

PATRIARCHY, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PRODUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIGERIAN WORKER

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the implications of patriarchy and gender equality on the productive development of Nigerian workforce as it continues to contribute to national development in a fast globalizing 21st century. It aims to determine that patriarchy and gender equality are practically functional tools for the promotion of workers productivity in contemporary Nigeria. It concedes that there is appreciable degree of belief by many Nigerians that patriarchy is a big factor undermining productive advancement of Nigerian workers and also fostering the propagation of social and gender inequalities in the country. Against this belief, the paper submits that the twin concepts of patriarchy and gender equality are potentially working tools for the sustained productivity of Nigerian workers; and therefore recommends, among others, change of perception to support the prevalence of patriarchy and gender equality, effective implementation of gender mainstreaming and meritocracy, eschewing social and political vices within the context of equal respect/treatment for and among all Nigerians.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Gender Equality, Implications, Productive Development, Nigerian worker

Introduction

Background to the Study

Nigerian workers are no doubt experiencing certain conditions that are common with their counterparts in other nations of the world but there are peculiar issues confronting their development in terms of productivity, welfare, growth and competitiveness, etc. The issue of the influence of patriarchy and gender equality on the productive development of the

Nigerian worker in these contemporary times is the focus of this paper. The average Nigerian worker cannot be said to be a happy man giving the conditions and experiences he faces day by day. The Nigerian worker today lives his or her life on remuneration that is referred to as “survival wages”, and we keep getting statistics from the relevant authorities telling us that there is serious improvement. Yes, people in the civil service have bought some cars, but without fuel to run them, so that is improvement (Dickson, 2013). This is not to say that the only problem confronting Nigerian workers is that of their poor welfare status but that it is the most glaring factor militating against their productivity as at now. A visit to the Federal Secretariat in any state, you will see corruption walking side by side idiosyncracies, ethnic and tribal sentiments. Who cares, workers pacing from one office to the other doing nothing with idiotic efficacy and efficiency (Adeoye, 2013).

Other factors, apart from meager wages and poor welfare system, are also contributing to putting downwards the productivity level of Nigerian workers. These factors are sometimes ignored or not easily noticed as being partly responsible for the present low productivity status of Nigerian workers. Factors such as the falling standard of education leading to unemployable graduates who are increasingly joining the Nigerian workforce, lack of regards for constituted authority, negligence of duty, absenteeism, corruption, strikes and official profligacy, etc, have all combined to continually undermine the positive development of Nigerian workers in different ramifications, including productivity. Some authors and long standing prominent feminists such as Helen Hacker, Dorothy Smith, Kate Millett and Ann Oakley, etc, also seem to believe that patriarchy and gender inequality are elements of social stratification that are also contributive factors that influence work organizations adversely. Hacker (1972), states that with the employment of women as wage earners:

men were quick to perceive them as a rival group and make use of economic, legal and ideological weapons to eliminate or reduce their competition. They excluded women from the trade unions, made contracts with employers to prevent their hiring women, passed laws restricting the employment of married women, and carried on ceaseless propaganda to return women to the home and keep them there

Again, Sachafer (2008), declares that, “a detailed overview of the status of the world’s women issued by the United Nations in 2000, noted that women and men live in different worlds – worlds that differ in access to education and world opportunities and in health, personal security and

human rights”. In Nigeria, especially in this era of women empowerment and drive for gender equality, many individuals, particularly women have the view that the practice of patriarchy and the absence of gender equality are partly responsible for the underdevelopment and low productivity of the Nigerian workforce. Many Nigerians believe that the prevalence of male dominance in virtually all sectors of the Nigerian work organization continues to engender inequality which perpetuates, among other things, fewer opportunity for women, unequal participation in both training and development of Nigerian workers. They argue that patriarchy as a system in Nigerian society, which also embodies the Nigerian work organizations, has the potential to undermine the pursuit and possible attainment of gender equality in the country. Taking the argument further, they claim that any system that perpetuates social inequality, such as patriarchy, creates forces that significantly retard the actualization of gender equality because it discriminates against girls and women in society. This argument is emphatically supported by the view of Nakpodia and Urien (2012), that:

gender discrimination is a problem that has eaten deep into the society. Women are seldom allowed to do their work; training opportunities are less for women than men. There is no contesting the fact that there is gender inequality and stereotyping that is skewed to the disadvantage of the girl child and women in our society. It is a problem that requires a proactive solution not only from parents, governments, the educational system, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) but all and sundry in the society

Also, Okebukola (2008), stresses that:

thus in the developing African countries where the unsettled patriarchial system persist, the girl-child and indeed the women are subjugated to play subordinate roles that often impede their access to equal opportunities for development. Consequently, these countries lack a skilled and educated workforce; they lack knowledge and investments in the basic education of the majority of their population. Such countries have not been able to take full advantage of the resources invested nor were they able to distribute the fruits of these investments for development

Many Nigerians, just like Nakpodia, Urien and Okebukola, have this view and are believing that as long as patriarchy is prevalent in our society,

gender equality may be far-fetched and our workforce may also continue to lack the necessary ingredients for growth and productivity, especially because the female half of its population are undermined and disadvantaged.

