

# HUMAN CAPACITY-BUILDING AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AS PREREQUISITES FOR GENDER CONSTRUCTION OF THE DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN AFRICA

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## **Abstract:**

The paper addresses issues underscoring gender dimensions in the construction of the democratic developmental state in Africa. It argues that a prerequisite for empowerment is access to formal education [human capacity building] currently being denied women due to cultural taboos and other chauvinistic constraints. Gender in the construction of a developmental state in Africa must be revisited through the auspices of empowerment, creating a level playing field - in short, “*power to people {women} and equal opportunities for all*” in the process of socio-economic transformation of the nation. Unfortunately, post-colonial state in Africa failed taking into consideration the *untiring, patriotic and great sacrifices made by women* in the struggle for self-determination. It argues that the concept of development, itself be redefined. The type of development that African countries need is one that ensures democratic governance, enough food sufficiency for the country and absorbing the labour force. In this pattern of development agriculture should be the leading link, not industry. Being the leading link equally imply empowering females whose access to political power is still far away.

Hence, the concept of development must be revisited and redefined within the perspectives of a new holistic multidisciplinary strategic approach incorporated and taking into consideration the following inter-related issues: {a} access to education at all levels and in the decision-making machinery of the society: {b} rethinking existing traditional taboos impeding development: access to credit facilities; land-tenure and inheritance issues {c} friendly technologies aimed at lightening their congested roles among others.

Construction of a developmental state must not evolve on a restricted empowerment of the female gender, but addressed within the context of a comprehensive and integrated national development strategy. Empowerment and equality becomes necessities for development and survival – the dreams of women are the dreams of their nations on which the construction of the democratic developmental state in Africa must build on. Gender in the construction of the democratic developmental state in Africa must remove women from the minus to the plus side of the development continuum. Proactive strategic policy-measures are advanced.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, equality, participatory democracy, science and technology, human capacity building, economic development, credit faculties, cultural taboos, land tenure, inheritance,

## Introduction:

*“The women of Africa have already shown themselves to be of paramount importance in the revolutionary struggle. They gave active support to the independence movement in their various countries, and in some cases their courageous participation in demonstrations and other forms of political action had a decisive effect on the outcome. They have, therefore, a good revolutionary record, and are a great source of power for our politico-military organisation. Maximum use must be made of their special skills and potentialities”*

**Kwame Nkrumah [1968]**

*“Honest and effective government, public order and personal security, economic and social progress did not come about as the natural course of events”*

**Lee Kuan Yew**

### **1: The Development Gap in Historical Perspective: A Continent in Distress**

**E**uphoria gripped Africa in the late 1950s: The euphoria of independence, which eventually was granted to former colonies, starting with Ghana in 1957. Fifty years down the road, genuine independence – political, economic and technological – is yet to be attained by African countries. Why? Africa is the only continent to have become poorer over the past 30 years. The ten percent of the world’s poor who lived in Sub-Sahara Africa in 1970 had multiplied to over fifty percent by 2000. And in spite of the decisive commitment of the “Millennium Development Goals {MDGs} to eradicate extreme poverty, reduce child mortality, achieve universal education and combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic by 2015, the reality is that there has been almost no progress. International debt, corruption in high places, poor governance, inadequate communications and nagging issues of trade among others has compounded the problems.

The Gross National Product {GNP} per capita in some African countries, Nigeria, Ghana was higher in the 1960s than some of what later became known as the Asian Tigers. Down the road, countries of the East Asian region have progressed, while significant deterioration is recorded within African countries who have continuously rely on ‘band aid and handouts’ for survival. The crisis of Africa’s development is by and large, a crisis of visionary, ethical, competent leadership and a vibrant civil society. Decades after independence, African countries are characterised by low growth rates, poverty and, worse still, loss of confidence as a people to deal with the socio-economic challenges to nation-building. The situation becomes even more distressing when we see around us countries which are not any better endowed than we are {resources wise-wise}, and which have suffered from some of the same factors which hitherto, were used as explanatory factors of underdevelopment {including culture and colonial heritage}, make it from “Third World to First World:” in one generation.

We call them the Newly Industrialised Countries {NIC} – Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey and South Korea. Earlier, Japan had made its breakthrough at the tail end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lately, we are observing significant improvements in the conditions of some African countries such as Mauritius, the Seychelles and Botswana [Adei 2004:9]. Latin American countries like Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina have made significant progress as well. In the words of Edward Jaycox, World Bank Vice President for Africa Region [1993:1] “in the last 20 years, Africa has had to face a very hostile general economic environment and most of the crises, have been generated by the inability to respond. Other countries that are also primary producers, if they had a slight edge in capacity, were able to weather these storms better, and in fact, they have done better. When you lack capacity, there is a tendency to substitute rigidities and rules and arbitrary activity to compensate for it”.

Africa’s developmental approach needs to be thoroughly revisited, and revisited from the perspectives of:

- *Is Africa forever condemned to political instability, picnic economic decline, and technological underdevelopment?*
- *Is marginalisation to be the fate of a continent poor in the midst of abundant natural resources, and suffering from the fate of a continent increasingly ignored by a rich and powerful North bent on the establishment of a hegemonic tyrannical authoritarian domination of international environment through powerful trade organisations?*
- *Are they lessons to be learnt from the success stories of Asian countries?*
- *Why has Africa failed in its development efforts?*
- *What future lies ahead for the continent?*
- *The role African intellectual community can play in the reconstruction and reconstituting process of a developmental state.*
- *What is the relationship between development and gender?*
- *What are the problems in realising women’s equal rights?*
- *Why have women been invisible in public life for so long?*
- *Why African countries are not implementing the basic tenets of the Universal Declaration of Fundamental Human Rights and other international conventions for example, The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights and Duties {also called the Banjul Charter} agreed under the auspices of the OAU and signed in 1981 The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights; The Convention on the Political Rights of the Women; The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.*

The purposes of these instruments are to guarantee to all citizens the right to participate in political affairs and to eliminate all forms of discrimination especially with regard to the exercise of political rights. Human rights do not just give us endless rights and freedoms, because they come with responsibilities. If we want to seriously protect each other’s rights we have to take up mutual responsibilities and obligations. It is therefore essential to make sure that we all respect everyone’s rights as equally valuable. Seen within this context, human rights start at home and with ones family. Sad enough, women have been left behind to take care of the private matters: family and home making, and to have no power. This is one reason why women have traditionally stayed invisible in public affairs. It also creates a vicious circle that keeps women in poverty and dependency: women are often less educated and therefore, handicapped to exert influence on the public domain to help build a more just society which should also give women all the respect they deserve.

Many of such questions abound and continue to raise further fundamental issues as to which way forward for Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. Though fifty years is a short span in a nation's history, one cannot but begin to question the premises under which independence was granted to Africa? What use African leaders made of their independence? Is the second generation of leaders properly equipped and prepared to turn the tide for a better Africa, and create an emerging African economic Lions, Elephants, Springboks or Crocodiles ready to articulate and construct a different developmental approach for the continent's economic and technological build-up? Africa is still with its past. Indeed, the ills which African societies endure, and for many of which they are responsible, to say the least, are also contemporary feature of a large part of the post-colonial era – the pillage of the coffers of the state and the productive wealth of its farmers, the excesses of public officials, corruption, repression, the burden of foreign debt, and a spiralling inflation [Austin 1993:216-7].

Pumplampu [2006:31] argues that the crisis of the African state in the past couple of decades, severely curtailed its role in political, economic, and social development. The result is human suffering in Africa that is often reported with '*ghoulish relish*' to the rest of the world [Mander 1996:9]. Background to women's unequal position linked together to the existence of a male dominated social order, which is called patriarchy. Women have not been considered as autonomous and rational decision-makers who should or could decide for themselves, leave alone participate in social or political life. Instead, their well being has depended on their families, husbands' wealth and men's good will.

