

WOMEN, NATION BUILDING AND JONATHAN'S ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA, 2010-2015.

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Abstract

The Goodluck Jonathan's administration, covered the period of 2010-2015. He completed the tenure of the late former president, Umar Musa Yar'Adua in 2011 and was subsequently elected as the substantive President of Nigeria in the same year which ended in 2015. However, Nigerian women never had it so good like they did or enjoyed during his administration. In all honesty, the administration is obviously one, most Nigerian women will never forget in a hurry. The Jonathan's programme on women empowerment cut across board as it did not exclude any level of the women folk. During his period in office, Goodluck Jonathan appointed an overwhelming number of the Nigerian women into top political, strategic and sensitive positions. As if that was not enough, he provided a level playing ground and avenues for as many eligible women as possible to fulfill their dreams and contributing their quota to national development. These singular gestures saw many women being elected as Councilors and members of House of Assemblies at both state and national levels. It is on this note that this paper, therefore examine the contributions of these Jonathan's women (as they are fondly called) in the various capacities in which they functioned as well as their brief profiles. It also highlights some challenges that confronted them while in office. Equally, the paper looked at related concepts of "gender", "sex" and "Feminism" as they have to do with women or the topic under discourse. It equally made a long list of women that served under Jonathan's administration of which five of them were randomly selected and discussed because want of space and time. It concluded recommending measures that will enhance women participation in political governance and administration of the country. These according to this paper include saying no to corruption, distinguishing themselves while in office by performing beyond expectation, taking every opportunity to compete with the male counterparts and not waiting to be given the opportunity before they can take part in the political process

KEYWORDS: Women, Nation Building, Jonathan's Administration, and Nigeria

Introduction

The pre-colonial era of Nigeria saw women playing active political roles. In Igbo land for instance, women were part of the republican nature of then political institutions. There were the “Umuada” and the “Umu-Nyom” which existed pari passu with other male-oriented institutions. These women groups were largely involved or carried along in important political decision making in the village.

However, the ever-changing political system in Nigeria has undoubtedly hindered women’s participations in governance. For instance, the country Nigeria got her independence many years ago in 1960 but was ruled by the military for over 39 years. In all these years, Emily Oghale God’s Presence (2014: 69-70) observed that women were virtually absent from the military regime and so were not part of the ruler ship. According to her, even when the military later involved civilian governance, women were not considered as been important. The worst part of it is that the contemporary independence civilian government of Nigeria has so far not done much to mainstream women in the political process of governance. This is in spite of the fact that over the years, a few women who have been entrusted with the leading role to manage human and material resources have more often than not proved the point that, given adequate backing and free hand to operate, they can perform beyond normal expectations and can make invaluable contributions to societal development (Emily Oghale God’s Presence; 2014, 158). This assertion is incontrovertible when one considers the role of women like Queen Amina of Zazau Emirate, Omu Nwagboka, the Ilaris (travel agents/guides) of the oba (King/palace), and the likes during the pre-colonial Nigeria or Mrs. Obasa of Lagos Women’s League, Mrs. Ransom Kuti of Abeokuta Ladies Club, the Aba Women Riot of 1929 or even Mrs. Janet Mokelu, Mrs. Magaret Ekpo to name but a very few in both colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. (Ikpe, 1997; Ezeifedi&Orjiakor, 2016). It was obviously in line with these capabilities of women to contribute to the political development of humanity that made Caldwell, T Zarin quoted in Emily Oghale God’s Presence (2014:159) to state as thus:

Indeed when women are full participants in this democratic process, there is greater likelihood that society policies will later reflect the needs of all its citizens ...that, when women are well represented on governing bodies, the overall quality of governance tends to rise and levels of corruption sinks

The observation above as made by Caldwell, T. Zarin could partly be one of the reasons why the interest or desire to have women in the corridors of power heightened all over the world especially with the declaration of UN Decade of Action (1975-1985), coupled with the Beijing International Women’s Conference 1995.

It is perhaps believed by many that the 35% Affirmative Action as recommended by these recent international conferences on women that prompted the then president Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria to mainstream many women into his administration like has never seen since the country’s independence. During this period, a good number of women were appointed as Ministers, Director-Generals, Heads of Government Agencies, Parastatals and Institutions, Chairpersons of Boards, Executive Secretaries, Rectors, Provost and even Vice-Chancellors of our higher institutions of learning. In the same vein, a number of women became members of the House of Assemblies both at the state and national level because Jonathan provided opportunity for them to compete favourable with male counterpart. Because of these giant strides, Jonathan was adjudged as one of the most gender friendly president in the world. Under his watch, women became the first Chief Justice of the Federation (Hon. Justice Mariam Aloma, Mukhtar), the first President, Nigerian Court of Appeal (Hon. Justice Zainab Bulkachuwa), the first Rear Admiral in the Navy (Itunu Honoturtd), the First Air Force Pilot (Blessing Liman) to name but a few.

