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'DIATUDE': HOW SOME WOMEN ESCAPED FROM MEN'S DOMINATION IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

Traditional views on women in relation to men in almost all aspects of life have always been in favour of the male gender across cultures. In deed women and the girl child have been subjected to all forms of discriminations, exclusions and segregations from birth to old age. This phenomenon has been a challenge to many scholars, government and International Agencies the world over. Efforts have therefore been made to address the negative effects of male dominance in all sphere of life to the detriment of women. This paper is yet another attempt at contributing to the existing knowledge on how to tackle the challenges of gender discrimination in relation to development of humanity. The attempt here however is a departure from the usual focus on how women have been denied opportunities to contribute to development. It rather focuses on how some women have been able to remove or jump over the barriers mounted by patriarchy and patriarchal structures in a developing society. The paper examines propertied women in South West, Nigeria in relation to how they escaped from men's domination in a male dominated society. About 195 out of 225 sample propertied women who owned landed and movable properties were selected for the study. The paper argued that the propertied women in this study area has actually experienced a remarkable change, against all odds, in their status majorly as a result of their mastery of the patriarchal structure of the study area and their own successful combination of both attitude of submission and achievement. This is what the paper termed 'Diatude' - a combination of cooperation and resistance mental sets that shape and influence ones feelings about something.

Keywords: Diatude, Women Escaped, Men's Domination, Nigeria.

Introduction

Increasingly women are becoming a special interest-area for scholarly research and policy making. Women have been keenly studied most especially in relation to men concerning a number of phenomena in many societies. The general consensus in the literature is that "men (and things men do) have been valued a lot in every places and time, and women (and things women do) have been valued less" (Gray, 1982: 19).

It is widely believed that women are disadvantaged in most things if not all. According to Joss (1990), the disadvantaged life of a woman starts at birth when everyone (men and women alike) is disappointed that the baby is not a boy. Boys are valued than girls in most societies and this attitude and preference have severe consequences on the entire life pattern of the female sex. As a girl she is often not educated as the boys; as a young woman she moves from dependence on her father to dependence on her husband and how to submit to "family expectations"; as an adult, she is expected to reproduce and work, howbeit stereotypic, mostly at home and sometimes outside, for either unremunerated and/or unequal pay; as an old woman, when she must have passed menopause, she is more likely to depend on her sons and brothers (Taylor 2012).

To that extent, women have been trapped in a world of Men - a world where they could hardly imagine another world outside; a world dominated by men and controlled by men through structures and cultures created by men. The common label for such a world in

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the literature is PATRIARCHY. It is a system in which authority is vested on the male head of the household. But owing to the dominant nature of men in most societies, the term has changed in meaning and application. It is now often used to describe the unequal relations between women and men (Figes, 1970; 1989; Harris, 1984; Pearson, 1992).

Whatever the nature of the relationship among and between any groups of people, of individuals in any social formation, it is believed; it must have been premised on long standing interaction process. To that extent, it can be said that, apart from the biological meaning of male and female sexes, the society has its own meaning for both sexes.

For Pearson (1992), the social meaning of being female or male will be the result of the history of that society, influenced by the nature of the local economic (material conditions) that evolved over time, religious beliefs and political system. This view readily reminds us of Karl Marx's analysis of social progress and change even though Marx did not go beyond class differentiation in his own analysis. It could however serve as a point of departure in understanding gender differences in the society.

Indeed, Marx spent the great part of his adult life studying the capitalist society and established the fact that capitalism as a system is rooted in inequality between the owners and non-owners of means of production. The ownership of these means of production according to Olutayo (1996) is also gender biased. Since the social relations resulting from production relation are determined by technology of production as well as the division of labour between sexes, and that social relation of production depends on who actually owns the basic means of production (men in this case) the ownership of these means of production cannot be gender neutral. The low status of and the general subordination of women in all patriarchal societies can only be appreciated in relation to that of men just as white colour can only be clearly perceived in relation to other colours like black. As Mies (1988, p.3) notes "the domination of men would not exist without the subjugation or submissiveness of women".