The continent is caught within the trappings of crippling debt repayment, which imply that net flow of money travelled from Africa to the West rather than the other way. For every one dollar given in aid, three dollar is returned to the rich countries in interest repayments. Giving is really recovery. Aid in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, were mixed up in the politics of the Cold war, providing an effective way for the West to gain strategic allies and counter USSR influence in the Third World, Africa in particular. The Communist block applied the same tactic. Often, these assistances were tied up with prestigious but very often, non-useful projects; expensive equipments, which were in most cases kept idle due to erratic electricity supply, lack of spare parts, non-maintenance culture and other impediments. Again, foreign aid was linked with the sale of arms, often with disastrous consequences. It was used to support corrupt regimes. These regimes worked according to the dictates of their sponsors and not in the ultimate interests of their citizens. "*Money meant for Africa came back in the West in private bank accounts. As recently as 2002 corruption was estimated to cost Africa USA \$150 billion*" [Storkey 2005:45]. No wonder things fell apart. A democratic developmental state could not emerge and survive under such governance system.

And they fall apart because of poor governance and leadership vision, and crown with the fact that at the end of colonialism, Africa was left with a legacy of weak institutional and general capacity for management of its economy. To a large extent, the period since then, the capacity has not witnessed fast growth to cope with the requirements of the people. For example, the state of African Universities reflects no longer the kind of capacity to generate new capabilities that previously existed. The lack of capacity in Africa is a critical constraint. Human and institutional capacity is needed not to manage national economy only but to equally to respond to world economy. So far, the responses to this problem have not worked – as African governments and international donors have

not solved, and may even have aggravated the problem. The neglect or slowness in the process of gender empowerment, poor governance and leadership are some of the factors accentuating the problems of a non-developmental state on the continent.

## **2: Historical Antecedents**

### **The Colonial State:**

**T**he trajectories of colonial rule, colonial state and post-colonial state underscore Africa's problems, more palatable to African leaders. To day, it is being haunted by its past. First, independence was largely flawed, and inescapably. The colonial state was inadequate, lacking a comprehensive and secured revenue base; smothering political skills and failure to establish functional institutional base that could adequately carry the weight of national problems. In addition, there was a gross absence of a legitimising ideological orientation by which plural African communities could be coerced into accepting a single and coherent administration. The processes of institution building and institutional reforms have been and continue to be characterised by a number of frustrating constraints and disappointments. A commonly shared experience by Africa countries is the illusiveness of anticipated outcomes from initiatives taken by governments at institution building and reforms. There is the lack of a political will to see through such initiatives and reforms.

Positive responses were expected from the administrative unit towards meeting the basic needs of the people, which never came. The state failed in creating an enabling environment entrenching altruistic values of giving and sharing: a sense of personal and national responsibility and reliance on initiatives in doing the right thing, and including rejection of inequality, violence and oppression. The unique qualities of inclusion were not exploited as a reference point for extensive networking and mobilisation for reconstruction and reconstituting the state. The failure to empower civil society derailed the democratisation process, which equally subjected and further relegated women to the background. A new state system in Africa requires the resurgence of a strong state, a vibrant civil society and a risk-taking productive private sector

It was not the many decades of colonial rule as such that mattered, but the very essence, which betrayed African governments. Second, a colonial ruled Africa was bound to leave behind the present requiring an alternative road map. The foundation upon which Africa's democracy is based is a bitter disappointment of independence and post-independence reconstruction and development processes [Ake, 1993: Forje, 2002] that must be revisited with new lenses and surgical instruments to perform the right developmental surgery. There is an urgent need for redesigning the state with a focus to addressing issues of poor governance, political corruption in development policy and practice: poverty alleviation and targeting the basic tents of democratic governance and inclusion.

Intellectual debate about democracy and development that occupied the African elite class to a large extent, focused very little on the potential of women as transformation agents in African development until of recent. Many contradictions arise on cutting-edge critical theory concerning the development path chosen by the continent. Africa as such, remains mired in all the challenges of {under} development and independence /dependency syndrome. A new paradigm shift is required to reinforce emerged debates in the late 1970s on the potential contribution of women as critical agents in the

development process. Looking at Africa of the 1980s and 1990s, there is a lot to be regretted by the failure of dominant discussions on development to tackle the roots of the inability of scholars and practitioners to break out of the (*self-imposed*) prison represented by the theoretical and institutional boxes from which they work [Codesria 2006]. Anyidoho Nana Akua's [2006:5] review of the book by Oyewumi Oyeronke looks at the epistemological and ideological challenges of theorising gender with reference to Africa.

Those nations that have experienced the most sustained transformative development in recent decades {e.g., East Asian Tigers} have all had developmental states to one degree or the other. Those developmental states helped East Asians in particular, to develop systems of innovation and human capital. Africa has suffered from not having a developmental state. As a result, Africa lacks such requisite systems of innovation and human capital development. When women are not involved in making laws and policies, there is a strong possibility and chance that these laws and policies made by men would not protect women's rights. For example, one may end up with constitutions that reflect and often reinforce the values as well as injustices prevailing in the society and protects existing power structures. Generally, the world over, and particularly in Africa, there are traditions that protect and humiliate women in the worst possible ways: widow burning in India, widows sleeping on bear floors not talking or greeting others in Africa, 'witch hunting' of old women with red eyes in some parts of Tanzania and other horrendous things against female gender in many parts of the continent abound.

The human potentials of the African woman has neither been developed nor integrated as a component of national development strategy. Mama [2005:95] identifies the following strata that have fuelled the development of gender capacity in Africa:

- The development of political consciousness inspired by women's political engagement both during colonial rule and after:
- The internationalisation of feminism, and the resulting manifestation of gender discourses:
- Gender studies – human capacity building – gaining ground due to exposure to diverse intellectual resources and influence, but they still have to make significant entry in the area of science and technology relative disciplines:
- The political, historical and economic conditions of African intellectual development inevitably generated much critical engagement with Western intellectual legacies.

To the above could be added intriguing aspects of a worldwide resurgence of civil society and its impetus coming from quite diverse roots in different societies fuelling the struggle for social justice and inclusion. In many countries, the driving forces being the struggle to attain or preserve basic human rights or the demand of disenfranchised minorities to participate fully in the society. Women though in the majority in many countries continue to be treated as minorities or excluded group. The minority-majority contingent had to make its voice heard. Thus the unprecedented mobilisation of 'tens of thousands of women who had hitherto rarely moved out of their communities and villages' to make their voices heard at the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing as well as other previous conference on Women {Mexico, Copenhagen, and Nairobi}.

The outstanding issue is what went wrong that Africa failed in intellectual discourses to highlight the role of woman in development bearing in mind their activism in the struggle for independence? The survival of many African states is due to the untiring efforts and contributions of women in both the agricultural and informal sector of the economy. This

paper looks at the plight of women and Africa's transformation with stronger emphasis on the total neglect of incorporating science and technology as pathway for the transformation of the continent. These developments have to be seen also within the broad context of the role in Women in Development {WID}, Women and Development [WAD] and Gender and Development {GAD} strategies that shaped policy interventions and informed authority mid 1960s in addressing gender-based silences and contradictions in the development process. Importantly, they also highlight the failure of nation-building process in Africa that inhibited the emergence of a developmental state.

Approaches to socio-economic transformation of these emerging polities in Africa pivoted on either adopting a Western or Non-western developmental strategy. Was a capitalist or socialist path the way forward for these new states? To a large extent, Africa settled on a western approach with a blend towards a disguised form of socialism, for example, Nyerere's Ujama – ideological approach that failed to implant into the citizens the ideological orientation of modern development necessitating ethical orientation with absolute emphasis on hard work, transparency, denial of the pursuit of luxury of leisure, regular rationalised work, exact accounting, and ascetic obligation to save values favourable to the development of modern capitalist enterprises. But the adopted western approach failed to copy the ethics and virtues of hard work, accountability, organisational management, mobilising domestic savings, transparency, productivity and good governance and actually understanding the nitric of western philosophical orientation of granting independence to areas that once contributed in sustaining the economic development of Western Europe.