Jonathan was thus showered with encomium by both the international community and Nigerians alike including the media who branded him with all manner of names like “the champion of women” in recognition of his dogged efforts to uplift and enhance the status of women in the country.

The Concept of Nation-Building

Nation building is a process of mobilizing available resources of human, material and finance for social, economic and political development of a given state. In view of this, it was the desire to build the Nigerian nation that led to the nationalistic struggle by our founding fathers (Obasi, et al, 1997, P: 107). It implies a process of constructing a national identity using the instrumentality and machinery of the state (Onuegbu and Nnajiolor, 2014:p.271). It involves attitudinal change as well as deliberate and conscious efforts by individuals of a given nation to contribute their quota to the progress and developmental strides of that nation. Nkwocha et al, (2014: p.348) posits that the term nation-building connotes those actions embarked upon by the leadership of a nation and its citizens that result in national development, unity and stability. In the words of Nwabughuogu (2004:p.01):

The tasks of nation-building in Africa therefore involve the transformation of many separate nations into a single nation and the stimulation of love for that new entity. Thus, the spirit of traditional communities / local patriotism must be mad to give way to modern form of organizing human life.

Nation-building has to do with the willingness of the people of a state to work together and live as one so as to enhance a viable political and stable community. It is interested in conscious efforts towards the unity of a nation which in turn is capable of making such a nation strong (Izuegbu, 2013:p.189). Mzee (2014) in his view holds that nation- building is the conscious and focused application of collective resources, energies and knowledge of the people to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours. In this paper, It is also an efforts to correct the observable ills in a country and thereby placing the country on the part for justice, equity as well as progress and development.

Brief Historical Survey of Contributions of Women in Nigeria

This section of the paper point to the fact that women have been contributing their quota to the task of nation-building in Nigeria since time immemorial in spite of the discriminating, stereotyping and social stratifications that have constrained them. These contributions are however examined in three divergent sub-headings/ perspectives as seen below:

a. Women in Pre-Colonial Societies of Nigeria

Precolonial history has it that the Nigerian women have, in time and space, and under prevailing changing political and economic situation, made vital contributions to societal Development (Ikpe, 1997: pp. 246-247). This is in spite of strict stratifications of the traditional society, the subordinate and dependents positions of women, the patriarchal or sexual nature of that era and contributions emanating from motherhood, that is being mothers and wives and taking care of family obligations. (Little, 1973:p6, Ezeifah&Orjiakor, 2016). This view was corroborated by Ikpe (1997: p.247) when she noted that apart from the contributions emanating from motherhood; that is bearing and raising up the future generations, protecting, feeding and training them in the right modes of behavior in the changing but difficult conditions of the pre-colonial times, that some women despite the traditional prejudices, still played important roles in all the spheres of the economy.

In agricultural sector, women farmed alongside their husband and children. In Igbo land for example, women were involved in cultivations of crops like cocoa yam, pepper, vegetables, cassava among others. As the feeder of the family, Nigerian women like women elsewhere, must have been responsible for the discovery of many edible plants in their environment. In commerce and trade, women also participated in both local and distance trade and were fully involved in the procurement and sales of various food items and related commodities. Nigerian women at this period also provided healthcare and spiritual services, extensively. Most traditional religions feature immortal females as goddesses. Most goddesses in Nigeria were portrayed as river goddesses, fertility goddesses and earth goddesses, diviners, healers, traditional birth attendants and often times as custodians of sanctuaries for gods and goddesses (Ezeifedi and Orjiakor, 2016).

In the aspect of politics, some women doggedly fought to make a difference in domain that is termed an exclusive preserve of the male folk.