Oscillating between psychology and culture, (Taylor 2012) however noted that:

*There have been attempts to explain the oppression of women in biological terms. For example, in his book *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*, the sociologist Stephen Goldberg suggests that men are naturally more competitive than women because of their high level of testosterone. This makes them aggressive and power-hungry, so that they inevitably take over the high status positions in a society, leaving women to the more subordinate roles.*

*However, in my view the maltreatment of women has more deep-rooted psychological causes. In my new book *Back to Sanity*, I suggest that most human beings suffer from an underlying psychological disorder, which I call 'humania.' The oppression of women is a symptom of this disorder. It's one thing to take over the positions of power in a society, but another to seemingly despise women, and inflict so much brutality and degradation on them. What sane species would treat half of its members – and the very half which gives birth to the whole species – with such contempt and injustice? Despite their high level of testosterone, the men of many ancient and indigenous cultures revered women for their life-giving and nurturing role, so why don't we?*

The major thrust of this paper therefore against the above background is to highlight the positive aspects of the life of women, in a male dominated society, particularly with respect to access to and control over resources occasioned by two types of attitudes displayed by the women in the study area. This is carefully done to establish how the access and control have assisted the women to overcome patriarchal domination and ultimately poverty, which common among women than men.

Patriarchy and Patterns of Women's Subordination and Domination

Although the nature of gender relations differs from one society to another, it is still possible to locate a similar pattern in the overall process of women subordination in most societies. Concerning access to property, such as land, money and capital as means of production, it has been argued that, in most cases, whether in a patriarchal or matriarchal society, women's right to these properties are often vicarious, usually through their husbands. Such rights are often limited to use rights rather than outright ownership right to

land, capital and so on (Aidoo, 1988; Pearson, 1992). This, it is often argued, is more pronounced in the patriarchal society. This argument may not apply to all aspect of a patriarchal society that is culturally diversified as Nigeria. For example it has been noted that, there are sharp variations in women's property right in Nigeria. However, it is generally reported that, in the pre-colonial era, African women in many areas were productive and had independent access to power, authority and resources and particularly, land (Johnson, 1921; Fadipe, 1970; Muntembe, 1982; Schildkrout, 1983; Okonjo, 1983). This access to power, resources and, authority is however reported in the literature to have been gradually eroded throughout the colonial period.

Even though there are some reservations concerning this assertion, scholars like Olawoye (1991) was critical of the erosion of women's right as it affects agricultural activities and Okonjo (1983) was even more critical of the erosion of women's political right particularly among the Yorubas, Edos and the Igbos in Nigeria. Several years after Okonjo's observation, (Akiyode- Afolabi 2010; Aluko 2011) noted in addition that politics and political arrangements in Nigeria still undermine female legitimacy resulting in women's political powerlessness.

Another vital aspect of women subordination is the conjugal decision-making, the allocation of tasks and responsibilities between men and women (Isariwange 2013). Not only that the time expended in the task also differs and favours one gender over the other, the difficulty in distinguishing between domestic labour and productive work in urban informal sectors and rural economy, especially in many Third World Countries, also constitutes another problem with different effects on male and female genders. According to World Bank Development Report (1990, p.20) "women in general are disadvantaged. In poor households, they often shoulder more of the workload than men, are less educated and have less access to remunerative activities". In another report, also by the World Bank, on poverty assessment in Nigeria, it was confirmed that:

While women play an essential and dynamic role in societal economic life, as a result of legal, regulatory and cultural barriers, they remain seriously disadvantaged in terms of equal access to health, education, and financial and agricultural extension services. (World Bank, 1996, p.62).

Furthermore, the time budget analysis from the participatory poverty assessment confirms that both rural and urban women work 17 to 18 hours a day. "They do not have time for leisure, relaxation ..." (Ibid., p.59)

The situation of the women does not seem to be improving fast enough despite the United Nations' Programme of Action declared in 1989; the Gender in Development (GID) of the 1990s and the Gender and Development (GAD) that followed. Corroborating the report of United Nations almost a decade after (Haddad, 1991; Birdsall and Berman, 1991) have been able to establish that the unequal relationship between men and women in relation to division of labour makes women to face lower chances of independent escape from poverty. The inequality between men and women, though not peculiar to Nigeria, has been noted to place women at the bottom of the economic ladder (Ellen and Stopper, 1988; Aina 2011). It has systematically perpetuated poverty by way of exploiting women's unwaged domestic work even as it restricts women's access to paid employment outside the household (Antrobus, 1995; Aina 2012).

The state, law and policies are other important factors that influence the perception of men and women in the society. These factors determine what men and women should do or be and what they get from the policies of the state. In patriarchal societies therefore, it is this mechanism that determines whether women are seen as autonomous individuals or as dependants on men. The Nigerian State, in its constitution, protects women against discrimination. In fact, it confers on both sexes the right to freedom from discrimination (Chapter IV No. 41, p. 31). This is the fundamental law of the land. Unfortunately, however, other forms of law operate within the state, which do not recognize the principles laid down in the fundamental law.