Africa is suffering from these vices that underscore its state of underdevelopment and exploitation. The innovation vehicle was not brought on the development drawing board and female potentials relegated to the background. The continent missed the innovative vehicle as a basic process to actively change the culture of underdevelopment or make it as system for the continuous advancement and implementation of the tool for development [Forje 2005]. The process of development in human societies involves the organisation, mobilisation, combination, use and distribution of resources in new ways, whether these resources take the form of capital, land, human beings or other combination. This explains why all 'development' is therefore inescapably political, and not managerial or administrative in the current technicist sense. In this context Hugh Stretton [1976:3] notes: "People can't change the way they use resources without changing their relations with one another". That is politics. Most understanding of development approaches is located within one or more of the following outlined approaches. See box 1.

### **Box 1. Major Understandings of Development Approaches**

- Development as historical progress
- Development as the exploitation of natural resources
- Development as the planned promotion of economic and (sometimes) social and political advancement
- Development as a condition
- Development as a process
- Development as economic growth
- Development as structural change
- Development as modernisation
- Marxism and development as an increase in the forces of production

Source: Leftwich Adrian [2000] States of Development. Polity Press, London

Generally, the practices of development to a large extent, have been exclusively designed and deployed by western, western-dominated or western-influenced institutions exercising enormous power and wealth and hence imposing western notions' strategies and solutions of development on non-western societies [Leftwich 2000:17]. Others [Crush, 1995; Escobar 1995] see it representing a version of western economic, political, cultural and ideological imperialism. This impacted on Africa destroying its own approaches to development, and failing to take into cognition that the very idea of development is itself profoundly political and requires an ideological orientation for sustaining it. President Julius Nyerere experimented with "Ujama" to create a new sense of direction, of devolving power to the rural people and bringing them into the mainstream development process. A process, which combined a number of issues, treated in Box 1. How successful or not "Ujama" was, is a different issue: but an attempt was made in mainstreaming the role of women who constitute the bulk of the poor population.

### **3: Some Theoretical Dispositions:**

The developmental state is one that has the capability, authority, power and capacity to work through, in and with a market economy or, is able to 'imagine the market' in the manner better described by [Wade 1990] as to 'govern the market" These states can be distinguished them from the "planned ideological " states of the Soviet variety and the 'regulatory" states of the Western liberal or social-democratic kind, but also sharply from states at the other end of the spectrum in the third world, what we might call – "non-developmental states" the likes of Zaire under Mobuto, Philippines under Marcos, Haiti under Duvaliers – which are characterised by varying degrees and mixtures of corruption, incompetence, political, cronyism, clientelism and straight forward kleptocracy, all of which have produced non-development or, at best, grotesque mal-development [Leftwich 2000:8].

Developmental states cannot be constructed out of institution-building kits in a foreign country or structured by think tanks as most of the developing countries show proof of this. Within a few years of attaining independence, these former colonies abandoned the constitution and institutional arrangements bequeathed to them by the departing colonial regimes. Constitutions and institutions are important but not the final means. Neither can be seen as separate, isolated or evacuated from the raw processes and practices of politics in the organisation, sustainability and continuity or management of change. To underscore the point, a developmental state is a function of the politics associated with the governance, development and transformation into other types of state. No institutional arrangements be it electoral, legislative, executive or judicial, have ever withstood the disabling effects of pervasive corruption, the thrust of the bayonet, the march of the jackboot or the rip-tide of implacably or violently antagonistic political forces which can simply wash them away [see Leftwich 2000:9].

There is a link between democratic developments as realistic prospect for a sustainable society. The collapse of the Soviet bloc brought to the open western thinking that democracy is not only necessary features of democracy, but an essential and vital feature as well. Given that the definition of democracy implies government of by and for the

people, all must be involved in shaping and recognising the variety of institutional and political forms in the developmental capacity in transitional polities. Furthermore, particular forms of democracy are critical factors in determining the pace, structure and extent of developmental achievement by the state. For example, the momentum of development a dominant-party democracy like in Botswana or Singapore would likely be greater than in coalitional democracy like in Mauritius or India, and more likely to be much greater than in societies where political parties alternate in power more frequently. To what extent can democratic states promote rapid and sustained development? In other words, what are the prospects for democratic developmental states? How do we situate the specific case of female gender marginalisation within the context of a developmental state?

The first section of the book by Oyewumi, Oyeronke [2005] ‘Transcending the Body of Knowledge’ seeks to redress the undue emphasis on the corporal interpretation of gender; and the chapter on “Invention of Women” states that theorising about gender is essentially an epistemological undertaking and where research on gender in Africa takes its cues from the West in terms of theoretical concerns, concepts, problematic and methodology. The book puts into perspectives a rich analytically and conceptual knowledge on gender from an African perspective as well as providing insights into the reasons for disengagement between research priorities and researched carried out between available knowledge and the way that knowledge is deployed [p.5]. The issue of policymaking on gender is inconsistent, fragmented and incoherent within African countries. This has to do with the degree of chauvinisms that the state which has manipulated gender because of its control of resources and discourses.

This attitude of the state retards the progressive advancement on the gender question because of a lack of vision of what a holistic, long-term gender transformation of society should look like and how it might be achieved. Interesting is the fact that the very state that relegates and monopolises and controls resources and progressive vision of the female gender, is the same state that relies on women for its mobilisation and support for any form of victory in elections. Though the academic community has been at the forefront for the liberation of female gender, it can equally be faulted in the process of producing and disseminating knowledge that significantly influences the undermining and exclusion of women. The academic community must revisit its stand on gender issues, inject new discourses in the predetermined development agenda, including the reduction of discussions of gender to narrowly delineated “gender issues” {Anyidoho 2006:5}. The fourth estate - power of the media - should play a vital role in advancing knowledge production and knowledge consumption on issues related to gender empowerment, social justice and inequities in society.

Closely examined, unemployment, inequitable distribution of national and natural resources, wrapped democracy, a crisis in governance, food insecurity, environmental degradation and gender discrimination are all about exclusion. It is imperative that the state recovers from paralysis and takes charge to prevent looming crisis. Civil society should shift gears in its engagement with the state and be more sensitive to the plight of women and the marginalised groups in society. Fifty years of independence has yet to resolve the plight of the excluded groups. The consequences of such exclusion are many and varied.

Any discerning observer need not look too far back. Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Niger Delta Area of Nigeria for example; offer instructive examples – violent conflict being the result of official neglect – neglect of marginalised communities, youth and women, high unemployment and corruption in government. First political leaders should support and advance the status of women and start dialogue in Parliament on how to advance the Beijing Action Plan as how to move towards inclusive and sustainable development. Second, conscious and comprehensive search to address the economic marginalisation of certain regions and ethnic groups, grand corruption and gender inequities as a way forward in fight fighting and addressing underdevelopment and reconstruction.

A dominant one-party state embedded with good leadership and positive responses from society can achieve much within a short space of time. The African One-party system failed in that respect as it soon took upon itself within a short time period varying forms of the astringencies of corruption, cronyism, incompetence, clientelism and straightforward kleptocracy. The result was grotesque mal-development. In these process women were marginalised but used as shields for fanfare related activities. Their role failed to go beyond the lining up at roadsides and animation at political parties' events. For many, this reflected the very caring nature of the women. Implying her roles were neither to extend beyond the boundaries of entertainment nor given the chance for further development in the mainstreams of societal transformation. It is not too grotesque a caricature to say that women were not part of the politics of development. Power and authority were institutionalised within the reach of men, immediately after independence. The norms of traditional political system had to be respected to rephrase Weber [1964].