There were names like BarkwaTurunku, Queen Amina of Zazzau Emirate, Moremi of Ife, Emotan of Benin, Orompoto of Oyo, OmuOkwei of Osomari, Delta state and OmuNwagboka of Onitsha and so on. Women also made significant contributions in education, food processing, palace administrative functions, and legal system as well as in production and extractive industry like

weaving, basket making, pottery, dyeing and the rest. In all these contributions, Ikpe (1997: P247) however noted that even though motherhood and the attendant contributions were not traditionally recognized or considered as historical achievements worthy of mentioning, but that this as a matter of fact remains a significant contributions of women in the societies at that period.

b. Women in the Colonial Era of Nigeria

In all the conquered countries, it was then the European colonial authority that decided how the people will be governed, how their society would be ordered, and their economic resources disposed of (Akintoye, 1976: p.2). So, colonialism was adopted by the imperialists to subordinate and exploit their colonies thus, colonial policies and colonial situation affected the lives of women in Nigeria tremendously. With the institutionalization of the colonial state in Nigeria, Britain ruled its new territory based on its own gender ideology of separate spheres for men and women (Mba, 1989: p.3). More men than women were educated and thus recruited into the new (emergent) power structure. Women, unlike before become confined to the domestic sphere. According to Ikpe (1997: 258), women were accorded neither a say nor representation in the colonial system and colonial economic policies partly robbed them of their traditional means of livelihood. Thus under colonialism, Mba (1997: p67) observed that women felt victimized and deprived. Also, under the some new conditions, women began to lose some of the economic autonomy enjoyed earlier Mba (1989: p.3), in this regard, the colonial economy being an export-oriented one seriously undermined the prestige of the traditional occupation of Nigerian women. While it placed women at a great disadvantaged, it enhanced the economic status of the British and a few male Nigerian merchants. Many of the smaller markets hitherto dominated by women gradually disintegrated as a result of the emergence of expatriate firms like John Holt, U.A.C, Petterson and Zochonus (PZ) among others (Ezeifedi and Orjiakor, 2016). Similarly, women according to Adenokun as cited in Ezeifedi and Orjiakor (2016) were denied access to medium and large scale loans which were vital in operating at the bulk purchase level of the colonial economy in agriculture... The colonial policies and status was clearly sexist or patriarchal and biased against women.

On the political angle, the position of women took a bad turn. Women who used to wield political power in the pre-colonial societies were marginalized with the introduction of native administration. Men (for reasons of their exposure to literacy) were recruited into the new administration to the neglect of women. Women political titles fell into disuse. Thus, women stopped functioning in the political sphere. In Igbo societies, the native courts effectively replaced the judicial functions performed by women's meetings like that of Umu Ada Forum (Olojede, 1990: p.69)

The result of all these ugly development were however, the rise of various protest movements which were prevalent in southern Nigeria during this period, and which were targeted against unfavorable colonial policies as they affected the welfare and wellbeing of women.

Mba (1982: pp 68-97), noted that from 1918 till the end of the colonial rule, that there were protests against different ordinances. The native revenue ordinance in the south-western Nigeria, the market ordinance in Calabar, while the most widespread and significant of these protests was the so-called Aba women Riots of 1929 which engulfed the whole of Eastern Nigeria.

Mba (1982: pp 41-42) informed us that women position was instrumental to minimal reforms, but that it was not structurally decisive. To her, whatsoever was the role of women vis-à-vis men in the political sphere in the career phase, that decades of strong colonial hegemony inflicted great havoc on women's positions. So, by the time the colonial state decided to accommodate women through the principle of representation in the 1950s, decades of exclusion, neglect and oppression had severely handicapped women in the race of decolonizing states. Thus, some women, though few in number, participated in the formation of modern pressure groups and political parties (Uchendu, 1993: p.61). For instance, Ikpe (1997: pp 259-260) observed that Mrs. Obasa formed the Lagos Women's League in 1909, as a pressure group for better sanitary conditions, women education and as a medium to address infant mortality and underage hawkers. Lady Abayomi established the women's party in 1944 for welfare issues and equality for sexes, while Mrs. Ransom Kutu formed the Abeokuta ladies Club which later metamorphosed into the Abeokuta Women's Union of 1946. The aim of this union was to fight for the rights, freedom of this women which had been trampled upon by this colonial government.