In fact, a more recent phenomenon is the official declaration by some Northern States in Nigeria to fully adopt and enforce Sharia law. The application of this brand of legal system as different from constitutional law has generated a lot of controversies that is not gender neutral. A case in point is the popular death sentence hangs up on Amina Lawal for committing adultery by a Sharia court in Northern Nigeria.

Whereas unmarried women have rights to hold property as males do in some societies such as Yorubas, the Hausas of Nigeria and Gas of Ghana, interestingly however, they often lose this right through marriage. According to a former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Muhammed Bello,

One of the pillars of marriage under some customary laws (in Nigeria) is the legal, social inferiority of the status of the wife to that of her husband, and also the inferior status of a daughter to that of her brother. Under some of our customary laws, a woman is like a chattel to be sold by her parents to her husband to whom she becomes enslaved. Upon his death, not only has she no right to inherit from his estate but also she becomes part of the estate of her deceased husband (Bello, 1989, pp. 2 and 3).

This obviously affirms that women, in the light of some customary law (though not all), and in actual men-women relationship (in some areas) could be described as “property” to be possessed by men. They are therefore not seen or perceived as individuals but as “things”. This perception also could have informed the attitude of men towards women’s property right. For instance, Kabir notes that:

Islamic laws uphold the right of women to own, manage and dispose of their property. It gives them the right to inherit and to hold and manage Marr (dowry). The menfolk of the Kinsmen of the women usually brothers, uncles and fathers usurp these legal rights bestowed in women. The women end up empty handed, cheated out of their rights (1990, p.25).

The practice described above by Kabir could hardly be controlled or checked because the customary law supports it. The implication is that women are more likely to be hindered significantly and freely under such law, most especially when the women concerned are not aware of their fundamental rights in the nation’s constitution. Even when they do, some cultural considerations or social facts may hinder them from raising objection. At the policy level,

Women suffer from cultural and policy biases which undervalue their contribution to development and prevent them from increasing the productivity of their labour, and as head of household, they face the same problem as men while having to carry out the full burden of household management and production (excluding reproduction) for which they get little support (Sanginga, 1995, p.13).

Writing on Nigeria policy environment Aina noted that:

Facts sheets on Nigeria present a gruesome picture of the condition of women and girls compared to their male counterparts. (Indeed) according to a recent publication by the British Council: Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012, Nigeria’s 80.2 million women and girls have significantly worse life chances than men and also compared with their sisters in comparable societies(Aina, 2012, p. 23)

As long as the status quo remain as it is, the situation regarding inheritance, property, land reforms, enforcement of labour legislation, state policies on development processes, etc. would continue to be gender biased. Women are therefore likely to be subjugated, disempowered and marginalised in various overt and covert ways in the society.

From all indications above, it seems there is no way of escape for women from their perpetually low status and position of subordination. Perhaps this has contributed to why feminist scholars have paid much attention to the general subordination of women and how this position has adversely affected them at individual, household, community, national and international levels. Evidently, most literature on women studies have been able to show the origin, cause and how women have been kept in such disadvantaged position in most

societies for a long time (Okonjo, 1983; Harris, 1984; Oakley, 1977; Connel, 1987; Alliyu, 1995, Alliyu 2006). In effect, many of such literature have been pre-occupied with how to revert the situation of women. The empowerment of women is therefore seen as a catalyst for socio-economic development (Hafkin, and Bay, 1982). Why much sustainable development have not occurred in most developing countries is partly attributed to the subordination of women who “though very strong, are constrained by centuries of playing marginal roles in what are considered when computing national development” (Jeminiwa, 1995, p.55; Akanle 2011 p.28, See also Nigeria Gender Profile 2011). For development to happen, women must be empowered. It is along this line of argument that achieving women across culture is now discussed below to serve as a precursor to the findings of this paper.

The Achieving Women across Cultures

What could be said to be lacking in most literature on women studies is that little or no attention is paid to women who, despite all odds in patriarchal society (a society where women are believed to be ‘doomed’), have been able to achieve greater things than men. This is noticeable at individual, community and national levels. For example, Westwood (1984) reported that the Ga women of Ghana are astute enough to equate independence with economic freedom from men, trading is fundamental to the realization of female autonomy. Imoagene 1990 equally reported on the Yoruba women in south and southeast; west and central of Yoruba ethnic group who enjoy a greater degree of freedom economically and otherwise due to the minimum hereditary restriction system and egalitarian system in the south, west and central Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria.

