GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND YOUTH CONSIDERATION IN RURAL SECURITY: PANACEA FOR ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY POLICING IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper discussed issues on gender gap and the challenges faced by youth in securing the rural areas. It highlights the efforts of women leaders in global peace building and security initiatives. Sequel to the appointments of women in ministerial capacities and elective positions in Nigeria, they have contributed immensely to community peace and security. It asserted that equal representation leads to more participatory and representative political decisions. This in turn results in a more harmonious society and provides a strong foundation for the development of peace and security. The paper posited that even though women are increasingly taking leadership positions in business and politics, progress has been slow for their inclusion in decision making in security related issues. Little or no attention has been paid to issues regarding women and young people in the area of active or effective participation in national and rural security agenda. The paper concluded that for a successful gender inclusion in rural security initiative, government should collaborate with organized security institutions to provide professional training for potential recruits. This could also entail tackling and eliminating gender stereotypes that often underpin the culture of violence and inequality. It is recommended among others that States should endeavor to establish a community security expert agency to create a clear cut mode of operation, areas of jurisdiction and specific responsibilities for rural community security personnel; involve more women and youths in peace and security efforts.

Keywords: Women, Youth, Community peace and Security

INTRODUCTION

Gender responsive security initiative has been recognized by the international community, among others, through the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (2000) on women, peace and security. This resolution urged member states to amplify the voice of women on issues of peace and security by increasing their representation at all levels of decision-making. The platform for action adopted at fourth- world conference on women in Beijing emphasizes that the active participation of women in decision-making positions, coupled with the corporation of women's perspectives at the policy formulation level-, are indispensable components to achieving equality, development, peace and security. The latest United Nations Security Council Resolution (2013) on women peace and security seeks to address the issues of mainstreaming the importance of women's engagement in facilitating sustainable peace. Such sustainable peace requires an approach "based on the coherence between political, security, development, human rights, including gender equality, rule of law and justice activitiesas well as the enhancement of women's engagement in conflict prevention and peace building" (United Nations Institute for Training and Research UNITAR 2014). Inclusion of women in and security agenda must be accompanied by access to gender expertise and gender analysis and must be used to identify the impact on women's right of all peace related decisions. Elements of this practice include holding early and regular consultations with women leaders and women's right groups; securing a gender advisor for the mediation team and ensuring that crimes against women are addressed in peace negotiations (Ban, 2013).

In Nigeria, while women have been increasingly taking leadership positions in business and in some cases political appointments, progress has been slow for their inclusion in decision making in security related issues. Little or no attention has been paid to issues regarding women and young people in the area of active or effective participation in national and rural security initiatives. Under-representation of women in Nigeria is further reinforced by poverty, patriarchy, illiteracy, religious and cultural norms (Olufade, 2013). Other challenges include gender roles and stereotypes as well as structures of the political environment that is against their full participation in political and public life. Women are struggling to gain access and have a voice in the political arena of their countries. Though currently, youths have been involved to some extent in community policing effort such as the Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) and local vigilante, they have been under strict guidance and supervision of the adults. It is widely believed that the under-representation and marginalization of women and youth in decision making process has been responsible for the exclusion of the interest of women in governance and developmental paradigms (Omoye, 2012). Some measures have been put in place to encourage women and youths' participation in such areas as politics and decision-making positions, however, measures alone cannot ensure positive outcomes. The key to success still lies in the incorporation and implementation of these measures for actualization of gender equality.

Women play important roles and have particular skills that they have developed over the years as mothers, wives, and caregivers for the family members and community. The creativity, patience and the capacity to love and build a consensus are qualities that make the female gender a valuable constituency for peace and security (Lardera, 2012). According to Clark (2012), commitment to the culture of peace is a core ingredient for the success of the three areas of the work of the United Nations namely, sustainable development, peace, and security and human rights. Hence gender equality and women involvement in decision-making is a key component for development and sustainable peace building.

Gender as a concept

The idea of gender was brought into main focus in the 1970s by international conference on women. The underlying reason was to use the notion of gender to establish the fact that the position of women in the society varies considerably. Thus, different definitions followed suit with every definition coined to suit different purposes (Akinyode, 2010). According to Hannan (2001), gender is the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationship between women and men; girls and boys as well as the relations between women and women; and those between men and men.