Early political philosophers raised the question of women participation in administrative functions of the state as a way of either justifying the primacy of male power or challenging it. This is explicated by highlighting the theoretic premises of Plato's ideal state which recommended participation of both sexes in the composition of the guardian class: and that the guardian class should abolish the institution of private property including private wives and private families. Recommendations too radical for the Athenian society to swallow bearing in mind its strict adherence to class and gender divisions. Realising the impracticability of such an ideal state, Plato's second ideal best state was construed within the parameters that women were to be engaged in limited functions mainly those e related to their traditional social reproductive functions. The basis of authority laid on the ability of the rulers to ensure attainment of the "*greatest happiness to the greatest number and with values not based on equality or social justice*" [Shanley and Pateman 1991].

According to Plato, women of the common classes constituted part of male property. Aristotle's perception, understanding and analysis of the universe were through the hierarchical structuring of very living creature with specific pattern and order. A hierarchical setting was that the females of all classes constituted defective males and hence relegated to a subordinate place in society. According to Aristotle, the female gender had nothing to offer life except matter, while men gave life its purpose and determined its final shape after attaining maturity [Meena 1991]. Rousseau argued that the foundation of a good society depended upon the role of women in the private sphere not in the public sphere. Women were therefore, to have basic citizenship training at the household levels to sustain the family. Competing for public jobs grossly undermined both

their natural status as well as the masculinity of men. Hobbes rejecting the naturalness of male domination introduced a theory of conquest, arguing, political right was a maternal right, until men conspired and conquered women through an original contract that excluded women [Shanley & Pateman 1991].

The roles, which Hegel assigned to both sexes implicitly, relegated women to an inferior status of the private and men a superior status in the public. Whereas women are seen as representing the principles of particularity, immediacy, and substantiality, Hegel sees men as representing the principles of universality, immediacy, freedom and subjectivity [Benhabib, 1991]. On the other hand, it can be taken that Hegel directly or indirectly challenged men to open up the political and economic sphere for women to be active and complimentary participants to men in the development process. Men and women were created as complimentary partners to one another. Why has the process of development in Africa separated the two? Has this to do with the culture of the people? Or culture misinterpreted to suit those who control and direct the spectra of power and the economic purse?

Accordingly, [Benhabib in Shanley & Pateman [1991: 134, see also Meena Ruth 1991], *one sex is mind in its self-disruption into explicit self-subsistence and the knowledge and volition of free universality, i.e. self-consciousness of conceptual thought and the volition of the objective final end. The other sex is mind maintaining itself in unity as knowledge and volition in the form concrete individuality and feeling. Thus the man has his substantive life in state, in learning, etc. as well as in labour and struggle with the external world and with himself so that it is only out of his disruption that he fights his way to self-subsistent unity with himself. In the family he has the tranquil intuition of his unity, and there he lives as subject ethical life on the plane of feeling. Woman, on the other hand, has her substantive destiny in the family, and to be imbued with the family piety is her ethical frame of mind* [Benhabib in Shanley & Pateman 1991:134]

According to Hegel, *men's world was in state, science and external world, while for the women it was the family in the unity of piety though allowed some minimum rights, for example, the free choice of spouses, and right to property which they loose upon marriage, and right to inherit upon death of spouse or divorce* [Meena 1991]. Nonetheless, the family was important since it provided the basic foundation whereby the rights of individual man could be exercised. Freely exercising the right of selecting a spouse according him the right of 'particularity', while caring for the welfare of the family implied the right of 'subjectivity'. Karl Marx and Engel's considered the family as part of the bourgeoisie's super structural institution that had to be destroyed in order to free women from domestic slavery [Shanley & Pateman 1991].

Can one draw the conclusion that existing poor status of women are traceable to cultural taboos reinforced by the theoretical dispositions advanced by scholars like Hegel, Marx, Aristotle, Hobbes and others? The modern state construction with its notion of gender-neutral disposition, in essence is gender bias. The modern state in Africa went about with the depoliticising of the development agenda, with government playing the critical and centralised role in the process of developing both the human and natural resources of the country. Development implied growth. It also implies undertaking a policy of social justice and equitable distribution [Goldsmith, 2000; Leonardo et al eds. 1998, Bayart 1993] and avoiding exclusion. But the most significant development in Africa is that the granting of

independence gave the women the 'vote' to make choices and influence the political and policy decision-making process. This was the first stage of empowering the woman and to promote 'gender equality'.

Many years down the avenue of independence, men's violation of women's rights has not decreased. If we live in a culture or nation that promotes collective rather individual rights the constitution can be used to maintain prevalent power structure and gender hierarchies, denying women the same rights as men. Though the issue of human rights are entrenched in the constitutions of African countries, women are still vulnerable and helpless to fight against such rules and to demand their own individual rights and to boost patriarchal societies, women have come to believe that they somehow second-class citizens and even second-class human beings.

The politics of underdevelopment was approached from the technicalities of targeting a select few, men of course, with the belief that this will generate a 'tickle-down' effect on the rest of society. Hence the policy orientation on human investment was 'male' power-oriented or focused with the female gender relegated to the background. Development implied meeting 'male' power needs of the new state. This is reflected in the slow pace of gender education. Access to female education has been slow. Which seriously affects their participation in the labour market especially into state institutions and decision-making posts? Most women remain in the agricultural and informal sectors mainly at subsistence level; or hold low-ranking positions in public or private establishments.

Apparently, with the prevailing negative forces, heightened by the centralised nature of the state and its institutions, it became necessary to demobilised civil society as the voice of the people. State centralisation and demobilisation of civil society took the form of the creation of the monolithic party. The African state elevated the party as the most vital and supreme organ of the nation. Co-opting mass association such as trade unions, cultural associations, and women's association and others, stifled critical opposition and the advancement of the democratisation process. This had serious consequences on gender politics and gender empowerment that eventually impacted on slowing down the development pace of the continent.

Let it be remembered that women were active participants in various fields during the struggle for independence. Hardly were they rewarded and recognised the morning after independence even though political factors have shaped the urgency, thrust and pace of their developmental strategies through the structures of the state [Castells 1992; Pempel, 1999] and captioned primarily within the realm of nationalism, the idea of catching up with the developed countries but failing to construct the necessary structures and enabling environment for articulating their wishes and incorporation into the development mainstream of the continent.

Instead, they created an atmosphere of power accumulation, capacity and legitimacy at the centre to shape, pursue and encourage action in pursuance of explicit developmental objectives [Pempel 1999; Woo-Cumings, 1999]. Developmental objectives which often turned out not to be in the common interest but self-centred oriented. The idea of making the state the pillar of development to bring about a socialist state failed to materialise due to pursuing individual interests by harnessing those of the state to its purpose. The developmental state failed due to many inter-related issues: absence of visionary

leadership, exclusive politics, neglect of female gender, poor human capacity development, rise of ethnic politics instead of national reconstruction and consolidation of its valuable human and natural resources for development.

Going back to Oyewumi [2005: p. xiv] “taking Africa seriously, there is the need for conscious efforts to correct the longstanding [problem of western dominance in the interpretation of African realities” and for African intellectuals and political leaders to reshape their analytical tools and policy and decision-making strategies on the place and role of women in the development of Africa. The issue of a developmental state in Africa with specific attention on women must begin with a disconnection from western epistemological analytical approaches and reconnection with an African reality and empowerment for development and the pathological representations of women in the development literature and practical realities of the transformation of gender relation relations and the society. In short, gender issues in the African context must be placed within the framework and perspectives of social, cultural, political and historical contexts and African perspective. African academia and policymakers should move away from western pre-determined development agendas into embracing gender issues and home-grown policy agendas as the solid basis for socio-economic transformation.