Westwood noted several ways the Ga women have used to gain their freedom and independence. To her therefore, women are a threat to the over-riding patriarchal nature of Ga forms. What this implies is that even though Ga society is patriarchal, women are still able to have access to property, power and positions of authority, which remarkably made them to improve their status and contribute to development of the Ga society. Their erstwhile positions of subjugation and subordination were turned to position of power, influence and authority. The same can, even at a greater dimension, be said of women in United State of America who now controls 60 percent of the wealth in USA (Young 2013)

In addition to the above, research have further shown that even in some other patriarchal societies apart from the above mentioned, women are indeed successful even in areas or sectors hitherto neglected by policy makers. The informal sector, for example, has been neglected globally until 1970s when the International Labour Organization (ILO) explored the nature of income generating activities in this sector (Otero, 1989). It is within this once ‘rejected stone’ that Amarteifo and Davies (1995) have found hope in turning around the society. They argued that though they are low in credit and education levels (usual barriers to women especially in the patriarchal world) women in the informal sector in Sierra-Leone earn more than their counterparts in the formal sector, tending to greater economic power and self-confidence.

For them, in spite of all the constraints, there are few women who have been successful in the informal sector; the “Hajas” in Sierra-Leone and the “Cash Madams” in Nigeria are cases in point. Some of these women are not only powerful in the business sector, but they are also prominent politically. They achieved this greatness yet in patriarchal societies. Although they may be few, there may be need to further investigate the coping mechanism of these sets of women, who against all odds, still make a mark in the development process.

This becomes necessary and germane because the role of women in development has not only become a national issue but international. Although it is widely reported in literature, as said earlier on, that the rights and powers of women were adversely eroded by colonial administration yet, under same colonial administration new leaders emerged through achieving outstanding success in colonial commerce.

These new leaders attempted to unite in their persons traditional political power and colonial political influences. A case in point was the famous Yoruba woman - Madam Tinubu - described as “a truly outstanding woman by any standard, who won herself wealth,

position and power - (and) because of her position she fought with success, for the return and reinstatement of Oba Akintoye, the exiled Oba of Lagos, following the British seizure of Lagos in 1861" (Okonjo, 1983, p.216). The same can be said of Madam Okwei of Onitsha and Ossomari otherwise known as Omu Okwei (1872-1943). Okonjo reported that 'using her wealth acquired in her trading with foreign merchant companies to acquire political power, she engineered the appointment of her husband as a member of the Onitsha native court - a position of considerable political importance in the colonial administration of the period" (Ibid., p.220). It is hoped that with changes being gradually recorded in the legal, social, economic, and political status of women, their role in development will be further enhanced.

Thus, these women who have acquired statuses desirable as higher than low in a male dominated society, such as Nigeria, needs to be studied. The objective of this study therefore is to really examine the propertied women that earlier studies have somehow overlooked. The effort in this direction will illuminate existing knowledge of their attitudes, and how this category of women managed to escape domination as it were in a male dominated society to warrant a higher and better socio economic status.

Research Design

This study was designed to capture both indigenous and modern propertied women. Questionnaire was administered on a total of one hundred and ninety-five (195) of them. The (195) respondents cut across those resident in Lagos and Ogun State areas of the study. Precisely, 99 indigenous propertied women were from the Ogun State area and 96 modern propertied women were from the Lagos State area. As far as indigenous content of property was concerned, women who have lands and houses for either personal or commercial purposes and small scale businesses dealing in only indigenous goods, not imported, were carefully selected. As for the modern content of property, women who have registered industry (manufacturing); registered commercial businesses dealing in foreign and/or modern goods alone, were surveyed. The rationale for the division of the respondents into both indigenous and modern propertied women was derived from the need to understand how women have been able to acquire property under the indigenous and modern socio economic conditions despite an obvious difference between the two conditions and, of course, the statuses of the women.

Apart from the above, the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Semi-Structural Interview (SSI) were designed to 'get behind the scene' of some of the responses in the questionnaire. This became necessary in order to have an insight into some issues that need further and/or wider explanation or clarifications. Through this means, some underlying social realities and processes of some obvious attitudes, actions and inactions of propertied women were revealed. A total of four FGDs sessions were held for all the respondents in Ogun State and twelve SSI sessions were held for modern propertied women from Lagos State. An average of twelve propertied women participated in each discussion sessions. The principal researcher conducted the session and a female Research Assistant took the notes.

Research Instrument

Three major methods of data collection were employed in this study. The first being the questionnaire and the second the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The third was the Semi-Structured Interview (SSI). The questionnaire was done in such a way that some background identification information was collected. These include: Place; Name; Type of property; Location (Lagos) or (Ogun). There were also columns for interview visits, result and language of interview. The main body of the questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first part contained questions on respondents' background and demographic features. The second section elicited information on the attitudes and roles of propertied women in development. The rationale for this was to be able to find out the effect property has on women, particularly their status; if a change in women status has further effect on their role in the society particularly as regards contribution to the development process of a society.