Besides establishing their own parties, Women played vital roles in the establishment and growth of the political parties which dominated Nigerian politics from 1951 till independence. (Johnson, 1982). In 1957, during the pre-independence era of colonial Nigeria, a couple of women political activists such as Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, Miss Young were all elected members of Eastern Houses of Assembly. In addition to this, Ibekwe[2021:pp 131-136] also pointed out notable women in education, music and sports such as Prof Alele Williams and Onyeka Owendu, who contributed in nation building during this era. Other women politicians of this era included Lady Abayomi, Miss Kuti and Mrs. Feru-Pearse. In the north, there was the like of Hajia Gambo Sawaba who did not participate so directly in party politics but waged a fierce battle for the political and cultural emancipation of women especially with the right to vote and to be voted for which were lacking in the north and that has affected the political aspiration of women in the region.

c. Women in the Post-Colonial / Independence Nigeria

Post-colonial cum independent Nigeria also saw a number of women making significant contributions to the task of nation-building. Agboola, (1996: pp. 141-147) noted that despite the political setback experienced at a national and state levels due to the imposition of military rule in 1966 and the abolition of political activities which accompanies military rule, that women's political relevance increased at community levels. As countless women's organizations contributed to the building and running community schools, maternity homes and hospitals, motherless babies homes, roads and markets. However, the point remains that, the role of women in Nigeria's post 1960 politics has not been sufficiently reflected in terms of appointments and participation to policy making. This is in spite of massive support given to various political parties by women, women organizations, market women movement, and so on. (Ezeife and Orjiakor, 2016).

Not minding several factors that held many women down and that stopped them from contributing largely to nation-building, a good number of them have contributed in their own little ways in the political processes in the early time of independence. Thus, women have been part of our political journey or history which started from 1960 independence Nigeria, to the first republic of 1963, to the second republic of 1979, to the third republic of 1983 and down to the period of military administration of general Ibrahim Badamos Babangida and Sanni Abacha respectively. Post-independence Nigeria politics included names like Wuraola Esan from western Nigeria who became the first female member of the Federal Parliament, Chief Mrs. Margaret Ekpo who won the Aba North Constituency under NCNC, Thus becoming a Member of Eastern House of Assembly and Mrs. Janet Mokelu and Miss A Young both of which were equally members of eastern Nigerian House of Assembly. In the 1990s, three women emerged as deputy governors in the persons of Alhaja Latifat Okumu of Lagos State, Mrs. Pamela Madaki of Kaduna State and Mrs. Cecilia Ekpeyong of Cross River State. During the military regimes, Mrs. Emily Imoukhuede (AIG Rtd) became the president of the National Council of Women's Societies, Mrs Laraba Dagash, Professor Grace Alele William, the first female Vice Chancellor (VC) of University of Benin (UNIBEN) in Nigeria and so forth. However, the high point of it was in the Babangida led administration which did a lot to foster the cause of Nigerian women and enhance images of Nigerian womanhood. Eboh quoted in Oruwari (1996: p.76), for instance, observed that he institutionalized the office of the First Lady, introduced Better Life Programme for rural women, appointed the first female university VC and so forth.

The Women in Goodluck Jonathans Administration, 2010-2015

Below are part of the women that served in the then president Goodluck Jonathan's led administration in Nigeria from 2010-2015. Due to want of space and time, an attempt was made by the authors to briefly discuss at least 5 of these women in the table below of which were cabinet ministers. In doing this, the capacity in which most of them functioned, their contributions to Jonathan's led administration as well as their challenges or shortcomings would be thus highlighted. However, the arrangement of these names and their portfolios, in this text are based on the authors' choice, convenience and discretion. It is equally worthy of note that the Jonathan's presidency inherited some of these women when he took over the mantle of leadership at the death of Yar'Adua. But then, Jonathan did well to sustain them and consequently increased their number astronomically more than any president before him has ever done.

