejoka-Brown knows that her mother is influential, she can easily influence the other market women to vote for him. Sikira on the hand is placed under Purdah, a practice of women restriction at home even in the larger society, by the chaunistic rules of Lejoka-Brown, she is not suppose to talk when her husband is talking, she is to respect him to the letters but she is under subjugation just because of ignorance, and ignorance is a disease, if not for the divine intervention of Liza, she would have been used and dumped by Lejoka-Brown because he said it that the marriage between him and Sikira is a temporary measure that after the election he will give her money to go and set up a business and send her packing. She realizes her potential that she too can as well pick up the candidature of the party since **men and**

women are created equal. Though her new discovery through Liza got Lejoka-Brown "mad" but there is nothing he can do to it again, her essence has been awakened, she packed out of Lejoka-Brown's house to join her rich mother to take up the candidature flag of the Liberation Party and Lejoka-Brown was impeached unanimously.

Sikira: *(exclaiming) Rise up! All women of our land!*

*Rise up and vote for freedom or forever be slaves!*

Lejoka-Brown: *Who is that crab?*

Okonkwo: *(looking out of the window) come have a peep major*

Sikira: *Vote! Vote for me! It is true I am a woman but that does not matter, it does not matter because why? Because..*

Lejoka-Brown: *A woman?*

Sikira: *Men and Women are created Equal*

Madam Ajanaku: *No more, no less (p. 76)*

The philosophy behind Ola Rotimi's work in *Our Husband has gone Mad Again* is to focus on the oppressive socio-cultural practices which women had to contend with

in their daily life and the only thing to do is a collective action as a means of pulling down the patriarchal system that has been oppressing women for a very long time.

### **General factors that foster the difficulties of Women participation in leadership roles**

According to Natso (2008) in Ekpenidua (2011) among the many problems noted for the slow participation of women in politics and other leadership positions are gender constraints, where women are relegated to the background right from the home front, to the communal level even up to the federal level. In time past where power was centralized, women were relegated to house chores and domestic affair while men got involved in communal and community matters. According to Okpoh (1998) cited in Ekpenidua (2011).

*Women in Nigeria are discriminated against, they are marginalized, oppressed, and exploited and above all abused. These tendencies also define their place in the society, what they should or should not do, who they are and in fact what or who they can aspire to be in the society"*



Thus gender-biased attitudes result in the relatively low level of participation of adult women in leadership roles. Their seclusion from decision making start from when they were little girls when they grow up and becomes women, the seclusion they suffered as girls becomes compounded leading to political, social and economic marginalization at all levels of affairs in the society.

We will examine some of the impediments to women participation in leadership role:

➤ **Opportunity for participation in education is less for girls than boys.**

The male child is exposed to informal processes of leadership training from the very onset while the girl child is denied such training even in the area of formal education the story is the same especially in the Northern part of Nigeria. If the family is faced with a choice of choosing whom to sponsor in school, the son or the daughter, the former would always be the natural choice. In light of this you see the female child lagging behind in social interaction because she will be feeling inferior to others in the society.

➤ **Early marriage:** The issue of early marriage is another difficulty on the path

of women to greatness, you will see a girl of 11 to 13years old given out to a man who is even old enough to be her father, and these ones are affected victims of arranged marriage in which their consent is neither required nor sought. The arrangement is detrimental to their physical, social and psychological development. The girl is forced out of school at a tender age only to resolve to fate and be giving birth to children like a mouse, which kills her potential as a woman of destiny.

➤ **Culture:** Women face an array of barriers to their full participation in various aspects of social life, due to entrenched cultural attitudes which put the women at a disadvantage in education and discourage or hinders her participation in various types of employment as well as in politics and public life. Like the practice of "Purdah" also known as "Kulle" in Hausa. it is a religious practice of secluding women from the sight of men. This has not helped the women to get exposed to social life for example in Zamfara, it has become an offence for male Okada drivers (motorcycle driver) to carry female passengers on their motorcycle

and there are suppose to be separate taxis lo men and women. This policy which is a contemporary interpretation of purdah in the public domain hinders the free movement of women within the community. This apartheid-like restriction not only contravenes women's right to movement and right to freedom of association but also affects their livelihood, impeding their ability to contribute to family income and care for their children. This practice of purdah is an extreme form of the denial of participatory right of the women which is at variance with the obligations assumed by virtue of Nigeria's ratification of CEDAW in 1985 and also with Section 15(2) of the Nigerian Constitution of 1999 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Though they have proven difficult to eradicate, since they reflect views about gender roles that are deep seated in Nigerian culture.