From this perspective, patriarchy appears to be the big factor that undermines gender equality and the productivity development of Nigerian workers. However, the paper discusses patriarchy and gender equality from the structural functionalist perspective and highlights the implications of the two concepts on the productivity development of Nigerian workers and national development.

Statement of the Problem

What actually matters to any work organization that hopes to develop in the world is growth and productivity. Every work organization, including the Nigerian workforce, is increasingly seeking for ways to improve its productivity level. Ukachukwu and Iheriohanma (2013), state that, “as the importance of productivity in the organizational context increases, organizations invest large resources in improving the skills and aptitudes of their employees”. In agreement, Onichakwe (2013), also states that:

growth remains the focus of every organization and its employees. This is to enable them achieve their different goals. In order to realize growth, strategies like downsizing, harmonious industrial relations, right application of procedures, efficient communication skills and system, technological advancement, and training and development are employed by the organizations

The matter with the productive development of work organizations in Nigeria is that most of these above mentioned strategies for growth are not being employed nor sustained. However, the paper identifies a number of issues that concern the existence of patriarchy and the pursuit of gender equality in Nigeria and how they may influence the productivity development of its workers. Firstly, the issue of many Nigerians believing that the system of patriarchy does not encourage or support the productivity development of Nigerian workers because of its discriminatory posture and antecedents may constitute obstacle to pursuing other very critical factors that are actually undermining the improved productivity of our workforce. Secondly, there is also the issue of patriarchy working against the pursuit and attainment of gender equality in the country. This idea stems from the belief by some Nigerians that patriarchy breeds different forms of inequality that tend to propagate the divide and domination of males over females and therefore can only in its true nature continue to negate efforts towards achieving gender equality. Thirdly, many Nigerians, particularly feminists,

believe that gender equality should be pursued and sustained through strategic actions that sometimes give undue advantages and privileges to girls and women. This is obviously a dangerous trend that can lead to compromising standards and encouraging mediocrity in a nation that is already bedeviled by numerous problems.

Little efforts appear to be made in real terms towards the pursuit of gender equality in the country considering the fact that since the Beijing Conference of 1986, many Nigerian women are still disadvantaged educationally, politically, socio-culturally, emotionally and even in work places; not particularly because of patriarchy but other factors such as poverty, corruption, lack of self help and self esteem, the system of capitalism, etc. Okebukola (2008), concurs with these words:

gender inequality is not limited to individual lives. It is confounded and correlated with the political (lack of empowerment and political voice), the social (allocation of low status by others, resulting in a lack of self-esteem), the cultural (exclusion from mainstream) and the educational (lack of access to relevant basic education for the girl child and forceful early marriage)

In a nutshell, the matter of developing Nigerian workers towards improved productivity is not actually a question of social inequality or gender equality per se but rather a question of how workers are employed, trained and maintained in terms of welfare and organization. This paper aims to determine that patriarchy and gender equality are functional tools for the promotion of the productive development of Nigerian workers.

Research Questions

The following questions are formulated to aid in this investigation. These include:

- i. Is there any link between the practice of patriarchy, gender equality and the productive development of Nigerian workers?
- ii. Do patriarchy and gender equality have the capacity to engender productive development of Nigerian workers?
- iii. In what ways can patriarchy and gender equality contribute to the enhancement of the productivity of Nigerian workers?

Objectives of the Study

This paper has as its general objective the analysis of the implications of the practice of patriarchy and gender equality on the productive development of Nigerian workers. The specific objectives include the following:

- i. To ascertain the link between the practice of patriarchy, the concept of gender equality and productive development of Nigerian workers?
- ii. To examine the fact that patriarchy and gender equality have the capacity to engender the productive development of Nigerian workers?
- iii. To recommend ways through which patriarchy and gender equality can contribute to the productive development of Nigerian workers.

Significance of the Study/Rationale

Theoretically, this paper contributes in providing more insight and knowledge that can be helpful in creating further awareness and education about the positivity of the phenomena of patriarchy and gender equality. It highlights that patriarchy should not be considered as a factor undermining the development of Nigerian workers' productivity nor can attainment of gender equality adequately guarantee or ensure the smooth productive development of Nigerian workers. It attempts to argue and show that patriarchy is typically a functional tool for the development of Nigerian workers and that gender equality pursued within a given context can be immensely supportive to the improvement of the productive development of Nigerian workforce in a largely patriarchal global system like we have today.