It means overcoming vaguely principles and processes construed on ‘ancestral culture’ on the one hand, and the struggle by women to overcome ‘social customs” and other traditions” on the other. Why must gender continue to be an issue of contention in the socio-economic transformation when most of Africa’s Founding Fathers showed great concern for women as vital inputs in the struggle for self-determination, technological and socio-economic transformation? A gender developmentalist agenda and approach devoid of a non-African concept backed with critical and in-depth knowledge, theoretical and empirical perspectives of the foundation of the African society and geared towards conceptual analytical and solution-seeking is required.

#### **4: The Difficult Road To Recognition.**

The principle of integrating women into all phases of the development process – both as participants in planning and policy-making, implementation, evaluation and as beneficiaries - is now widely accepted by governments, traditional authorities and civil societies the world over. It has not been an easy road to the present status of acceptance. Like Rose Parker took the bull by the horn in Alabama in the 1960s, African women have continued the struggle for their inalienable rights as contributors to the development process. The importance of women’s contributions to the achievement of national economic, social and political goals was initially articulated at the First ever-United Nations International Women’s Conference, Mexico City 1975.

Since then, there has been no turning back: by women or the “*lady is not for a u-turn*” to use Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s famous phrase in Parliament. It has and remains a long road to travel. Of course, the journey of 1000 miles {as the Chinese will say} begins with the first step, a move taken in Mexico in 1975 to give women greater input in the development process. How far have African women travelled? How far have men changed their chauvinist towards women and thus build bridges between the potentials of women and resistance toward their role in development because of age-old traditional

taboos? Unfortunately, women continue to be treated more as objects of history rather than makers of history in their own right: 'received ' development but were not the makers of development. Apart from their contribution to the self-determination struggle, their gallant efforts in the informal sector and household activities to earn extra for the upkeep of the family, especially since the inception of Bretton Woods Financial Conglomeration imposed structural adjustment Programmes {SAP} goes often unnoticed.

The truth is that no African government can survive for a day if women down their tools or stop giving their unflinching support to ruling regimes or Opposition parties. The strength of any regime, opposition party in Africa depends on the input efforts of women. Women are instrumental for the rise and fall of dictators or democratic regime forms in most African countries. One should recognise the inherent strength of women in transitional polities. Women should use those inherent resources to ensure their incorporation and empowerment in societal activities. Women do not ask for any extra rights that men do not have, but women's rights need to be taken seriously as human rights and they need better treatment and protection. When we all learn to respect each other as valuable, girls can be have a better chance for education and women for political participation and in top policy-making decision positions. Hopefully, then men's violation of women's rights will decrease and women can safeguard their rights and men will understand how much better for everyone it is living and working with women on equal basis.

From Mexico City [1975] through Copenhagen {1980}, Nairobi {1985} and Beijing {1995}, together with other subsequent conferences, (e.g. *The World Summit on Social Development Copenhagen 1995*) that established the link between gender equality and poverty explicitly recognised women's potential in the development process: it has been stressed repeatedly and emphasised again and again that the neglect of women in development related activities is embedded with many deleterious effects, such as aggravating the political process, decline in food production, economic decline and loss of income earning opportunities and their concentration in low income occupations. The marginalisation of women [which chauvinists will take as a pride] is a curse than blessing to the socio-economic transformation of society. These highlight major failures in the development of a developmental state in Africa.

As a consequence, both rural and urban households continue to face increasing impoverishment and difficulties in meeting basic needs. Women in this view are rightfully seen as actively integrated in the developmental life with their labour and economic output being essential for supporting their families and moving the nation forward. This cannot be done as they are no fault of theirs, excluded from decision-making mechanisms, having little access to human capital investment, restricted by certain cultural taboos from actively running for public offices, marginalised in respect of human capital development, among other vices placed on their path. Hope is not lost as far as gender issues are concern in Africa. These hopes can be seen from increasing gender studies that depicts issue showing that despite phenomenal structural constraints, women as economic agents have refused to celebrate victim-hood [Codesira 2004] and how the struggles for gender equality puts pressures on women to challenges facing the edification of gender studies, women's rights and entitlements [Codesria 2004b]. Everyone is in agreement that much more should be done to empower women: most organisational cultures make it harder for women to exercise leadership than it is for men. A large body of literature identifies a wide range of internal and external barriers that constrain women's leadership

effectiveness [Evans 2000, Tang, 1992; Kim & Kim, 2001]. Internal barriers come from within, such as individuals' self-limiting beliefs about their roles as women or their lack of self-confidence. External barriers are rooted in the environment, such as traditional hierarchies, cultural stereotypes, lack of access to critical developmental experiences and tokenism. Taken together it seems women still walk a different path than men.

Sometimes these barriers are overt but, in many cases, they are subtle or covert – arising in everyday situations as the taken-for-granted way of doing business. Individually, the barriers may appear insignificant and trivial but as they accumulate, they produce significant disadvantages for women [Valian 1999, Cole and Singer 1991]. That is why human resources development for women and effective leadership training should enable women to counter both overt and subtle internal and external barriers that limit their leadership effectiveness. While leadership development programmes for women have mushroomed, research does not tell us whether or how they may enable women to address such barriers more effectively [Debebe 2007]

The Human Development Goals {MDGs} **box 2** provides an opportunity for developing countries, African in particular, to redress the current barriers preventing women from play a more coherent, coordinated and complimentary roles in the development of the continent. Knowledge acquisition, behaviour change, skills development, and self-confidence improvement provides the way forward for women to claim their place in the development strategy of the continent.

**Box 2: The Millennium Development Goals MDGS**

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achieve universal primary education;
- Promote gender equality and empowerment of women;
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health;
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensure environmental sustainability;
- Develop a global partnership for development.

Source: [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals).

The Millennium Development Goals {MDGs} approved by Heads of States and Governments at the United Nations General Assembly with its eight established goals of halving poverty by the 2015, put women at the centre of focus with greater obligations to play a conscious role in the development process if poverty is to be erased from the continent. Their potentials have to be developed and adequately utilised. Making poverty and underdevelopment an issue of the past cannot be accomplished without the critical contribution of the female gender. Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women constitute the key factor for any form of female emancipation. This is a process that touches on issues of democratisation and governance. Getting the political equation and changing aged old traditional beliefs, and exhibiting the necessary political will remains the key to attaining the Millennium Development Goals, which is necessary for placing Africa on the right path of a developmental state.

A negative impact on women empowerment and development efforts aimed at maximising economic growth and pushing forward the democratic process has been the tendency of male chauvinism hanging on outdated cultural taboos, and for national development planning strategic, policy-making and resources to be totally concentrated and monopolised by the industrialised and financial sectors of the economy – spheres dominated by men [INSTRAW and ILO. 1985]. Women dominate the informal sector in most African countries. Women also constitute a significant proportion of those engaged in agricultural related activities that constitute the backbone of the economy of many African nations. Unfortunately, their contributions being significant are generally not given the high priority and recognition deserved.

Their inclusion into the job market at different levels, including increase rural incomes and reduced inequities in access to land and other productive resources, women have often lost out in comparison with men in the distribution land rights and other benefits [Palmer 1985]. A developmental state cannot exist in Africa when those constituting more than 52 percent of the population are marginalized in all aspect of development. Meredith Woo-Cummings, [ed. 1999] examining the theory of the developmental state with experiences from Asian countries links democracy and the developmental state. Johnson's contribution in the book denies any necessary relationship between democracy and the developmental state, but acknowledges that "authoritarianism can sometimes inadvertently solve the main political problems of economic development using market forces, how to mobilise the overwhelming majority of the population to work, sacrifice and benefit for development projects:

Again, Africa at the time of independence failed to build on the independence euphoria to get the people to work. Most countries embarked on a repressive authoritarian regime form focused on destructive purposes and not for the construction of the nation, as was the case in most Asian countries. Hence, the explanation by Johnson that 'authoritarian governments can achieve this mobilisation artificially and temporarily whereas in the true developmental state, the bureaucratic rulers enjoy a special kind of legitimacy that emanates from devotion to a popular revolutionary project' [Woo-Cummings, 1999].