Furthermore, though the questionnaire was originally prepared in English language by the researcher, this was later translated into Yoruba Language with the assistance of a Yoruba language expert. This assisted in capturing in Yoruba Language the concept originally written in English Language without loss of meaning and understanding. This, in addition to the training given the field assistants, reduced, to greater level, errors in having a common understanding of concept and issues in the questionnaire.

In addition to the questionnaire, discussion guides were also developed for the focus group discussions and the SSIs. The responses during the discussions were documented in notebooks and tapes. This helped in recording verbatim, the respondents' answers to all the issues raised. Since the study sought to examine issues around attitude; the moderator and the note-takers were actually trained to be very observant in this regard. Such observations enabled the team to note some non-verbal cues that are vital to the discussions and understanding of issues.

Selection of Research Respondents

A total sample of 225 modern and indigenous propertied women was drawn from the population of study. Out of the 225, only 195 were adjudged useful for the purpose of the analysis. The 195 propertied women cut across women who reside in both Lagos and Ogun States areas of the study. They own properties ranging from land, houses, small scale businesses and manufacturing industries. At the outset of this study, it was stated that Land/house, and commercial properties were the targets in Ogun State area of the study population. On the other hand, manufacturing industries, commercial and financial properties were the focus in the Lagos area.

The researcher was able to locate 32 women who actually own lands/houses for the survey (questionnaire) through some Community Based Organisations (CBO) like Thrift & Credit Societies. This was done with the assistance of the CBO executives who were familiar with the socio-economic statuses of their members. The chances of sampling were limited here. Hence propertied women purposively identified by the CBO executives for the study were surveyed. On the contrary, a sample of 67 women was drawn from a population of propertied women dealing with indigenous items such as timber and planks. Since they were well organised into stalls, the systematic random sampling was used to arrive at the sample population of 67. In all, a total number of 99 indigenous propertied women were gotten.

For the Lagos area, a total of 20 women who own small-scale industries were gotten through the services of Market Facts Limited. Market Facts Limited is a research and marketing based firm operating in Lagos. The firm has first-hand contact with manufacturers of diverse products for purposes of marketing research. From a list of their clients, another list of industries owned by women was compiled and, out of it, a sample of 20 was drawn. Women who trade in modern or foreign items abound in Lagos. However, the study sample was limited to areas where they are most concentrated hence Lagos Island and Ikeja Local Government Areas of Lagos State were used. From both locations, a total of 76 commercial propertied women in the Lagos area were gotten at their market stalls using, as well, systematic random sampling method. In all, a total of 96 modern propertied women were drawn. The total of both the Lagos and Ogun respondents amounted to the 195 respondents sampled and selected for the study.

Findings and Discussion

The study examines the opinions of the respondents who are themselves propertied women, toward likely sensitive issues in a patriarchal society that borders on structure of ownership and control of property by women. In this regard, issues investigated and discussed include: (A) operation of joint account by couples; spending line of authority of money within the family and (B) pattern of property acquisition. All issues on control are discussed in section (A) of this paper while section (B) addresses the ownership pattern and structure in the study area.

Section (A): Some Specific Issues about Control of Property

There are many patriarchal obstacles against women in any typical male dominated society including Nigeria. Principal among these are issues that revolve around access, control and management of property (including women body). In specific terms however, the study sought to find out spending line of authority of money within the family in this section. Tables one, two and three are the major findings from the respondents.

Table one: Items respondents will or not Spend their Money without Husband's Consent

Items	Spend without husband's Consent	Not spend without husband's consent	TOTAL
Land	88 (45.1%)	107 (54.9%)	n = 195
Houses	95 (48.7%)	100 (51.3%)	n = 195
Business	25 (12.8%)	170 (87.2%)	n = 195
Vehicles	84 (43.1%)	111 (56.9%)	n = 195

Table Two: Distribution of Respondent's Perception of Operating a Joint Account

Level of Education	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
No Primary	-	-	27	13.8	27	13.8
Primary	1	0.5	16	8.2	17	8.7
Secondary	10	5.1	106	54.3	116	59.4
Post Secondary	4	2.1	31	16.0	35	18.1
Total	15	7.7	180	92.3	195	100%

Table Three: Respondents view on if they could spend their money without Husband consent.