Practically, it has significance from the reality that many Nigerians, particularly women and some social critics who previously believed that patriarchy is dysfunctional to the productive development of Nigerian worker will begin to have a change of mind and perception. Many Nigerians will learn and begin to put into cognizance and practice the art of gender equality that is pursued from a well defined perspective that is devoid of inequality in itself, that is, gender equality derived from a positive context. They will learn that attaining gender equality through giving undue advantages and privileges to women in the name of balancing equality is in itself inequality against men and also counter-developmental to the state of the Nigerian work organizations. The understanding and change of perception of individuals can go a long way to influence Nigerian work organizations, the governments, policy makers and other stakeholders in the development of the Nigerian nation, to view patriarchy and the pursuit of gender equality within a positive context. It will also enable a wider understanding of the need to pursue issues critically, objectively and constructively in order to eliminate many of the prevailing social vices tormenting the Nigerian state; such vices include nepotism, favouritism, tribalism, ethnicity and most importantly, corruption. All these efforts will advance the course of the Nigerian workers' productively, morally, socio-

economically and possibly help Nigeria to attain its present laudable vision to be one of the world's biggest twenty economies by the year 2020.

Operationalization of Concepts

For the purpose of this paper, the following concepts would be used as interpreted below:

Patriarchy refers to a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political and economic structures are controlled by men.

Gender Equality is used to refer to the equality of the genders which implies that men and women should receive equal treatment, unless there is a sound biological reason for different treatment.

Productive Development refers to the increasing optimal or above average measure of the efficiency and value that individual workers contribute towards the goods and services which an organization or workforce produces over time.

Nigerian worker refers to any worker or employee whether Nigerian or foreigner of any organization that is owned by the Nigerian government and Nigerians domiciled in Nigeria and its foreign offices.

Theoretical Framework

The structural functional paradigm is adopted in this paper. According to Macionis (2005), “structural-functional paradigm is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability”. As the nomenclature suggests, this paradigm points to social structure which implies any relatively stable pattern of social behaviour. In every society, social structure gives the lives of its members shape, whether at the family, workplace, or in the classroom. Structural-functionalism also looks for a structure's social functions, or consequences for the operation of society as a whole. Kendal *et al* (2007), posit that, “structural functionalism is based on the assumption that society is a stable, orderly system. This stable system is characterized by societal consensus, whereby the majority of members have a common set of values, beliefs and behavioral expectations”. According to this perspective, a society is composed of interrelated parts, each of which serves a function and (ideally) contributes to the overall stability of the society. Societies develop social structures, or institutions that persist because they play a part in helping society survive.

In the context of this paper, the structural-functionalist paradigm helps to explain the relevance and essence of the phenomenon of patriarchy in most societies of the world, including the Nigerian society which embodies the Nigerian workforce. Patriarchy, as a social practice, is part of the social structure of the Nigerian society and therefore plays its own role

that can never be over emphasized. It forms part of integrated whole of the Nigerian society and therefore functional to its survival and development. From the biblical point of view, men are the head of the family and women should be submissive to their authority. This does not mean that hardworking women should not be appreciated and rewarded but respect should be accorded to the men as the head. Historically, even in the primitive society, men had dominated roles and responsibilities that distinguished them from the women folk. Their superiority in most spheres of life was not contestable (Haralambos *et al*, 2008).

In today's modern society, and globalizing system, patriarchy remains relevant as part of the social structure and cannot be ignored or wished away. It is perceived by some individuals that patriarchy perpetuates social inequality including gender inequality and therefore cannot contribute to attaining gender equality. This view does not undermine the functional relevance of patriarchalism in any society. Gender equality (if attained) defines equilibrium or balance in opportunity, privilege and right between men and women in society and can be a functional tool for the productive development of Nigerian workers. This paper argues that patriarchy and gender equality pursued and sustained through the application of meritocracy can fundamentally upgrade and ensure sustainable development of Nigerian workers' productivity. This is anchored on the premise that a merit-based patriarchal society that also pursues gender equality will firstly have the right individuals (whether male or female) in the right positions. Secondly, there will be no room for mediocrity, favouritism and nepotism and this will help guarantee that productive individuals are working for the nation. This in the long run, ensures the sustained productive development of the Nigerian workforce.

Methodology

The methodology involves the use of library research and the descriptive method of analysis. The paper employed data obtained from both primary and secondary sources, mainly works by American and European authors, particularly, renowned sociologists, feminists and some contemporary social thinkers; found in textbooks, journals, newspapers, periodical, and in the internet, etc. Direct observation was also used as a technique in order to bridge the gap in information and to illuminate some of the issues discussed.