S/N	NAMES	PORTFOLIO
1.	Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Okonja Iweala	Minister of Finance
2.	Hon. Justice Mariam Aloma Murktar	First Women Chief Justice of the Federation
3.	Hon. Justice Zainab Bulkachuwa	First Women President, Nigerian Court of Appeal
4.	Prof. Mrs. Dora Akunyili	Minister of Information and Communication
5.	Hajiya ZainabMaina	Minister of Women Affairs
6.	Mrs. Diezani Alison Madueke	Minister of Petroleum Resources
7.	Mrs. Omobolaji Olubusola Johnson	Minister of Communication Technology
8.	Mrs. Farida Waziri	Chairman EFCC
9.	Mrs. Yabawa LawanWari	Minister of Finance (state)
10.	Sen Mrs. Stella Oduah Ogiemwonyi	Minister of Aviation
11.	Mrs. Arunma Oteh	DG SEC
12.	Mrs. Oloye Olajumoke Akinjide	Minister of FCT (State)
13.	Mrs. Salamatu Suleiman	Foreign affairs (State)
14.	Prof. Mrs. Viola Onwuliri	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Later Minister of Education (State)
15.	Mrs. Sarah Alade	One time CBN Governor under President Goodluck Jonathan.
16.	Mrs. Erelu Olusola Obada	Minister of Defense
17.	Mrs. Josephine Tapgun	Minister of Defense (State)
18.	Iyom Josephine Anenih	One time Minister of Women Affairs
19.	Mrs. Grace Obiozor	MD, Nigerian Shippers Council
20.	Mrs. Asmau Abdulkadir	Special Adviser to the President on Gender Issues
21.	Mrs. Rosemary Chinyere Uzoma	Controller General Nigerian Immigration Services
22.	Mrs. Stella Ochekepe	Minister Of Water Resources
23.	Mrs. Ama Pepple	One time Head of Services of the federation and later Minister of Housing and Urban Development.
24.	Rear admiral Itunu Hotonu	First Woman Naval Rear Admiral in Nigeria.
25.	Mrs. Uju Aisha Baba	DG. Legal Aid Council of Nigeria
26.	HajiyaHadiza Ibrahim Mailafia	Minister of Environment
27.	Chief Mrs. Irene Nkechi Chigbue	DG Bureau of Public Enterprises
28.	Prof Mrs. Joy Ogwu	Ambassador/Permanent Rep. of Nigeria to the United Nations (UN)
29.	Mrs. Precious K. Gbeneol	Special Adviser to the president on MDGs.

30.	Chief Mrs. Remi Oyo	Managing Director News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)
31.	Mrs. Fidelia Akuabata Njeze	One Time Minister of Aviation and Defense (State)
32.	Dr. Mrs. Mariam Ali	Special Adviser to the President on Inter-Government Affairs
33.	Dr. Mrs. Aisha Laraba Abdullahi	A.U Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace And Security
34.	Hajiya Salamatu H. Suleiman	ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security.
35.	Prof. Mrs. Ruqayyaht A. Rufai	Minister of Education
36.	Senator Mrs. Sarah Jibril	Special Adviser on Ethic and Values
37.	Mrs. Sarah Akubene Pane	Special Adviser of the President on Social Development.
38.	Mrs. Amina Mohammed	Special Adviser to the UN Sec. Gen. on Post-2015 Development Plan.
39.	Officer Blessing Liman	First Woman Air Force Pilot
40.	Mrs. Stella Atoe	Director Gen VON
41.	Mrs. Bosedé Onyelowo	Auditor General of the Federation
42.	Mrs. Joy Bob-Manuel	One Time DG Legal Aide Council of Nigeria.
43.	Mrs. Grace Ekpiwhre	One Time Minister of Science and Technology
44.	Mrs. AishatuJibrilDukku	Minister of State for Education
45.	Mrs. Fatima Ibrahim	Minister of State for Energy (Power)
46.	Mrs. Halima Alao	Minister of Environment and Housing
47.	Prof. Selina OmaghaOko	Resident Electoral Commission (INEC)
48.	Dr. Rose Obinoforribo	Resident Electoral Commission (INEC)
49.	Mrs. Gesila Khan	Resident Electoral Commission (INEC)
50.	Mrs. Amina BalaZakari	Resident Electoral Commission (INEC)
51.	Dame Gladys NneNwafor	Resident Electoral Commission (INEC)
52.	Mrs. TelmaIremire	Resident Electoral Commission (INEC)

Cabinet of president Goodluck Jonathan – wikipeda, the free encyclopedia available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/cabinet-of-president-goodluck-jonathan>

The Jonathan's Women, 2010-2015: Contributions and Challenges

From the list of the women in the table above, an attempt was made to discuss at least 5 of them whom were mostly cabinet ministers with respect to their contributions to the Jonathans administration as well as their challenges.

1. Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala:

Okonjo-Iweala is a product of two of the best American tertiary institutions- Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Before her appointment as Minister of Finance by the then President Olusegun Obasanjo on July 15 2003. Only a few Nigerians, outside the economic and financial sector, knew of Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. And by the time she left on august 3 2006. Shortly after her redeployment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she had become a household name.

She distinguished herself in the Obasanjo's Cabinet by establishing the Debt Management Office, but more significantly, in 2005 she led the team that negotiated with the Paris club to serve a historic 18billion dollar debt relief for the country. She also engendered transparency in public finance through the publication of monthly allocations from the Federation Accounts to the 36 States and helped Nigeria to obtain its maiden sovereign credit rating from Fitch and Standard Poor's. She

would also be remembered as being part of the economic team that set up the Excess Crude Account to home-grown economic blue print; the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy, which got the approval of the International Monetary Fund in its article IV Consultation with Nigeria.