Gender refers to the social construction of female and male identity. It refers to the socially constructed roles of and relationship between men and women and differs from "sex" which refers to biological characteristic that defines human as female and male (Alaga, 2011). In day-to-day parlance, gender is often interchangeably used with sex. However, in social science it refers specifically to socially constructed and institutionalized difference whether real or perceived, have been valued used and relied upon to classify women and to assign roles and expectation to them. Contrary to popular misconception, gender is not synonymous with "women's issues". Rather, gender describes the social roles and relations between men and women, in society; it affects all aspects of life – economic, political and social (Ebo, 2011). Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) (2014) views gender as the socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men in a given culture or location. Osaat (2011) refers to gender as a societal construct that separates the role expectation of male and females.

Gender equality

Gender equality refers to an equal sharing of power, between women and men in their access to education, health, administration and managerial-positions, equal seats in parliament, among others (GNAT, 2014). It implies the same status rights and responsibilities for women and men. Alaga (2011) remarks that gender equality do not actually imply that women and men are the same. However, their interest, needs and priorities should be valued in order to overcome the barriers of stereotypes and prejudices so that both sexes are able to equally contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development.

Gender mainstreaming and analysis

Gender mainstreaming as a concept was introduced in 1985 at the world conference on women in Nairobi. It is a strategy which takes into cognizance the role of women and men in policy making programmes and projects at all levels. It is a strategy that integrates gender equality policy through the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in 1995 at Beijing (China). According to International Labour Organization (ILO) (n.d), gender mainstreaming is a "strategy for making concerns and experiences of women as well as men an integral part of any plan of action be it legislation, policies or programmes in any area and at all levels". Mainstreaming is not only a strategy for increasing the participation of women but also integrating the knowledge, experiences and interest of women and men in developmental scheme of things.

Gender analysis on the other hand, is a systematic process of considering the impact that a development policy, programme or project may have on females and males on the economic and social relationship between them. It provides a basis for robust analysis of the difference between women's lives (their roles, status, positions, and privileges) and this removes the possibility of analysis being based on incorrect assumptions and stereotypes (Alaga 2011).

The purpose of gender analysis according to GNAT (2014) is to ensure that development of project and programmes fully incorporate the roles, needs and participation of women and men. It requires separating data and information by sex and understanding how labour, roles, needs and participation are divided and valued according to sex (whether one is a woman or man).

Gender analysis therefore seeks to examine the differences in women's and men's lives including those which lead to social and economic inequality for women and applies this understanding to policy development and service delivery. Alaga (2011) opined that it aims to achieve positive change for members of a disadvantaged gender group.

Youth as a concept

Youth is best understood as a period of transition from dependence of childhood to adulthood and independence (Nwachukwu and Ekanem, 2016). Youth are known for their energetic, exuberant and dynamic nature. They are risk takers considering their limited level of responsibility and are mostly those who are materially dependent. In some extent, they need adult supervision.

The United Nations for statistical purposes define youth as males and females between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This definition of specific age range, vary depending on culture and race. An individual's actual maturity may not correspond to his/her chronological age, as immature individuals exist at all ages.

Security Conceptualization and Community Policing

Adebayo (2011) defines security as a measure that ensures peaceful co-existence and development at large. According to Alaga (2011), security is a public good that is necessary for ensuring individual and collective safety, stability and development. It is the primary function and responsibility of the state to deliver this public good, "security" to its people and communities in an appropriate and accountable manner as to prevent conflict and foster development. Whenever this public good is deficient, the opposite appears, that is the rule by force, which in turn tends to contribute to the eruption of violent conflict (Jaye and Alaga, 2010).