In a male dominated world, women are hindered from contributing and sharing the benefits of development by wrongly deploying cultural taboos and archaic traditional values. They should be a part, but not apart of the ongoing process for sustainable development. Religion is constantly used to restrain the full emancipation of women. Greed {expounded by men} has been a hidden factor behind these developments. Things are changing. The strategy of "remedial action" tends to isolate women's issue and women's programmes in the peripheries of development planning far from where the major decisions are made. Most importantly, it has segregated them from crucial economic and political resources directed at comprehensive development endeavours [Buvinic, 1983:24-29]. Women remain vulnerable. And must continue the tortuous struggle for access and demand for political, economic empowerment and acceptance.

Addressing the plight of women entails addressing national developmental issues. Cultural and religious taboos stand as stumbling blocks to the progress of women in society. When activist Tahani el-Gebali was appointed the first ever women judge in the Constitutional Court a few years ago, she came under heavy fire from conservatives and fundamentalists, who claimed that women are biologically and emotionally unfit to preside

over law courts, especially criminal courts. According to Egypt's First Lady, Suzanne Mubarak [MENA 2006:1] there was no discrimination between women and men in different laws adopted by the Arab countries. The problem lies in applying these laws, a matter which results in setbacks to the role of women in some societies. I am astonished that the issue of women's participation in public work is a question in the 21<sup>st</sup> century".

In the same vein, Prof. Souad Saleh, Dean of the Faculty of Islamic and Arabic Studies, Al-Azhar University, stresses "*the Holy Qumran does not oppose women working in the judiciary: nor does the Sunna {the Prophet Mohamed's teachings and deeds} oppose this: and therefore, nothing wrong in appropriately qualified women working as judges, even in the criminal courts*". The saga and plight of women continues unabated notes Prof. Amna Nosseir: "*Muslim women are victims of a deep rooted cultural and social heritage, which forces them to play second fiddle to men*" [Arishie 2006:2]. Considerable mindset and change is required to place women on the plus side of the development agenda especially in transitional polities still engulfed in deep-rooted traditional virtues. Modernisation can still be embarked upon without destroying traditional values.

Considerable interest in women empowerment and development generated since Mexico 1975 over the years has given rise to a multitude of well-informed women specific related activities both governmental and nongovernmental – at local, national, continental and global levels. The purpose has been to help redress imbalances in some of the inequities and neglect suffered by women and marginalised groups in the process of social, economic, cultural and political transformation. The process of sustainable transformation must engulf all not part of society. Hence the effective utilisation of a country's human resources requires that all social groups share equally in the development efforts and in the distribution of benefits.

Three decades down the Mexican road, and fifty years after independence, the path of women empowerment and integration into mainstream development process can rightly be questioned? Policy-makers face many difficulties in formulating policies, strategies and programme to achieve the goals of women empowerment and social equality. Among them is the need to overcome deeply ingrained prejudices and assumptions about female gender's roles, such as the belief that their highest position is the kitchen, as children bearing objects, or satisfying men's chores and needs: and that policies benefiting men will automatically benefit women through shared household resources, or that promoting the integration of women into employment generating schemes cannot be justified where there is significant male under-unemployment. Assumptions such as these obscure the critical importance of women's social, economic and political contributions in the development process. And it greatly affects women's economic needs especially in low-income households. The continent is littered with these low-income households with the majority living under the USA \$1 per day threshold as the minimum basic limit for existence. Women suffer the most and bear the greatest burden of the development process.

The tragedy of the African continent is clear and keeps multiplying and constitutes the linchpin of its underdevelopment and global exclusion. The tragedy to deliver new sunshine opportunities did not work. Africa has culturally been a patriarchal society and leadership the domain of men. Consequently, Africa continues to face decline. Even though the continent is privileged to have a female Head of State from Liberia, five deputy/vice presidents from Uganda, Gambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Burundi,

where women hold senior ministerial positions argue well for more women in top decision-making positions in African countries. More African women need to be empowered to assume political leadership by abiding to the Beijing Platform for Action, with 30% representation of women at all levels of decision-making positions.

So far, Tanzania is the first African country to include a 20% quota representation for women in its national constitution of 1998 [Articles 78, 81 & 82 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, available at the following website [<http://www.Tanzania.go.tz./constitutionf.html>]. The constitution of Burundi [2005] has a 30% representation for women and the Local Government act Section 4(3) of 2004 in Lesotho reserves one-third of local government electoral divisions or seats for women. The appointment of Mrs Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as Nigeria's first female Minister serves as a credible example. The combination of building capacity, holding [positions of authority, insights into involved political processes has been most effective in the East African region which as of now has the highest level of women in governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. Regional average of African women in governance show East Africa at about 28%, Central Africa, 11%; Horn of Africa 15%; Southern Africa 18% and West Africa 12% [See the following: <<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>> [Women in Parliaments: World Classification.]

However, market reforms are not changing the situation for the better either. Rather, conditionalities reinforced exploitation and underdevelopment. Absence of gender issues as integral part of the development agenda undermines progress. Disparity between men and women is common throughout the continent. Drawing from the Tanzanian situation, out of a population of 34.569.233, women constitute 17.658.911, based on the 2002 National Population Census. Women remain under represented, at all levels, not only, in the public service, but in the private sector as well. For example, by 2006, statistics show the following, see Table 1.

<b>Table 1.</b>	
<b>State of Art in Tanzania: Percentage of Women in the Public Service</b>	
Women Permanent Secretaries	29.67
Deputy Permanent secretaries	13.3
Women Commissioners	24.0
High Court Women Judges	21.0
Directors	28.0
Ambassadors / High Commissioners	9
Ministers	21
Members of Parliament	30.4
Regional Commissioners	14
District Commissioners	25
Administrative Secretaries	15
District Executive Directors	21
<b>Source: "Status of Women in the Public Service": Gender Newsletter Vol. 2 Issue No. 1. June 2006</b>	

The situation in Tanzania is far better when compared to that of Cameroon. There is no female Governor out of 10: There use to be a lone female Vice-Chancellor out of six state

universities: Fewer than six female cabinet members out of 67 and less than 20 out of 180 members of Parliament. The list continues in respect of the number of Director Generals in state corporations, Secretary Generals or Permanent Secretaries in Ministries; Senior District / District Officers; Commissioners of Police, Army Generals, Senior magistrates and judges of the Supreme Court among others. Cameroon has a long way to attain the Beijing quota of ensuring that women hold 30 percent of decision-making positions. The positive progress in Cameroon is non-existence of a discriminative salary scale between men and women in the public sector {civil service}. This is in line with the philosophy of the founding president of Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjo propagating the ideal of 'social promotion'; *"the new Cameroon we wish to build, when it is achieved, will offer equality of opportunity in social development for all the people of Cameroon. What is essential is that every one of us should, in activities that are commensurate with his/her capacities, have the possibility of living a decent and full human life with the opportunity for a genuine development of his/her own personality"* [April 1976, statement in Nkondjock].

In lower level jobs in the public service women in Tanzania occupy the following:

- Child Day care assistant [100 %]
- Typist Grade 1: [94.1%]
- Telephone Operators Grade 11 [91.2%]
- Maternal and child Health Aid 11 [98%]
- Personal secretary 11 [91.2%]
- Library Attendant 11 [76.2%]

These figures compared to higher-grade jobs show the disparity of position held by women compared to men.