Like his predecessor President Goodluck Jonathan upon assuming office fished her out from her job at the World Bank, where she was the Managing Director, to head the Finance Ministry, with an expanded mandate to be in charge of the economy. No wonder, some people called her the de-factor prime minister because of her principal position as the coordinating minister for the economy. During her second stint on the job, Okonjo-Iweala had helped to drive the president's Transformation Agenda by way of instilling some fiscal discipline and reforms in government and supervised a significant reduction in government borrowing as well as reduction in recurrent spending to the neglect of capital projects, job creation and ending a regime of deficit budgeting. However, in spite of this, her ministry has not done enough to reduce the government's bloated annual recurrent expenditure and free up resources for capital projects that will grow the economy. The economy has had steady GDP growth rate during her period and Nigeria became the largest Economy in Africa. Though this was not translated to job creation and improved standard of living in a visible way. Nevertheless, Okonjo-Iweala has managed to keep the economy above water during her time. For this, she deserves credit.

2. Senator Mrs. Stella Oduah-Ogiemwonyi

Stella Oduah was born in 1962 in Onitsha, Anambra State. She joined the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation in 1983 following her return from the United States where she had gone to further her education and had bagged both her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Accounting and Business Administration. In 1992, she left the NNPC and established Sea Petroleum and Gas Company Limited (SPG), an independent marketer of petroleum production in the country.

Senator Stella Oduah was appointed Nigeria's Minister of Aviation by the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, a key ministry in the administration. At first, people criticized the president for appointing a woman with no background or experience in the aviation to head the ministry. But the Minister got to work and attempted some sweeping reforms. Oduah no doubt inherited a collapsing aviation system. Airports were an eyesore and there had been five major plane crashes in less than ten years. Her ministry superintends/spearheads four international airports in the country-Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Kano and Abuja-and a plethora of domestic airports that are all in a state of complete mess. Under her, the ministry began reconstruction and modelling of 22 airports across the country. It also started building five international terminals in Lagos and three other cities. At a point, there were plans to float a national airline. The airspace was a lot safer under her administration and because of her work; she got a lot of praise from some sections of the media. Part of the reforms she introduced in the system includes the installation of large baggage screening machines that would eliminate manual screening by security personnel at the airports. In addition to this, is the reorientation of the customs, immigrations and security personnel posted to the airports to comport themselves professionally, discreetly? All these measures were geared towards the service delivery to the customers/passengers at the airport and to improve Nigeria image at the international community.

Unfortunately, Stella Oduah, got herself involved in a N255m corruption scandal that has to do with highly inflated purchase of BMW bullet proof cars without following due process. Moreover, her MBA certificate was also alleged to be bogus. Activists swiftly demanded her sack, and eventually the president showed her the exit door.

3. Mrs. Diezani Alison Madueke

This woman is an alumna of Howard University and Cambridge University, both in the United States and Britain respectively. After several years of working in Shell BP, she was appointed first into the cabinet on July 26, 2007 as Minister of Transportation. She was later redeployed to the Ministry of Mines and Steel and subsequently to the Ministry of Petroleum Resources in April 2010 under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan. Alison Madueke was one of the longest serving ministers in the administration and the fact that she got into the cabinet as a Minister of

Petroleum resources despite a virulent campaign against her is a testimony of the confident President Goodluck Jonathan had repose in her.

In her first year as a Petroleum Minister, she had a serious battle with multinationals over her agenda. Especially her enthusiasm to ensure their compliance with the Nigerian Content Act that opened the door for more Nigerian participation in the oil and gas sector. She was also instrumental to the signing of the landmark agreements that would usher in investment worth billions of dollars in gas development and distribution for power generation and petrochemical and allied industries in the country. In the last three years of her administration, crude oil production was steady, growing beyond two million barrels per day. Her ministry put the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) before the National Assembly in 2008, but the Bill was stuck in legislative bureaucracy/bottleneck. It was believed that the Bill will revolutionize the sector in terms of transparency, productivity and accountability. Some people had questioned her commitment to the cause and claimed/alleged that she was not resolute enough in pushing for the passage of the Bill.

However, there were also several controversies and scandals in the petroleum industry in the last three years of her administration all involving her and apparently happening under her watch. For instance, a parliamentary committee set up in April 2012 showed that the federal government was paying certain Nigerian Oil companies hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies for fuel that was never delivered. Then there was N20 billion corruption scandal involving her personally. Unlike Stella Oduah, she retained her job and continued to enjoy the president's backing till the end of Jonathan's administration.