Level of Education	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
No Primary	23	11.8	4	2.0	27	13.8
Primary	13	6.7	5	2.6	18	9.3
Secondary	107	54.9	7	3.6	114	58.5
Post Secondary	34	17.4	2	1.0	36	18.4
Total	177	90.8	18	9.2	195	100%

In their responses in table two, about 92.3% indicated that they would not hold or operate a joint account with their husbands. They will prefer to keep their money in a separate account under their full control. This perhaps will give them quick opportunity to use their money without having to wait for a co-signatory. In addition to operating separate account, about 90.8% of the respondents in table three also argued that they would spend their money without their husband's consent. However, some would not, particularly on some items such as land, houses, business ventures, vehicles and so on. The overall views on what items the respondents would or would not spend their own money without husband's consent are presented in table one above.

The figures in table one above revealed that under all the items listed; more than 50% of the respondents would not spend their money on such items without their husbands' consent. The highlight from the qualitative study on this issue of control of property (as typified by money) is as follows:

- ❖ He is the boss or leader
- ❖ He is the adviser
- ❖ He is the head and instructor
- ❖ He is the protector of the family
- ❖ Its men's world

Based on the above highlights, the emerging theme from the qualitative studies is that women must inform her husband on all issues and not the other way round. The box below present issues around decision making on housing as a case in point.

The Predicament of Wives in a Patriarchal Society Concerning Housing.

CASE 'A'	CASE 'B'
..... a man can take decision because they are the head of household. Some would have built a house and completed it before telling their wife. They do not regard us as such.	If it is the other way round, the woman will be accused. Some women have been ejected from their husband's houses because of similar issue in the past.

The implication of the above is that while men could conceal information in such society, women could not. If she does, she stands the risk of being accused of sabotage or evil manipulation of the head of the household (i.e. the husband). It is indeed men's world!

In fact, some of the respondents strongly argued that such items listed above are "big things" that cannot be acquired by a woman under authority without husband's consent. However, some felt contrary, thus expressing different attitude and opinion on the issue. For one of such, she argued that:

I cannot buy a car or any 'big thing' like that without telling my husband. But if he does it to me I will do mine in return.

The implication of the above statement is that although the respondents are wealthy they still conform to the traditional dictate of male authority. They are however filled with potentials to resist or challenge some patriarchal attitudes as a result of their improved socio-economic status. This indeed may not be possible some years back. Another respondent also argued that:

Men who have many wives are the ones who could do/take decisions with outright disregard for wives' view but 'awon-alakowe' will not do that.

'Awon-alakowe' signifies the 'educated ones'. They have been found to establish monogamous and egalitarian family where mutual respect is observed by family members particularly husband and wife. Consequently, it is believed by the respondents that where such exists there will be mutual consent to whatever each will do in the family and not the other way round as noticeable in polygynous families.

Level of Education, Joint Account Holding and Husband's Consent

The issue of operating a joint account and spending money without husbands' consent was further subjected to cross table analysis in table two above using the levels of education. All the respondents who do not have primary school education (i.e. 13.8%) would not operate a joint account at all with their husbands. The majority of those who have primary education would also not operate a joint account with their husbands. However, about 0.5% claimed they would do. The situation improved with those who have secondary school educations as about 5.1% would operate a joint account with their husband. The percentage dropped to 2.1% for those who have post secondary education.

The general trend is that irrespective of the level of education the respondents would not want to operate a joint account with their husband. Education, therefore, seems to play no significant role in this issue. The earlier position to freely operate their account and manage their business unhindered by any husband seems to be paramount to the respondents than any other factor. This indeed must have informed the data above as 92.3% would not operate joint account as against 7.7% who would want to operate one.

The attitude of the respondents, from the point of view of their levels of education, is not very different from the issue of joint account. A majority of them i.e. 90.8% claimed they would spend their money without husband consent and 9.2% claimed they would not. The freedom to freely spend is however a function of the item to acquire. If the items include the 'big things' as land, houses, car etc as noted earlier the consent of the husband becomes a principal factor, level of education notwithstanding as documented in table three above. It is evident from tables above that other factors rather than formal education determine whether

the respondents would hold or operate a joint account with their husbands and how they would spend their money.