The 1994 Human Development Report defined human security as people's safety from chronic threats and protection from sudden hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily lives. It can be defined as freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights to safety and lives

The above assertion among others may have ushered in the concept of community policing which was introduced in the United States in the 1970`s. Enshrined in this concept is a philosophical context of integrating individuals and members of the public into the police agenda typically, not as police but as co-collaborators in national security effort for effective operation (Wong, 2009). Community policing is a strategy aimed at achieving more effective crime control, reducing fears of crime, improving quality of life and police service as well as its legitimacy. These goals according to Gbenemene and Adishi (2017) can be achieved through proactive reliance on community resources seeking to reduce crime causing conditions such as building relationships with the rural communities and creating partnership and strategies for curbing crime and disorder. This calls for a complementary role of members of the public in security related matters rather than leaving the bulk of the job with the Police.

According to the United Nations (2020), community-oriented police is an approach that not only strengthens the bond between the police and the community but also enhances the public confidence and community cooperation towards the police.

Gender dimension in security effort

Although, women have made consisted and notable efforts in peace and security at communities, national, regional and global levels, they are still underrepresented in the official process for peace and in decision making in post crisis settings. Such peace process, that marginalizes, ignores, or excludes women are unlikely to lead to sustainable peace (Ebo, 2011, Clark, 2012). However, within the context of this paper, women leaders have played significant roles in peace and security efforts. Inspiring examples of women leaders who have contributed towards restoring peace and security include that of Leymah Gbowee and Comfort Freeman in 2003. They were presidents of two different Lutheran churches and leaders of Women in Peace- building Networks (WIPNET). These two women in collaboration with other women, pushed for the disarmament of the fighting factions in Liberia before signing a peace accord, thereby making a relevant contribution towards the peaceful resolution of years of conflict. According to UN-Women, (2012), two women, Ana Guadalupe Martinez and Maria Marta Valladares, signed the Chapultepec Agreement that put an end to the conflict in El Salvador in the early 1990s - a sign of the comparatively high level of representation of women in the leadership of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FLMN). Two other women, SemaWali and Amena Afzali, also signed the Bonn Agreement in 2001. The women were invited as part of the delegation of the former monarch, Mohammad Zahir Shah, in contrast with all-male delegations representing the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras of the Northern Alliance, on one hand and the Pashtuns on the other.

In Nigeria, efforts have been made by the Nigerian section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), to advance women's rights, prevent insecurity and promote equality. These attempts were to enhance women's participation in peace-making as recommended in UN Security Council Resolution (Peace women, 2011). Despite these efforts, Nigerian women are still under-represented and unless there is a full participation of women in security effort and decision making positions, a fully stable, peaceful and violence free society may remain elusive (Arokoyu and Enebeli, 2015).

Youth and rural security initiative

Rural youth make up a large segment of the total rural population however they are often neglected and overlooked by government policy makers and international agency for development strategists (FAO, 1995). This can be attributed to large part of the overwhelming concern to immediate solutions to problems of national development, with an accompanying inaccurate perception that youth are violence prone, non-productive and non-contributing members of the society. Young people for the most part, have limited opportunities for participation in community development programmes and most often are unable to speak out on their own behalf. For many countries, it is assumed that formal education is all

that is needed in response to the needs of the youth, therefore other options and opportunities such as non-formal educational programmes are often poorly supported or not even considered.

In the traditional Nigerian society, the youth are involved in discussing social and political issues, they execute public works and related community development activities. They participate actively in promoting the well-being of the entire community.

Today, Nigerian youths are hardly contributing meaningfully to community development due to poor participation in community and national issues. Okunola (2002) identified certain factors responsible for this poor participation of youth in community and matters as: the socio-economic scourge of illiteracy, poverty, diseases, hunger, cultural contamination, unemployment and political uncertainty.

Inclusion of youths in rural development such as security related issues, peace-making and peace building activities implies approaching young people not as mere toolkit for development but as co-actors and citizens in socio-political endeavours both at rural and national levels, granting them the opportunities to engage in meaningful activities. Mainstreaming young people in security initiatives became imperative at the formation of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in 2013 in the North Eastern States of Yobe, Bornu and Adamawa following the frustrations orchestrated by *Boko Haram* insurgence who systematically integrated gender and youth dimension into their act of terrorism. Currently, over 25,000 young men and women have been recruited into the CJTF, contributing enormously to "the success recorded in Nigerian counter-insurgency operation" (Reliefweb, 2017).