4. Prof Mrs. Dora Akunyili.

This is another Amazon that performed creditably during her brief period in the Jonathan's administration. Prior to her appointment as a minister, Akunyili was prepared for her administrative position as NAFDAC Director-General and by her four years stint as Zonal Secretary of Petroleum Special Trust Fund (PTF), coordinating all projects in the five South-Eastern States of Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebony, Enugu and Imo states). She also served as a supervisor for Agriculture and Member of the Caretaker Committee for her Local Government, Anaocha Local Government of Anambra state from 1994 to 1996. From 1992-1994, Akunyili served as a Member of State's Hospitals Management Board and States Advisory Council Women Commission both in Anambra State of Nigeria.

Professor Dora Akunyili was made Minister of Information and Communications in the Late President Umar Musa Yar'Adua and Dr. Goodluck Jonathan led Federal Government. She continued to function in that capacity following the demise of President Umar Musa Yar'Adua in 2010. It was because of her Doggedness and zeal for excellent that made President Goodluck to retain her when he eventually took over the mantle of leadership. One of her major achievements was the Rebranding Nigeria Programme through which she helped to improve the country's image in international community. The programme was all about sensitizing the outside world that Nigerians are good and honest people and not what a couple of us have portrayed it to be. It was also about reorientation of Nigerians to be upright and always do the right thing. This particular programme made her more popular among Nigerians. She was also one of those few Nigerians who fought and insisted that the then Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan must be installed as the Acting-President and subsequently the substantive president at the invocation of the popular "Doctrine of Necessity" following the death of Umar' Musa Yar'Adua.

However, one could say that the major challenge that confronted this brave woman in that administrative era could be attributed to the role she played in ensuring the emergence of Goodluck Jonathan who was then the vice president as a substantive president of the country following the demise of president Umar Musa Yar'Adua in far away Saudi Arabia. As the then Minister of Information, she was vocal, and fearless. Thus, she made sure that the right and proper thing was done by asking the National Assembly to invoke the then popular "doctrine of necessity" which was a constitutional thing to be done in order to fill up the already existing leadership vacuum in the country created by the departure of the late former president. With her strong voice, outcry, clamour as well as public condemnation of the ugly development, Jonathan became the substantive president

of the country having been on acting capacity. It was therefore believed by many Nigerians that this role earned her hatred and enmity among the then cabals of the government. It was also believed by some sections of Nigerian that events leading to her were associated with her role as one of the key public officials who championed the demands that Goodluck Jonathan should assume office as the president and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria in line with the provisions of the country's constitution.

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5. Honorable Justice Mariam Aloma Mukhtar(Rtd.)

On 16 July 2012, Hon Justice Mariam AlomaMukhtar was sworn in as Nigeria's very first female head of the Judiciary, the Chief Justice of Nigerian (CJN). She became Nigeria's 13thIndegenous CJN after confirmation by the senate, replacing her predecessor Honourable Justice Dahiru Musdapher, who retire on 14th July. Justice Mukhtar has had a distinguished and impeccable career as a jurist and in many ways has been a pace setter for Nigerian women in general and women on the bench in particular. She takes the mantle at a time when the judiciary of the country is in dire need of critical reform. During her time as the CJN, she embarked on serious internal cleansing cases of corrupt judges, frivolous court injunction, delays in trials and dispensation of justice were areas she made serious impact in the Nigerian Judiciary. In other words, her impeccable track record and achievement are definitely a milestone for women in Nigeria.

One of the biggest challenge she was said to have had was from a conservative groups from her home base in Kano who were aggrieved for her appointment as CJN following a dissenting judgment she gave alongside Justice George Oguntade (rtd) and Justice Walter Onnoghen that was widely acclaimed in legal circle and the academia in the Yar'Adua/Buhari election result dispute in 2007. The judgment held that there was a substantial non-compliance with the electoral Act which vitiated the election of the late president.