Patriarchy and Gender Equality: The Interaction

The relationship between the practice of patriarchy and the concept of gender equality can be seen as one of two opposite phenomena that have positive societal implication. Patriarchy has been defined as the hierarchial

system of social organization in which cultural, political and economic structures are controlled by men (Kendall *et al*, 2007). This definition captures the basic elements of the system of patriarchy in any human society where it is found. In simple terms, patriarchy implies literally, “rule by fathers”, a form of social organization in which males dominate females. In a patriarchy, some men are far more advantaged than others, but in general, males have more social resources than females. Newman (2002), defines patriarchy as, “male dominated society, in which cultural beliefs and values give higher prestige and value to men than women”. This statement points to the fact that patriarchy is not fundamentally discriminatory to particularly women since all men are not equal and all women are not also equal. Patriarchy is a social system in which the male is the primary authority figure central to social organization and the central roles of political leadership, moral authority, and control of property, and where fathers hold authority over women and children. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege, and entails female subordination. Many patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and titles are inherited by the male lineage. It is also defined as a form of social organization in which the father is the supreme authority in the family clan, or tribe and descent is reckoned in the male line, with the children belonging to the father’s clan or tribe. In another context, patriarchy is used to define a society, community or country based on this social organization (Hooks, 2013).

Patriarchy has been in existence for a very long time in most human societies, and its longevity should not be seen as an accident nor a mistake by some contemporary social thinkers and feminists in these days of increasing clamour for gender equilibrium. This paper, opines that, its prevalence in most societies up to present day is a testimony of its imperativeness for society’s sustenance and development. It has survived generations, different forms of social change and revolutions and was able to do so because of its potentially advantageous implications. As a social practice, patriarchy has dominated matriarchy because it is biologically, biblically, economically and structurally more powerful, relevant, sensible and functional to human existence, survival and development. Newman (2002), observes that:

in a male-dominated society, or patriarchy, cultural beliefs and values give higher prestige and importance to men than to women. Throughout such society, girls and women are affected by inequality in everything from the perceptions, thoughts, and social interactions of individuals to the organization of individuals to the organization of institutions. Matriarchy which involves societies that give

preference to women is rare in the contemporary world. Even the most modern, democratic societies tend to be patriarchal to some degree

Understanding the definitions of patriarchy and gaining insight into its practical meanings in society, it is clear that it is a social structure that some people believe run opposite of the concept of gender equality in practical terms. This is perceived from the point of view that patriarchal societies basically support and encourage gender discrimination and inequality through the supremacy and dominance of the males over females. Nakpodia and Urien (2012), hold that:

gender discrimination exists in most parts of the world today. It is a universally acknowledged truth that societies had always been inclined to discriminate against the female half of the human race. It begins as soon as a child is born. There is much happiness and celebrations when a male child is born because of the importance attached to sex. This is due to cultural beliefs in the society

However, gender equality which defines the opposite of gender inequality holds that males and females should be equal in the ways and eyes of the society. Gender equality emphasizes that men and women should receive equal (balanced) treatment except in cases of biological disability or incapacitation (International Planned Parenthood, 2013). This view is considered by some critics, as somewhat utopian because many factors point to the fact that there may hardly be an egalitarian society in the world. Sachafer (2008), posits that, “stratification is universal in that all societies maintain some form of social inequality among members”. Gender equality can only be found in an egalitarian society which the world is yet to have. In linking patriarchy and gender equality, something fundamental has to be established at this juncture. Patriarchy is an age-long, historical and almost ubiquitous societal practice that places men as the head or the dominant figure. Gender equality is relatively a contemporary concept, an agenda that is increasingly becoming a global movement aiming at bringing male and female genders to equity in human affairs. While patriarchy emphasizes male dominance, gender equality emphasizes women empowerment and equality with the male gender.

The paper affirms that patriarchy does not actually stand on the way of gender equality as many Nigerians tend to believe. It is a common practice in which the males (men) are naturally the head mainly at the family unit and other social levels; and that is historical, ancestral and even the current situation in most families and societies around the world. On the other hand, gender equality should not be sought after or pursued from the angle of

changing the status quo at the family level because that could be detrimental to the survival and development of society. Rather its focus should be on attaining equality between the genders at workplaces and public engagements. At these places, patriarchy does not and should not determine who goes into positions of authority, because that could have adverse effects on the smooth operation of work organizations. Also, undue advantages should not be extended to women in workplaces (in the quest for gender equality) because that can equally undermine the productivity of work organizations.