➤ **Poverty:** The situation of poverty is a further constraint making it difficult for Nigerian women to break out of this vicious cycle. It create practical barrier to many forms of participation in the sense that it breeds illiteracy not only

that women living in poverty carry the overwhelming burden of domestic responsibilities. They tend to have multiple roles as wives, mothers, daughters and income-generator, the work is unpaid and time consuming. For women living in poverty, getting involved in anything beyond their immediate needs for survival may seem like an impossible extra burden. In fact, majority of women could not increase their qualifications because of responsibilities within the family. No man faced such a problem, even if various household tasks are shared, if more urgent need arises (such as possibility of increasing qualification and income) they can always opt out of housework and concentrate on further training such a choice is still not open to the majority of women.

➤ **Abuse and violence at home:** This is another dehumanization of women in the highest order. The beating of women and even children is widely sanctioned in Nigerian culture, as a form of disciplined with the caveat that it, should not be excessive in the sense of inflicting grievous bodily harm. In beating their children, parents believe they are

instilling discipline, much the same idea lies behind beating of wives who are regarded like children as the property of men and prone like minors to indiscipline and excesses which need to be curbed. This notion is so deeply entrenched in the cultural mindset that the penal code applied in Northern Nigeria which stipulates that a husband who corrects his wife without inflicting grievous hurt is not committing an offence, if the couple is subject to any natural law or custom in which such correction is recognized as lawful section 55(1) penal code CAP89 LFN (1963). A feminist pamphlet has referred to an old saying attributed to Napoleon and his code that *“women like walnut trees, should be beaten everyday”*. It was thought to have been accepted saying of the time reflecting Napoleon's attitudes about wives, fickle defenseless, mindless beings, tending towards Eve-like evil. The little Emperor was very big on punishing women. The only time he legalized any sense of equality between husband and wife was when the husband was the wrong doer in a crime against the society both of them will share the punishment.

In fact when wife battering is reported to the police rarely do the police take action. There is the presumption on the part of police officers that getting involved in family matters is a waste of time, since cultural and financial considerations as well as the complexity and cost of the judicial process will deter women from pressing charges. The failure of the law to provide adequate protection for women against violence in homes is an indication that the legal provisions on ground are not only diametrically at odds with Nigeria's obligations under CEDAW, but are in contradictions with non discrimination of the country constitution. In order to achieve equality for women there must be a comprehensive review of family law, with the view of providing effective reprieve for the many women who suffer conjugal violence. There should be means of bringing social pressures to bear on a couple to compose their differences so as not to jeopardize the future of the woman in question.

- **No active involvement in decision-making:** Women has the right to share in the making of decision on issues which affects their lives and the life of the community of which

they are part. The national policy on women (NPW) adopted by Federal Government in July 2006 upheld these right. It is through practice that an understanding of democratic participation, confidence and competence to participate can be acquired gradually. But it is quite unfortunate that in the patriarchy society in which we are makes women suffer marginalization even at the family level. In most cases especially in the North and among the Yorubas, women are excluded from decision making on the issue of choice of spouse, women do not take part, they don't know either the woman is in love with the man or not.

- On inheritance, women don't take part; they believe women are not part of the family so they exclude her from family meeting only to be informed on what was discussed. Among the Igbos. Women who lose their husbands usually have to observe a mourning period in seclusion. During this period they are excluded from participating in any social activity, as this would be

translated as lack of sensitivity and love for the deceased husband. On the other hand, men who lose their wives are not put under such strict obligation. This attitude has great implication on the women for it can a fleet their future tor even the husband property, the house, land or anything that can make the women and her children to take off and start life afresh will be taken from her by the wicked in-laws.

At community decision-making level, women are not allowed to attend meeting with their male counterpart in fact in Northern. Ghana, tradition dictates that women must not sit with men at community meeting but sit behind them. Such lack of opportunity to approach local politics on an equal footing sees those women who do engage fighting an uphill battle to be accepted by their constituents including female voters. Though, there are forum for women association but how many of their decisions has gotten to the top for consideration even in the case of Mama Rashida in *our Husband Has*

*Gone Mad Again*” it was not mentioned there that she ever went for a meeting with the market women union because she is an 'ELEHA" she is under Purdah practice, how would she be able to contribute her quota to the issues that bothers on women's needs and priorities; no social interaction, no exposure

- **Low women participation in politics and Government:** Women are considered to be too weak and emotional to exercise responsible leadership roles whereas no one has monopoly of wisdom; the men need the women in running the affair of the society. Queen Amina of Zaria and Oba Orompo of the old Oyo state also showed that it was not totally unheard of for women to assume great political power or influence, in more elaborate centralized states. Though, majority of traditional rulers are men and custodian of local culture, they tend to uphold traditional gender stereotypes and biases against women (Hyaryar 1992).