Section (B): Specific Issues about Access to and Acquisition of Property

This section addresses the opinion of the propertied women on ownership pattern and structure of property. To ascertain factors that influence acquisition of property, the level of education of the respondents was checked against their various opinions in the process of acquiring property. The findings on this are reported in tables four and five below:

Table Four: Distribution of Respondents' view on Acquisition of Property in Husband's Name

Level of Education	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
No Primary	1	0.5	26	13.3	27	13.8
Primary	2	1.0	15	7.7	17	8.7
Secondary	39	20.0	77	39.5	116	59.5
Post Secondary	23	11.8	12	6.2	35	18
Total	65	33.3	130	66.7	195	100%

Table Five: Distribution of Respondent by levels of Education and opinions on Property Acquisition

Level of Education	Total per level of Education	Yes	%	No	%
No Primary	N = 27	1	3.7	26	96.3
Primary	N = 17	2	11.8	15	88.2
Secondary	N = 116	39	33.6	77	66.4
Post Secondary	N = 35	23	65.7	12	34.3

Attempt was made to find out if it is more honourable to acquire properties ('the big things') in husband's name as it is customary not to do some 'big things' without the husband's consent in the study area. About 66.7% of the respondents said it is not and 33.3% said it is honourable.

The question was asked against the background that it is 'natural' for men to achieve in a male dominated society since the social structure is favourable towards them. And that the properties under consideration in this study are symbol of achievement in the study areas. So, a situation where women acquire these items despite operating within an unfavourable social structure, one then wondered what will be the attitude of a propertied women (not expected to achieve so much at least not more than the husband) to a property less man (expected to achieve and control the wife) in a patriarchal society? Salient among the reasons adduced why it is not honourable to acquire property in husband's name is captured in the following viewpoint:

It may be so in the past but now, we do not agree to that again. We will use our names. What we have belong to our children.

Our husband has many wives. Family is so many. So, why would I not buy my things in my name? Tell me. More so, there is no peace in the house. In future it can lead to problem. May God not let our hard work become unfruitful. But a woman who is the only wife of her husband may buy big property in her husband's name but not we that are many in our husband's house.

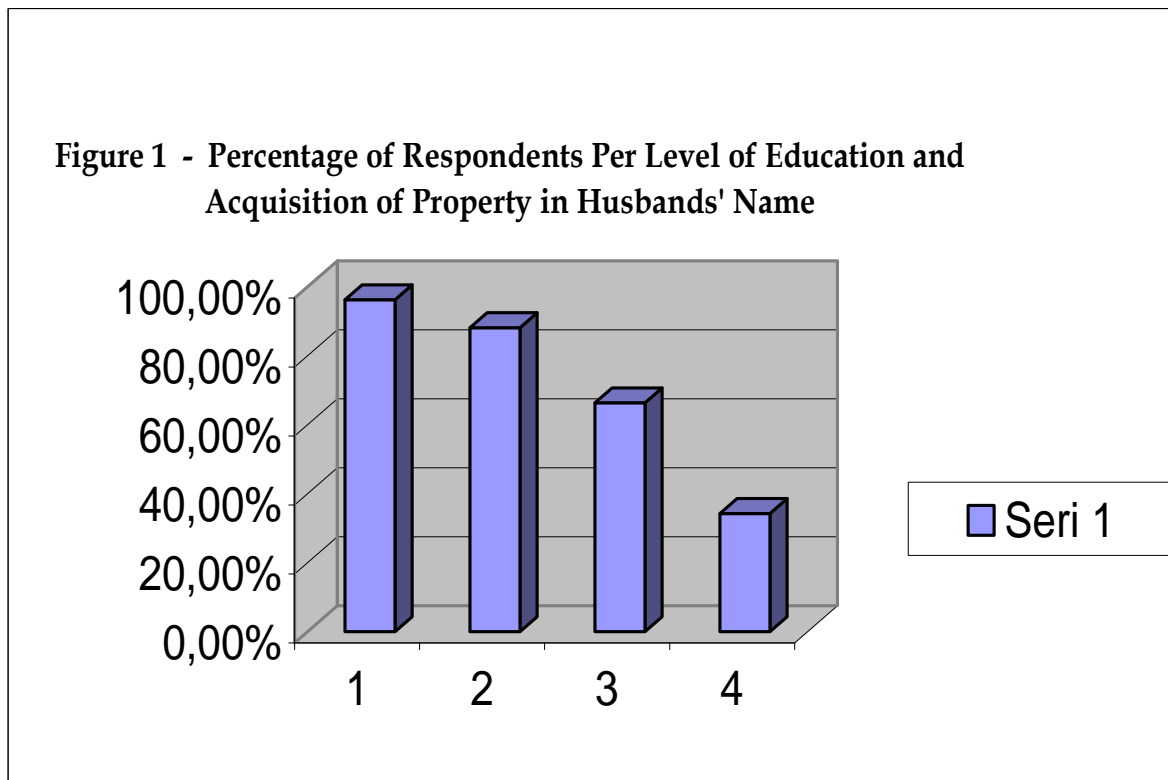
A clear indication from the above statement is that the respondent was from a polygynous setting, there is the issue of a clear and complete break away from what used to be in the past about the relationship between husband and wife in relation to property. There is uncertainty and the fear of family incursion is well pronounced. Doubt as to the real owner of property may likely arise where one buys in another's name particularly in a polygynous setting where envy and suspicions prevail. Consequently, for this respondent, and many more who shared same view, they will rather not 'honour' any man for the sake of it and allow all the above problems to befall them.