Barriers to effective gender and youth inclusion in rural security

Cultural barrier and gender stereotyping

Nigeria like most African countries is patriarchal in nature and this is reinforced by societal norms, attitudes and practices which depend upon an understanding that males are superior, more powerful and that they represent the 'norms' whereas women are regarded as inferior, lacking in power and autonomy. This culture is embedded in the traditional institutions and within the political frameworks, where male supremacy prevails over the female in leadership structure in the family, community, and the larger society. According to Jakobsh (2012), the power, prestige and privileges of those in position of power, generally males, depend on the subordinate position of women.

Stereotyping is a serious obstacle facing women in security related activities. This discriminatory attitude is often veiled in inaccurate 'facts' about women capacity for leadership in conflict resolution. Women are presented as not aggressive enough, lacking the self-confidence required for the position and not being serious enough about their careers to climb to top managerial ladder. Despite the overwhelming evidence that these stereotypes are wrong, they still persist, and this may not be unconnected to the cultural norms and values specific to the Nigerian society.

Inadequate support for capacity building

Despite the huge financial resources in Nigeria, the quality of human, institutional and infrastructural capacity has been adjudged to be grossly inadequate (Ejumudo, 2013). This lack of adequate capacity building has affected the way public resources, projects, activities and programmes are managed in Nigeria, resulting to inequitable access to education, health care and other opportunities that affect women and young people more. Women and youths in Nigeria are given limited access to credit and finance, which may be part of the limiting factors for their inadequate capacity building.

Strategies for breaking the barriers and achieving peace and security

Transformative and inclusion approach.

One of the important strategies towards the creation of gender equality in security and peace building efforts is the strengthening of women's participation in leadership and in decision making positions. However, to empower women and promote women's leadership, transformative change is needed. This should involve the coordinated efforts of men and women in changing the existing practices, ideas, and distribution of power and resources that exclude women. According to Cordaid and WO=MEN (2010), transformative change is both about changing specific decisions affecting people's lives and changing the way decision making happens into more inclusion and democratic process. As transformative change challenges existing power relations at all levels of society, it is crucial that change is sought through an inclusive approach that minimizes the risks for women who take up leadership positions and for men who become change agents in their families, communities, and societies.

Strong recognition of human security

Human security is a concept that is built on the value of human dignity, instead of economic and political interests of states. It can be regarded as global common good that intends to benefit the larger collection of peoples. It is fundamental to achieving gender equality in peace and security process because it has the potency of promoting the right of both men, women and young people in all issues regarding to human dignity and protection.

Adoption of gender responsive peace process

United Nations Security Council Resolution (2000) on women, peace and security, called for special measures to protect women and

girls from gender related violence and for consideration to be given to the special needs of women and girls during post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution also affirmed that for peace and security to be sustained, women must be empowered, their voices must be heard, and they must be included as active participants in conflict prevention, management and resolution. Cordaid and WO=MEN (2010) state that when women are actively involved, peace agreements are more credible and cover a broader range of issues.

Creating a community security expert agency

In order not to arm people who will end up terrorizing those they were meant to protect, States should endeavor to establish a community security expert` agency to develop a clear-cut mode of operation, areas of jurisdiction and specific responsibilities for rural community security personnel. This in addition should include organizational chain of command and regulations to ensure accountability and adherence to protocol stipulations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Gender mainstreaming and youth consideration in securing rural areas is crucial to Nigerian national security agenda. However, stereotyping in gender which encourage male domination and see the female gender as inferior is a major factor limiting gender equality in peace and security matters. This culture has been embedded in the leadership structure of Nigeria where the most critical positions are taken by men while the women take the back seats and play the traditional supportive role. Even when women are engaged in peace negotiating efforts, their inputs are often not taken seriously enough. Be that as it may, there is no gainsaying that women make up half of human race and their role and contributions are very essential for cultivating more peaceful societies.

If Nigeria is to cultivate a sustainable route out of violence, crisis and poverty, women and youths should be core participants and contributors to Nigeria's political and security architecture. At the rural level, government is encouraged to collaborate with organized security institutions to provide professional trainings for potential recruits.

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