**Table 2: Percentage Positions of Women in High-grade Jobs**

- %]
- Assistant Commissioner of Police [9.8%]
- Veterinary Officer 1 [7.7%]
- Irrigation Technician 111 [2%]
- Executive Engineer 11 [2.85]
- Education Officer 1 [25%]
- Accountant 1 [23.7%]
- Planning Officer 111 [18.9%]
- Auditor 111 [11.4%]
- Trade officer 1 [14.8%]
- Engineer 11 [13.4%]
- District Magistrate 11 [20%]
- Accountant 11 [22.2%]
- Agricultural / Livestock Research Officer 1 [21%]
- Agricultural Officer 111 [9.8

{Source: Status of Women in the Public Service: Gender Newsletter. Vol. 2. Issue No. 1. June 2006}

Some of these draw backs can equally be attributed to factors hindering women's ascent to senior decision-making positions which include among others, the following:

- *Low level of Education*
- *Low level of confidence among women*
- *Lack of interest to leadership positions*
- *Lack of information about potential women or role models within and without the country.*

Therefore, appropriate measures are necessary in building female resources capacity to enhance participation in top decision-making position and these include:

- *Capacity building by training women to acquire required qualifications*
- *Changing mindset of the population through gender sensitisation, gender mainstreaming and women empowerment*
- *Ensure that information on vacancies reaches the wider population of women*
- *Cooperation and coordination between different ministries, especially President's Office, Public service management, Ministry of Women affairs, Community Development. Higher Education and Vocational Training concerning gender mainstreaming*
- *Need for up-to-date information about women that will improve the quality of decisions with regard to gender issues*
- *Request to development partners to waive age limit required to pursue further education especially post-graduate studies to better enable women above 35 years to benefit from sponsorship*
- *Development of transparent mechanisms for recommending women to decision-making positions [See Gender Newsletter Vol. 2 Issue No. 1. June 2006].*

## **5: Adapting to Underlying Structural Changes**

It has often been argued [Gerschenkron 1962] that late-comers have something of an advantage over early starters since the former could benefit from the accumulated experience of the latter and thereby reduces the time-lag and costs needed to catch up. This is true to a certain extent, which does not fit, in contemporary global situation guided by a knowledge-based economy. Africa has not benefited from being a latecomer. Science and technology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been greatly revolutionalised. Technological innovation today is advancing at a much faster rate: and the social, institutional and physical technological developments are more demanding. More than ever before, technology is now the driving force of economic growth.

Human capacity plays a leading role in the process. This is why countries lacking natural resources compete in global market better than countries with natural resources but lacking in human capacity to give added value to their resources base. It is in pursuance of the need to push forward with technological innovation that competition between developing and developed countries is most keenly felt today. The state should play a leading role in development but in partnership with other actors [Lumuba-Kasongo, 2002] such as civil society and the private sector.

Therefore, the African developmental state must seriously embark on developing its human resources capacity, giving greater recognition to the role of female gender in the development process, building its scientific and technological capacity, and knowledge production. Without the requisite human capacity, value neither added to its potential resources nor makes the country competitive in global economy. Beeson {2003} notes that the core component of a successful developmental state, is a policy activism of a part of the government through investment incentives, subsidies and the like to accelerate the development process – in short, partnership with civil society and the private sector with a focus to improving the living standard of the people, especially, the currently poor and excluded.

Failure to develop a working dialogue with other stakeholders – civil society and the private sector - unable to redress the plight of the poor and meet the great expectations of the society is what leads to “failed and rouged states” in Africa can that bleak trend be redressed? By whom, how and when?

Gloomy as the picture undoubtedly is, it is important to remember that it is not the only picture. Some developing countries have braved the tide, achieved and sustained some remarkable rates of growth since the 1970s, which some have used to uplift the living standard and improved on the misery that plaguing their societies, [Botswana. Mauritius, Seychelles for example]. These countries have gone through these developmental phases under formally democratic conditions of varying degrees. Their experiences provide lessons for others. While others with growth have only sunk into deep underdevelopment due to poor policies and bad governance.

Since independence, as especially within the past decades, Africa has succeeded in creating millionaires at the expense of impoverishing millions of women who bear the burden of failed development policies: the result of the greedy attitude of men, who continue to misinterpret traditional values and cultural taboos in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The theories are there but the male dominated world lacks the political will to implement policies that promote issues of inclusiveness and social justice and distributive equity.

## **6: Where Do We Go From Here?**

Given the clear implications of current trends, the question must be raised whether a widening of the income gap between nation states of the order of magnitude mentioned above is realisable and sustainable on moral, economic and political grounds. Africa states should by now realise that while the underlying dynamics of the growth process as it exists today is ineluctably dividing the world ever sharply into separate and unequal camps of haves and have-nots, the situation is **even** worse for the continent’s poor who are constantly pushed to the fringes of abject poverty ad neglect.

There is need to articulate new development strategies, drawing lessons from countries that once below the development standards have over taken the continent, bringing on board the factors or stakeholders in pushing forward the development process that must oscillate on the platform of State, Civil society and Private sector intercourse; building on the strength and natural resources potentials of the region; developing its human and institutional capacity bases among others. A development strategy that evolves on the modalities of participating, partnership, responsibility and benefit-sharing among the key

stakeholders {state, civil society, the private sector} without of course, forgetting the international community. Africa is no longer an island but part of the evolving global community.

Africa cannot develop leaving behind the female gender. Women must be better equipped with aims at increasing skills, visibility and contributions to science, technology and development of women in all related fields. Human capacity development contributes directly to the Millennium Development Goal to promote gender equality and empowerment. A Gender Diversity and Empowerment Policy Strategy [GDEPS] remain inevitable. Recognising that many talented girls / women drop out of sciences as they move up the ladder, and those who remain are less likely to attain leadership positions, drastic policy measures are needed to inject a recovery approach.

If Africa is ever to see progress in the fight against hunger and underdevelopment, it must repair this leaky pipeline. Solutions will come all the more quickly if African states stop wastage of human talents and capacity by bringing women's experience to the laboratory. The voice of women from rural and urban areas is important because they work closely with issues fundamental to our existence - food production and in the informal sectors and they know and are better equipped to make a difference. Policy measures should be addressed in that direction.

The incorporation of the marginalized groups, and how they contribute in development, will be the Achilles heel determining how viable in the long run, Africa can develop a developmental state and organised its people and nation states diverging ever further in income levels and standards of living. The future is not written in stone. Many paths are possible. But the right path must be selected. Let us examine these closely as we can envision a better future for Africa. What Next? What type of state do we want for the continent? What role must women play in the state? Is the developmental state in Africa being a replication of western state system? Or would modernisation create a process of a promised progressive wave of economic, social, and political transformation that would catapult African states into the global centre stage of competition, productivity, judicious use of time, quality livelihood for the vast majority of the population and playing a central role in world affairs.

## **7: Conclusion – The New Way Forward.**

The issue of Africa's developmental state should vigorously be revisited with a view in redressing the continent's current predicaments. No doubt, Africa within its short independence history has made significant and tremendous strides. These achievements could be greater if a clearly defined approach had been adopted by either; {a} exploiting the natural resources of the continent for the benefit of its people; {b} adopting a process of planned public, civil society, private or combined mobilisation of resources and technology in the promotion of economic growth to ensure social and political progress for the good of all; {c} development as structural change imply a shift in the structure of an economy, and its output from primarily agricultural to being primarily industrial – in short, industrialisation; or modernisation; and {d} modernisation, seen as the fundamental structural changes and processes of all human societies developing from simple forms of traditionalism to complex expressions of modernity or a convergence in economic, social and political properties and processes; and development in human

societies understood as process of progressive and revolutionary change giving way to the next set of social and political relations and so on involving a series of revolutions in the mode of production and exchange [Huntington 1971; Weiner 1985; Arndt 1987; Cowen & Shenton 1996:56; Marx & Engel 1888/1958:35; Leftwich 2000].