The implication is that the practice of polygyny over the years has contributed to the trend of views expressed by the respondents among whom many were from polygynous

family. The experience has educated them and indeed helped them to reposition themselves to resist and reshape some situations within the social structure.

Culturally, and particularly within the polygynous setting women are expected to be submissive to their husbands. Consequently, some well 'socialized' ones do most things from the view point of submission to the extent that some buy property in their husband's name. The extent of this type of 'submission' or 'mark of honour' as some called it has however been challenged by experiences of women in the polynynous setting. Such 'mark of honour' is gradually disappearing according to the respondents.

From the foregoing, whereas formal education might not have played a significant role in the attitude of the respondents in tables two and three the case seems to be different in table four -. Although the life experiences of the propertied women (inform of informal education) have actually taught them how to acquire, manage and control their property in patriarchal society, the influence of formal education equally had different impact on the respondents as presented in table below.



Key:

- 96.3% - No Primary Education
- 88.2% - Primary Education
- 66.4% - Secondary Education
- 34.3% - Post Secondary education

Evidently, it is deduce able from table five and the graph (bar chart) above that apart from the role some life experiences of the propertied women played in the process of acquiring and managing their property, education seems to stand out clearly here as a salient factor in the process of acquisition of property and subsequently its management. A majority (i.e. 96.3%) of those who do not have primary education would not attempt to acquire their property in husband's name. This percentage is higher than those who possess primary education (i.e. 88.2%) which is also higher than those that have secondary education (i.e. 66.4%).

This percentage of (66.4%) is obviously higher than the percentage of those that possess post-secondary education (i.e. 34.3%). The data in table five seem to suggest that the

higher the level of education of the propertied women the more the likelihood of such women to acquire property in their husband's name or at least do things under same name without necessarily personalizing such property within marriage.

The data, as it were, may also be a reflection of the fact that those highly educated are most likely to practice monogamous marriage (wherein things are done in common between couples) contrary to polygyny commonly practiced by the less educated ones¹. It is important to also stress here that the attitude of doing things together by the educated ones must have arising as a result of a more friendly social environment for decision making occasional by monogamy. This should in no way be mixed or confused with the traditional expectation of submission on the part of women to men in a patriarchal society. It is equally not to suggest that the acts of submission are not present in the monogamous and highly educated families in a patriarchal society.

Should one then say that propertied women are non-conformist or deviant from traditional norms? No was the response of a majority of the respondents. About 70.8% strongly disagree while another 20.5% disagree with the view that propertied women are non-conformist or deviants to norm. In fact, the attitude is more of conformity than deviation from norms. This does not mean they support patriarchy totally. They condemn parts of the structure and resist sometimes. This resistance, as noted earlier, might be necessary for a gradual change in the dominant nature men enjoy within the present arrangement. The successful combination of both attitude of submission and achievement by the propertied women within the study area is what we have termed *Diatude*, which is further described as a combination cooperation and resistance mental sets that shape and influence ones feelings about something.

Concluding Remarks:

Evidently from the above it is clear that the conditions, experience and status of the women reported in this study demonstrate a clear departure, a significant shift, a major change and a remarkable difference from the past based majorly on the development of a new mental set or attitude that assisted in slowly but surely dismantling the patriarchal structure that held bound women in subjective position and dehumanizing status of a mere commodity.

Basically, a fundamental change could be said to have taken place among this category of women. This is so because the propertied women reported in this paper have transformed from a mere property to be shared by men in the society to property owners and sharers of property in the same society, where hitherto, some generations away, they were considered and treated as goods for sale or purchase in the market place in the village square.

These women have had access to property, which have positively improved first, their mentality then, their social standing in the community. They have access to land and moveable properties, which make them 'compete' favourably subtly with their male counterpart financially.

More importantly however is the mental set of the women that has emboldened them to refuse to be limited by any man in the name of patriarchy or its structures. The special mental set that is termed 'Diatude' in this study will subtly continue to empower the women folk to have control over their own body and property. And it is a potential factor that could further engender further change first among the women folk then, the entire society.

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