In Nigeria, particularly in her work organizations, quality of individuals, not gender, should be the basic criterion for placement into positions. Therefore, in the pursuit of gender equality in the country, women must first, seek empowerment through moving away from illiteracy, poverty, inactive participation, poor socio-political awareness, self-helplessness, self-low esteem and the role of being mere appendages to men in many of life opportunities, challenges and endeavours. This, in critical terms, requires women to earnestly seek good and functioning education, greater socio-political awareness and participation and mobilizing to fight and eradicate certain traditional values and practices that demean, subjugate and relegate them to the backwaters of insecurity and powerlessness.

This paper sees patriarchy in the context of its functions to society. Patriarchy is basically a form of social stratification. The functional theory of stratification as articulated by Kingsley Davies and Wilbert Moore (1945), is perhaps the best known single piece of work in structural functional theory. They argued that social stratification is both universal and necessary and that no society is ever unstratified or totally classless. This statement validates the practice of patriarchy which is a form of social stratification and explains the utopian nature of the concept of gender equality, in the sense that true gender equality may not become a reality because of the presence of the forces of social stratification that are already in existence in most societies.

Again, stratification is a functional necessity; therefore patriarchy is a functional necessity. Sachafer (2008), further argues that, “depending on its values, a society may assign people to distinctive ranks based on their religious knowledge, skill in hunting, beauty, trading expertise, or ability to provide health care”. The system of patriarchy is a structure in society where it prevails. Patriarchy, just like stratification itself should be viewed as a system of positions and not a matter of individuals in the stratification system. Patriarchy should not be seen from the point of view of male/female distinction and domination but particularly from the angle of positions meant for males or individuals that are found capable, qualified and eligible to occupy certain positions in society. This brings us to the issue of meritocracy, which is the application of common standards of a certain

quality to both males and females as they seek for positions in society, whether in work organizations, the family, etc. Gender equality can best be approached without conflicting with the practice of patriarchy when pursued through the application of meritocracy. This paper suggests that the concept of meritocracy is actually the connecting feature that can balance the influence of patriarchy and the quest for gender equality in Nigerian work organizations with the view to promoting productivity. It calls for the retention of patriarchy because of its functionality to society and also argues that both patriarchy and gender equality require that merit be applied in the operation of work organizations in order to increase their productivity. The paper highlights two main objectives that can be attained through this approach:

- a) It will help to minimize or reduce the so-called discriminatory and oppressive tendencies of the system of patriarchy since merit will be used as standard for placing individuals in positions and not gender, sex or age, etc.
- b) It will also ensure that some individuals are not given undue advantage or privilege because of their gender, particularly in work places.

Implications of Patriarchy and Gender Equality on Productive Development of Nigerian Workers

It has been established that a number of issues have implication on the development of Nigerian workers. These issues include poor wages, industrial disputes, lack of good governance, national insecurity, corruption, poverty and hunger, rising inflation, etc. Perhaps, all these issues have some connection to the issue of patriarchy and gender equality. One of them, good governance, which is simply the provision of governance that is good, useful and beneficial to the life of people in a society comes to bear much more than others because of its overwhelming capacity to positively breed policies that can improve workers' productivity. The Nigerian workforce is a very large organization consisting of many sub-organizations that have millions of workers. These organizations have workers who are of both genders and Nigerian society is typically a patriarchal one. This brings up the issue of how patriarchy and gender equality may influence and affect the productive development of Nigerian workers. But first, what is productivity?

Nwachukwu (1988), posits that, productivity is, "the measure of how well resources are brought together in organizations and utilized for accomplishing a set of results". Productivity is reaching the highest level of performance with the least expenditure of resources". Again, Akanwa and Ohiri (2003), further stress that, "effectiveness of the use of the factors of production to produce goods and services is commonly being referred to as

productivity”. For an individual to be effective and efficient in the use of resources available to him or her means that the person is productive. This implies that the person’s output must exceed input. Productivity is therefore the result of output that exceeds or surpasses a given resource input at a point in time. It is the term employed to describe output per unit of input. Mathematically, the situation of productivity can simply be represented as below:

$$\frac{\text{Output}}{\text{Input}} > 1$$

The equation above can be explained to mean that a productive situation is present or achieved when output is greater than input. Productive development of Nigerian workers basically is all about the improvement of the work output of Nigerian workers and subsequently the betterment of the nation at large. It is therefore a crucial issue that affects the future of the nation. Productive development has been perceived as the steady and optimal measure of the efficiency and value that individuals (in this case -workers) contribute towards the goods and services which an organization or workforce produces over a period of time.