As personal achievements in her career, Mukhtar has been many firsts: she was the first female lawyer from northern Nigeria, first female Judge of the High Court in Kano State Judiciary, the first female Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and first female Chief Justice of Nigeria. To crown it all she became the first Permanent Member of the Nigeria's highest Advisory Council, the Council of State after leaving office. Usman, Z. (2012), "Nigeria's First Female Chief Justice" Available at <https://zainabusman.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/nigeria's-first-female...> Accessed 18/04/2016<http://pmnewsnigeria.com/2012/07/04/Nigeria's-first-female-chief-justice-a-profile>

Nigerian Women and their Challenges to Nation Building

In Nigeria, the problem of women looms large; economic backwardness, ignorance, religious prejudice and obsolete ideas about women's place at home and in the society. (Enejere, 1999: p. 49). On this note, Nwankwo (1996: p.57) identified four major factors that have contributed to the near absence of women in politics in Nigeria to cover every aspect of women's lives and these include: education, culture, socio-economic and political system and these factors are not peculiar to Nigeria environment and perhaps Africa when critically examined. Lawless and Fox (2013) observed in a 2008 study which centered on exploring why there were fewer active female politicians than men in the United States, came up with some answers that were not entirely unexpected and that were not peculiar to US but are applicable to almost every other country in the world, Nigeria inclusive. To them, the persistent gender gap in political ambition can be linked to several factors which are stated as thus:

Women are less likely than men to be willing to endure the rigours of a political campaign. They are less likely than men to be recruited to run for office. They are less likely than men to have the freedom to reconcile work and family obligations with a political career. They are less likely than men to think they are qualified to run for office. And they are less likely than men to perceive a fair political environment.

In other words, there are fewer women in offices than men, not necessarily because women are less successful candidates, but rather because fewer women even consider running for office. This was true in the 2011 general election as well, where only 9% of candidates were female in spite of the

vigorous efforts made by the wife of the President Dame Patience Jonathan for women to come out and aspire to various elective offices.

Lawless and Fox further argued that in order for women to simply run for office, they have to overcome several hurdles not encountered by their male counterpart. Chief among the obstacles women face are lack of economic independence, the economics of care, and a gender gap (perceived or real) in overall education and political expertise, as well as the attitudes of political gatekeepers.

Again, running for political office costs money, and women, far more than men, are economically dependent on others such as their husbands, fathers or brothers. In short, most women don't have the economic basis to even consider a political career with those of their home and family life given the fact that the responsibilities of caring for family and children traditionally lie with the women.

The above scenario is no doubt the economy of care, which impacts social attitudes across the globe and creates very real obstacles to a woman's political ambitions. In general, society still believes that a woman's role is to provide care for the home and children, ensuring the welfare of the next generation. Sadly enough, even religion just like many cultures in the world especially in Africa, equally sanctioned this attitude that women should care for the house and home, keeps young women and girls from getting an education that would qualify them for a job that could offer economic independence. Yet both education and economic independence are necessary to seek and win political office, which in turn is necessary to be a position to effect societal change. Clearly, this is a vitally important role, yet unless this role brings with it real status or power, women will continue to remain on this margins of society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The government of Goodluck Jonathan will forever remain evergreen in the anal history of Nigeria most especially with respect to issues that have to do with welfare and well-being of the women folk. Women never had it so good like they did in Jonathan's administration. Jonathan has set the pace that will take another president with extra-ordinary courage to embrace. His is no doubt a firm believer in the abilities and capacities of women to deliver just like their male counterpart if given an equitable platform to showcase their can-do-spirit. It is of course this interest in women that made many Nigerian particularly the media house to refer to him as "a lover of women".

It is however, good to remember that a number of the women appointed by him did not disappoint Nigerians. For instance, it was under the renowned economist; Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Okonja Iweala as a woman, that Nigerian economy was rated first in Africa and around twenty countries in the world. She stabilized the economy, and the standard of living of an average Nigerian was far better than what we have today even though Nigerians still complained of bad administration of that era. Today, the economy is bleeding and almost in tatters because of square pegs in round holes managing the economy of the country. Having said this, it is also sad to note that some of these women failed to live up to expectations and could not do much in their various portfolios. The worst being the allegations of financial improprieties and embezzlement of public fund. For instance Mrs. Diezani Madueke was accused of N20 billion corruption fraud. The same with Senator Stella Odua who allegedly used public fund to purchase BMW bullet proof cars to the tune of 225million naira.

Conclusively, this paper is therefore recommending that the women should endeavour to prove themselves beyond reasonable doubt by performing creditably well and by living a legacy whenever they are called to occupy important public offices. They should distinguish themselves in office by shunning vices like stealing/looting of public funds. Again, they should also not wait for the men to give them the platform in governance, but should take the bull by the horn. They should not be afraid to aspire or compete with the men because it is said that what a man can do, a woman can equally do it if not better.

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