Whatever development approach adopted, it requires an ideological orientation and the involvement of the people as driving forces for change. A great draw back in the early stages of the continent's quest for structural and developmental change was the neglect of women. Fifty years down the lane, the situation has changed significantly as the UN Commission on the Status of Women has pushed forward the rights and prerogatives promised at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women. Non-state actors have played a significant part in the process. The full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is an essential agenda for the continent to achieving the agreed development goals, including those contained in the millennium Declaration, aimed at further improving women's status.

What is clear is that women won independence for Africa. Men enjoy that independence. How many women are among the new millionaires emerging daily since the introduction of SAP and now the debt relief syndrome? The Structural Adjustment Programme and its bedfellow "*Debt Relief*" has created millionaires but impoverished millions of women who bear the burden of failed development policies. These failed development policies are the results of the greedy attitude of men who continue to misinterpret tradition and culture in ways that sustains their self-centred interests. Many theories of development will emerge, but the male dominated county, continent and world would continuously lack the political will to implement policies that empower women to be complimentary actors in the development process. It takes two to tango. Men and women must tango to attain balanced and sustainable development.

Of course, African women have made tremendous progress in the short span of the independence of the continent. More could have been achieved if open door developmental policies were put in place and the policy makers adopted a different attitude and approach. Interesting, African countries have ratified global protocols that aim to increase gender equality in all spheres to ensure that women, men, girls and boys participate and benefit equally from the development process. Unfortunately, despite, these ratifications and existing efforts to achieve gender equality, effective participation of women in governance structures and [processes as well as gender equity in governance outcomes is still limited in most African countries. A change in mindset, subjectivity and bias is required to deal with subjectivity, mistrust and the wrongs in people's perception of their identity as well as to scientifically and objectively reveal the gendered fault-lines in works of gender studies.

A depth of diversity and research is gradually emerging on the African continent in the field of gender empowerment, and entitlements through critical discussion of issues, resistance and male dominance. The emerging momentum on gender and developmentalist discourses; discontinuities and connectivity's highlight gender related issues that should force consensus to move the society forward. The dynamism of women's locations suggests the need to perceive structures at local and international levels that should position women in particular ways, and to explore women's own movements of resistance and adaptation

and to properly equip them with necessary skills that would enable them to take up the challenge from a more positive and reward angles.

In spite of the many achievements of the Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action, some draw backs, gaps and challenges that persist can be identified, such as:

- Women's disproportionate representation among the poor
- The high prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS among women
- The low level of women's participation in decision-making at various levels
- Continued violence against women, including trafficking in women and children
- Gender stereotyping
- Persistent cultural taboos
- Poor gender human capacity development
- Lack of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics
- Disproportionately high poverty levels among women and insufficient access to or control of economic resources

On the positive side of the equation, the status and role of women has undergone significant changes on a national, continental and global scale, although not at an equal pace in all countries, regions and continent. Large gap remains between policy and practice in promotion of gender equality. With civil society enjoying recognition as the voice of the poor, it can only play an important role in shaping our future views of key issues that to date have been lumped together under the broader concept of development. It is the argument of this paper that the challenge{s} facing the developmental state in Africa and the role of women in the process, existing imbalances should be adequately redressed to give the region a significant role in the fast emerging knowledge based global economy.

What went wrong is history but lessons should be learned from the past. Importantly in this respect, is to perceive development as a process that involves all, and tends to be reduced to the setting of specific policy goals and adopting of mechanisms to achieve them. The challenge now is for the public sector as the largest governance structure responsible for spear-heading and facilitating socio-economic development; should ensure the governance structures of the nation that include public and private sectors, and civil society are actively engaged in the process of establishing a developmental state and promoting female gender empowerment to ensure a sustainable development process.

The scale of human suffering in Africa and in an increasingly rich, technologically advanced, informed, and networked world is made more disturbing by a sense among many that such sufferings cannot be helped. In short, women should continue to remain behind men. This kind of thinking can never address the most pressing problems of the continent, and leaves little room for more innovative and far-reaching solutions. Issues of a comprehensive human capacity development and awareness creation within society provide an obvious path for women empowerment. Given that the majority of the African population still look to the public service for provision of essential services such as education and health, which is critical for sustainable human development, strong emphasis should be focused on developing female human potential and equipping them in the development of the state.

African countries should build on these positive achievements while making serious and committed efforts in redressing existing gaps in building a developmental state for the common good. It implies bringing women from the minus to the plus side of the development continuum. Women must intensify efforts and on their critical advocacy role for their inclusion in all aspects of national development agenda. There is need to see more intellectual discourses on gender empowerment. Just as mentality change especially on holding on to traditional taboos should shift towards embracing positive change as part of human development. Africa needs a comprehensive reconstruction process that is inclusive and with redistribution equity. Africa has failed in these two counts –inclusiveness and equity in redistribution.

Finally, there can be no socialist path to development when women are viewed as non-essentials or non-contributors to the development process. Bridges must be constructed across existing male-female divide to accelerate the process of sustainable development: and to rightly place Africa within the context of an emerging knowledge-based global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. Therefore, women empowerment and human capacity development are not formed by decrees or by the stroke of a pen. The moral commitments that constitute the core of women empowerment and human capacity development evolve only in the context of meaningful human interaction, understanding, cooperation and bridge building across the various divide. Though gender issues of marginalisation can be taken as universal, the particularise in Africa remains different: highlighting African epistemologies and cultural taboos and belief systems, colonial legacies, and other current issues, dilemmas and challenges in understanding and articulating the way forward for gender research and solutions to the problems.

The new development process in Africa must come from bottom-up with strong emphasis on improving critical indices as human resources development; mobilisation and proper utilisation of natural resources and the economy; mobilisation of national savings, proper use of energy and ICTs penetration into all sectors of national life; improving productivity and quality product; good governance and functional institutions, good leadership and a responsive but vibrant civil society among others. Despite the calls for alternative paradigms, it can be difficult to break out of the development mole. Up lifting representation of women in positions of decision-making women and general empowerment will enable women to strive to overcome social barriers, traditional barriers and taboos that constraints their vital input roles in the development process. This is important for the sustainable development of the continent. Africa has no choice but to continue building the on path of gender empowerment.

Recent developments in Liberia, South Africa and other parts of the continent show that the female gender is on the path of attaining broad-based social equality in all aspects of societal development and change. Should not the rest of the continent build and improve on the steps taken so far? The challenge now is using the Millennium Development Goals as the structural basis for a new developmental approach and dynamism for gendering gender issues and empowerment in the development process.

## **8: Recommendations**

- A home grown holistic approach to development is urgently needed for the sustainable transformation of African countries.
- Intellectuals and academia as the citadel for knowledge production, and modelling the next generation of leaders, should spearhead the new crusade for a developmental state, gender empowerment, and equality, inclusive and balanced development, with a priority goal of moving Africa from the ghetto of a Third World into a paradise of the First World.
- Development of a decision-making system that allows the full use of the skills and capacity of human resources in all sectors of national development with a special focus on women to ensure balanced development as well as facilitate higher levels of productivity and competitiveness.
- Articulate a long-term vision that underpins National Development Plans within the context of the total realisation of the Millennium Development Goals {MDGs} as the vision for consolidating societal transformation.
- Encourage the triple heritage of state, civil society and private sector partnership in the development process.
- Ensure an active, vocal academic community, a vibrant civil society and a productive private sector as partners in development with the State.
- Intensify rigorous intellectual debates and general awareness creation on the importance of female gender empowerment, equalities and rights of people in society.
- Amendments to existing constitutions should guarantee Gender Equality, as happened in South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia
- The media needs to improve the status of women by creating greater awareness [knowledge production and knowledge consumption] on women's issues to hasten change in customs, beliefs and values, accelerate, and promote sustainable socio-economic transformation processes in society.

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