Given this definition, productive development of Nigerian workers cannot be disassociated from the many factors that influence Nigerian workers in their workplace. Many feminists and public analysts argue that, patriarchy is the most important concept for explaining gender inequalities in society. To them, although literally it means, “rule by the father”, it refers to male dominance in society. For instance, several decades ago in her book, “Sexual Politics”, Millett (1970), argues that:

politics is not just an activity confined to political parties and parliaments, but one which exists in any power structural relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another. Such relationships of domination and subordination can exist at work where a man instructs his female secretary to make a cup of tea or in the family when a husband’s meal is cooked by his wife. Political relationships between men and women exist in all aspects of everyday life

She further states that, such relationships are organized on the basis of patriarchy, a system in which ‘male shall dominate female, and that patriarchy is the most pervasive ideology of our culture (human culture). Like other radical feminists, Millett suggests that gender is the primary source of identity for individuals in modern societies. Nigerian society is a modern one in the sense that it is increasingly pursuing universal standards and actively involved in the globalization process that has engulfed the

world. As a modern society, or at least one chasing modernization and traditionally patriarchal, the view of Millett on patriarchy to an extent obtains in Nigeria, even in her work organizations and among the workers. But her argument does not overshadow the fact that patriarchy is a functional system to societies that practice it, including Nigeria. In Millett's effort to castigate patriarchy as dysfunctional and discriminatory, she claims that, there are no fewer than eight factors which explain the existence of patriarchy in human society. She opines that, factors that are biological, ideological, sociological, class-based, educational, mythical and religious, psychological and even physical are collectively employed by men to continually dominate women.

From the biological perspective, 19th Century physicians claim that, few facts were more incontestable than the fact that women were the products and prisoners of their anatomy, more especially their reproductive systems. Everything about women that made them different from the men – their subordinate place in society, the predominance of the emotional over the rational, their capacity for affection, their love for children and aptitude for child bearing, their “preference” for domestic work and so on – could be explained by the existence and functioning of their uterus and ovaries. Similarly, men's physical characteristics better suit them for roles of economic provider and protector of the family. If it is true that men are naturally endowed with such traits as strength, assertiveness, competitiveness and rationality, then they are best qualified to enter the serious and competitive world of work and politics (Ehrenreich and English, 1979). This strong view is also further buttressed by other feminists as the basis for social inequality and gender inequality in society.

However, condemnation of patriarchy in this light must not be seen as “critic-free”, because if patriarchy is that negative, discriminatory and a pervasive source of inequalities in society, then democratic societies like Canada, United States of America, Britain, etc, would have long done away with it entirely. That it is still very much the practical system of relationships in most societies in the world means that it is not only a relevant structure but a practice that is serving certain functional and may be indispensable purposes for the society at large. Rowbotham (1979), argues that, “describing all societies as patriarchal has some universal cause which stems from the biology of women and the fact that they bear and rear children”. Henslin (1998), states that, “some sociologists acknowledge that biological factors may be involved in some human behaviours other than reproduction and child bearing”. Certainly biology plays a significant role in our lives, including being a factor for the existence of patriarchy in most human societies. Parsons and Bales (1955), cited in Newman (2002), claim that, “some structural functionalist sociologists have also used the observable

physical differences between men and women to explain sexual inequality. The fact that men tend to be physically stronger and that women bear and nurse children has created many culturally recognized and necessary sex-segregated social roles, especially at work and in the family”. These statements clearly support the presence of patriarchy in work places, including Nigeria. Again, the fact that women lack wealth and economic power when compared to the men is the most important factor determining their disadvantages. This is the reason Marxist and Socialist Feminists accuse capitalism rather than patriarchy for the oppression of women in modern societies. They see capitalism as being the principal source of women’s oppression, and capitalists as the main beneficiaries. (Haralambos *et al*, 2008). Nigeria is considered by some economic analysts as a mixed economy but there is a wider view that sees it as a growing capitalist nation. Therefore, the view that capitalism could be a real source of women oppression in Nigeria cannot be in doubt.

Nonetheless, patriarchy is considered in this paper as having positive implications for the productive development of Nigerian workers. Perhaps in explaining the usefulness of the system of patriarchy in modern societies and work organizations as it is found in Nigeria, we can draw some clear insights from the work of Sociologists such as Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore (1945). They view inequality as not only inevitable but also necessary for the smooth functioning of society, including work organizations and productive development of their workers. Drawing inferences from Davis and Moore’s thesis, the system of patriarchy is not only justified but is also understood to be of immense positive implications for the functioning of work organizations in Nigeria, particularly in the area of developing its workforce towards enhanced productivity. A summary of their definitive functionalist explanation for social inequality helps to buttress the relevance of patriarchy in particularly work organizations like the Nigerian work organizations and it includes that:

- ❖ All societies have important tasks that must be accomplished and certain positions that must be filled.
- ❖ Some positions are more important for the survival of society than others.
- ❖ The most important positions must be filled by the most qualified people.
- ❖ The positions that are the most important for society and that require scarce talent, extensive training, or both must be the most highly rewarded.
- ❖ The most highly rewarded positions should be those that are functionally unique (no other position can perform the same function)

and on which other positions rely for expertise, direction or financing (Kendall *et al*, 2007).