This is not to say that women did not have avenue for the expression of their interests in traditional society, there are specific structure and mechanism for the articulation of their views even though these have long vanished, it took a new form in the colonial period through the emergence of modern women's organization and the role women played in some of the most powerful protest staged against the colonial regime, such as the Aba riot of 1929 and the Abeokuta demonstration of 1949. The women in Northern Nigeria were excluded from voting until well after independence, due to cultural prejudice against their involvement in public life. But women like Hajia Gambo Sawaba and Ladi Shehu distinguished themselves as prominent member of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) but they paid dearly for their struggle for women's political rights. Hajia Gambo Sawaba was expelled from Kano and flogged in Zaria, she achieved the distinction of becoming the most frequently jailed woman in modern Nigeria history being imprisoned 17times during the First Republic. This overt denial of political rights to women only ended in 1976. When a decree was promulgated by the military



government, finally allowing women in the Northern states to vote and be voted for.

Despite these advances, what is striking is that politics and public life remain to this day overwhelmingly a man's world comparing the percentage of men and women in political post from 1979 and 1999. For example female representation in the National Assembly (Senate and House of representative combined) was just 3.4percent after the elections in 1999. There had been a marginal increase in the number of women elected to the Federal House of representative from four in 1979 to 13 in 1999 (out of 360members). In the Senate, the trend has been the same, from no female Senator in 1979 to one out of 95 in 1983 and three out of 109 in 1999.

At the local government level there were five women out of 301 LGA Chairpersons in 1979 while two decades later, there were still only nine women among the current 774 LGA Chairpersons. In relative terms, the proportion of women LGA chairpersons has actually declined from 1.7percent to 1.2percent, this reflect the strength of patriarchal culture and attitudes which makes it difficult for female candidate to be taken seriously. The 19 state House of Assembly in 1979 had twelve

female members. In the 1999 elections, the same number of female members was elected even though there were almost twice as many state House of Assembly (36), on average there is currently only one woman in every three State legislatures.

Out of President Shehu Shagari's 50 ministers in 1999, only three were women, a number which rose to six (out of 46) in president Obasanjo's cabinet in 1999-2000 and president Jonathan had about 8 women during the 2006-2014. However, it is still the case that only 13percent of ministerial post are held by women. Though two female were elected deputy governors one in 1992 and another in 1999 recently also one was elected in Osun 2010 and two in Ekiti State in 2010 and 2013 respectively. Currently only 5.5 percent of women made it to the Eight National Assembly, in the Senate four in 2003, nine in 2007, seven in 2011 and in 2015 only eight women. In the house of representative in 2015 out of the 919 seats contested women won only about 46 seats bringing it to 4.6percent.the list of ministers unveiled on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 contained three women out of 21 by the Buhari administration, this is still not good enough.

### **Conclusion**

The struggle for gender equality remains an integrated policy agenda which requires the attention of concerned stakeholders in order to foster the initiatives for social-economic and political growth in Nigeria, and formidable approach should be used especially in the area of empowerment, liberation and power sharing among other. It should be noted that women have some potentials and rights to contribute meaningfully to the development of their country, their role as home makers cannot be down played in that it equally has an extended impact on their responsibility in service. Even if men have the notion that women are weak, why can't they treat them with care, respect and love, treat them like egg that should not break for women are the mother of nation. Men should not think that being harsh on them is a way of trying to set moral standards at home. No, it is sheer dominance of ethos.

### **Recommendations**

Despite the fact that there is a rapid development in women education and employment, one might expect a corresponding improvement in the sexual distribution of position of authority. It is less than 5 percent of leading managerial and political position that are occupied by

women compared to almost 48percent of their overall employment. The men believe that for the women to be in executive post is an anomaly. For this reason the government should provide a framework for the expansion of women's democratic and managerial right.

- There should be high sense of responsibility in building democratic values and governance through fair and adequate representation and participation because women's political participation is fundamental to democracy and achievement for we cannot move forward if half of the population is left behind.
- All levels and arms of government should provide a clear analysis of how their programmes could improve the quality of life and status of women. For example the Poverty Alleviation Programme would clearly explain how it planned to reduce the burden of poverty on women's lives.
- The convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action should be given expression

in Nigeria legislation so as to make them binding and thus meaningful.

- There should be Federal Government policies and guidelines on the issues of violence against women.
- There should be training of police and development of skills and resources within the police force so as to ensure an effective and efficient handling of victims of violence and abuse.
- More schools should be established especially in the rural areas, this will give women ample opportunity to go to school
- There is also the need for women to form strong association which will be a platform for them to articulate their problems and needs like what Martin Luther King Jr. said '*we all know through painful experience, that freedom is never willingly given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed*'. And not only that they can also come together to start small saving association in which they will be able to borrow money to start a business that will help them to cater

for themselves without waiting for the men.

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