This approach explains that social inequality systems, including patriarchy, are fundamentally functional to a society in which it prevails and has adequate capacity to increase the productivity of workers when operated effectively, objectively and in conformity with the functionalist ideology. The questions at this point are; what mechanisms can be employed to aid the productive development of Nigerian workers in this present-day patriarchal Nigerian society while still pursuing the actualization of gender equality positively? Can there be gender equality in a patriarchal society like Nigeria? The paper hopes to attempt these questions ahead.

Sustainable Measures for the Productive Development of Nigerian Workers

The arguments that patriarchy engenders social inequality including gender inequality are many and are not in doubt. But this paper is of the view that both patriarchy and gender equality can be functional to achieving sustainable productive development of Nigerian workers. Attaining gender equality is not a simple matter or issue in any society. It involves the prevalence of balanced treatments between men and women, balanced respect and rights for men and women, mutual recognition and appreciation between them. This is most likely attainable in an egalitarian society which many people think is utopian. Nevertheless, gender equality pursued within a given context without giving certain incentives, privileges or advantages to girls and women is achievable. This is in order not to compromise standards in the Nigerian work organizations. This is because it will have a dysfunctional value to these organizations and subsequently undermine individual (worker) participation and productivity because some females (women) who may not be eligible, capable and willing to work may find themselves in positions of authority and fail to deliver on productivity, thereby adversely influencing the productive development of the Nigerian workforce. While arguing that the views of many authors and feminists about patriarchy are not exactly correct, the paper points out that, the inequalities against women in most societies originate mainly from the biological superiority of men over women and the effects of capitalism which, like patriarchy, is now almost universal or at least common in most modern societies of the world. Therefore, patriarchy should not be blamed for low productivity and gender equality should not also be seen as the “Messiah” to improving productive development of Nigerian workers because it may not be easily achievable in the near future and also may lead to underdevelopment of the Nigerian workforce if not properly pursued within

the contexts of gender mainstreaming and meritocracy. Okebukola (2008), captures the challenges of achieving gender equality in Africa with the following words:

developing countries especially African countries are culturally more male chauvinistic than the Western countries. The context encompassing the forces of gender bias in both situations is an unequal context. While the process of gender equity is carried out half-heartedly, if not dishonestly, with cunning and coercion and without moral compunction or compassion in Africa, it is pursued in the West with perseverance and vigour

According to Mutunga (2006), gender mainstreaming is, “a term used to refer to a strategy to strengthen gender equality through policy and resource allocation that reflect the interest of both men and women”. If gender mainstreaming is implemented and enforced in Nigeria, it is the belief of this paper that it has the potential to rub off positively on workers’ productivity within a decade. This is because it will not only support increasing women participation and activism but can breed policies that will give more women opportunities for training, education, employment and other sources of empowerment that can enable them to contribute more effectively and in large number towards the improved productivity of the Nigerian workforce.

Again, gender mainstreaming can also help to reduce or even eradicate some of the negative values and traditions against women that some persons consider as offshoot of patriarchy. Values and practices such as the conditions widows undergo female circumcision, early marriage, forceful marriage and even domestic violence against women, etc. Sandbrook *et al*, (1993) cited in Okonkwo (2008), agree and state that, gender mainstreaming involves:

the transformation of the economic, social, psychological, political and legal circumstance of the powerless. It will therefore entail not only positive changes in these critical respects but also the dismantling of the cultural norms and traditional practices that devalue, disempower and dispossess women

Put simply, both patriarchy and gender equality are laudable systems only if they are pursued, and sustained in a way that does not compromise the idea of improving Nigerian workers’ productivity level and expansion. This is the crux of this paper. The patriarchal system in Nigeria and the pursuit of gender equality in the country should be anchored on the

use/application of meritocracy, which Kendal *et al*, (2007), define as, “a hierarchy in which all positions are rewarded based on peoples’ ability and credentials”. Is Nigeria a meritocracy? The answer to this question is a capital no. Can she become a meritocracy? The answer to this can be affirmative because as a democracy, if democratic principles such as rule of law, due process, transparency and respect for human rights, etc, are adequately enforced regardless of our patriarchal inclination, then a certain degree of gender equality is attainable and a measure of meritocracy (though not perfect) can also be feasible. After all, an appreciable degree of gender equality and meritocracy have been attained in Europe and some other western nations. The European countries have launched an equity war. Through the human rights law, women regained their freedom and their dignity was restored. This was possible not only because of the matricidal system but also and even mainly because European countries required and developed highly skilled workers among males and females. Thus, the emphasis has been on the employment of qualified and competent people regardless of gender through massive investment (Okebukola, 2008). Perhaps, the example of Singapore is a good lesson for Nigeria on the effects of meritocracy. What makes Singapore work is social cohesion through the benefits of progress, equal opportunities for all and “meritocracy”, with the best man or woman for the job, especially among leaders in government. Singapore, a country of 640 square kilometers with no natural resources is today one of the Asian Tigers with a resourceful economy, human capital and infrastructural development (Badejo, 2010).

Meritocracy if properly put into effect will go a long way to enhance workers’ productivity in Nigeria because it will have the following implications:

- The right and qualified persons gain opportunity into positions of authority in Nigeria work organizations.
- It has the potential to encourage individuals (particularly students) to pursue good quality education that can guarantee their success in future because that becomes the standard for employment, and will sustain productivity of the nation’s manpower.
- It has the capacity to put workers on pressure to consistently do their best at work.
- Social vices like mediocrity, nepotism, favouritism, ethnicity, etc, in work places will be reduced and concerted efforts can be channeled towards increased productivity.
- Workers’ prestige, honour and dignity of labour will be restored and become better assured and this can be a motivating factor for Nigerian workers towards increased productivity.

Summary

Nigeria is a patriarchy that is apparently seeking for the actualization of gender equality even though it may not have a well defined nor coordinated approach towards this pursuit; as it grapples with how to develop the productivity level of its workforce. The nation in its bid to have sustainable and highly productive workforce must find a synergy between maintaining patriarchy and pursuing gender equity within the contexts of positive principles such as gender mainstreaming and meritocracy. This should be implemented alongside the reduction or elimination of social vices like corruption, bad governance, industrial disputes, poor wages, etc; as well as entrenching the observance, respect and enforcement of fundamental human rights among genders. These factors can substantially and in a sustainable manner redefine and empower the productivity development of the Nigerian Workforce in this 21st Century.

Conclusion

Productive development of workers is fundamentally necessary for the survival of any nation, including Nigeria. Patriarchy as a form of social organization in which men dominate women through the use of cultural, economic and political structures is very much in practice in Nigeria and gender equality is a positive concept that should be pursued in a democracy like Nigeria. The paper clearly sees patriarchy and gender equality as two phenomena that can be quite functional to the productive development of Nigerian workforce but from a peculiar perspective. It argues that despite some authors, particularly feminists, views on the system of patriarchy and its forces against attaining gender equality, the Nigerian society, particularly the Nigerian work organizations must adopt the concepts of gender mainstreaming and meritocracy among other measures, as a positive step towards increasing the productivity level of Nigerian workers.

It further argues that patriarchy and the pursuit of gender equality do not constitute mitigating factors against the productive development of Nigerian workers but rather poverty among women and the exploitative/manipulative system of capitalism and a number of other factors should be regarded as being the responsible factors for the domination and exploitation of women in most (if not all) societies across the globe.

Recommendations

In view of the implications of patriarchy and gender equality for the productive development of Nigerian workers, the paper posits the following recommendations aimed at sustainable productive development of Nigerian workforce. They include:

- Patriarchy should be seen as a functional tool for the promotion of the productive development of Nigerian workers, provided it does not counter the principles of gender mainstreaming, meritocracy and human rights.
- Gender equality is also a necessary and functional tool for the proper growth and development of Nigerian workforce in terms of productivity, social equality and national development.
- Gender equality should not be pursued by all means because by so doing more social inequalities and disorder may be created. It must be pursued and sustained through conscious, constructive and objective efforts that will engender love, cooperation, peace and unity of purpose and co-existence. It has to be sought after with a lot of perseverance and vigour in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.
- Patriarchy and gender equality should both be considered as pre-requisites for sustaining productive development of Nigerian workers. A synergy between the two concepts is necessary for a healthy and productive workforce.
- In pursuit of the improvement of productivity level of Nigerian workers, the concepts of gender mainstreaming and meritocracy should be at the forefront. They must be properly and effectively implemented.
- Other factors that undermine the productive development of workers in the country such as corruption, bad governance, poverty and hunger, illiteracy, indiscipline, industrial disputes, strikes, poor wages and lack of skills and manpower training and development, etc, are all issues that largely fall on the shoulders of governments in Nigeria. If only good governance prevails in the country, much of these problems will be reduced to allow for a more conducive environment for increased workers' output and national development.
- Nigerian men who do not give adequate respect to the female gender must realize that they are infringing on the rights of these individuals. Patriarchy does not demand that men disregard and disrespect or maltreat women, it only emphasizes male dominance which should imply that men be at the helm of affairs at the social levels. By giving women respect, their best come out at home, workplace and elsewhere in society.

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