

# UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN



## THE TWO HUNDRED AND NINETY-THIRD (293<sup>rd</sup>) INAUGURAL LECTURE

### “BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING FOR AFRICAN WOMEN: INSIGHTS FROM GENDER STUDIES”

*By*

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Chairmanship of:**

**The Vice-Chancellor**

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## **Courtesies**

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Head of the Department of Sociology,  
Heads of other Departments and Units,  
Academic and Non-Academic Staff of the University,  
My Lords, Spiritual and Temporal,  
Distinguished Invited Guests,  
Gentlemen of the Press,  
Students of the Department of Sociology and other Students here present,  
Great Students of the University of Ilorin,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

## **Preamble**

If I have a thousand tongue to sing, it will not be enough to praise God. I give glory to Almighty God, for sparing my life to witness today. It is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in my sight. I was born into a large family, dominated by girls, and from people's belief then, there was no need to train us because we were going to end up in the kitchen. However, the purpose of God for our lives was different and He gave us reasons to praise His name.

Vice-Chancellor Sir, permit me to give a brief of my background. This will give you and my audience a deep sense of understanding of my passion for the gender roles. I was born, in the mid sixties, in Iludun-Oro to the esteemed family of Chief

Abraham Binuomoyo Babatunde and Madam Maria Wuraola Babatunde (of blessed memory). My early education began at St. James Anglican Primary School, Iludun-Oro, in 1972, and I finished in 1978. I was admitted into Ilofa Grammar School, Iloffa in 1978 and graduated in 1983. I proceeded to the Kwara College of Technology between 1983 and 1985, for my Advanced Levels Studies. In 1985, I applied for B.Sc. Public Administration at the University of Ilorin, through Direct Entry. Because telephone was not common at the time and means of communication were limited, I did not know that admission process was almost up. I woke up one Monday morning and discussed with “Ba mi” that I wanted to go to Ilorin to see my uncle, who was then the Vice-Chancellor at the University of Ilorin.

On getting there, I went straight to Prof. Samuel Afolabi Toyé’s Office. After explaining the purpose of my visit, he sent for the then Admission Officer, Mrs. Dupe Aiyedun. The Vice-Chancellor briefed her about my admission request. She checked her file and explained that the quota for Public Administration has been exhausted, but there were still spaces in Sociology. My first question to her was: “What is Sociology?” She took time to explain to me the prospect of Sociology as a course of study, and that was how I was admitted as one of the third set of students in the then newly created Department of Sociology at the University of Ilorin. I graduated with a Bachelor degree in 1988. After my National Youth Service Scheme, I secured employment under the Kwara State Teaching Service Commission and was posted to Omupo Grammar School, Omupo in 1990 as Education Officer 11. The next fourteen years were spent in various secondary schools as a government teacher while I rose to the position of Chief Education Officer in 2004.

In between this period, I obtained two Master degrees from the University of Ilorin: Master in Public Administration (1996) and Master in Sociology (2002). I was encouraged by my mentor (Prof. Bashir Salawu, God bless his soul), to put in for Ph.D. Sociology, which I did in 2002 and graduated in 2010. Thereafter, I applied for transfer of service into the University,

and joined the service of the University of Ilorin as an Assistant Lecturer in 2005. Through teaching, research and community service, I rose through the ranks to become a Professor of Sociology in 2020. To God be the glory!

## **Introduction**

The first Inaugural Lecture in the Department of Sociology of this great University was delivered by the late Professor Johnson Adeyemi Sofola, the first Head of Department of Sociology and Social Administration, as it was then known, on the 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1988. The title of his lecture was **“Cultural Self-knowledge and the Cultural Self-appreciation for True Development in Nigeria”**. The second one, titled **“Work, Industry and Society: The Synergy that Mirrors the Reality of our Everyday Existence”**, was presented by Professor Noah Yusuf on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. The third was delivered by Late Prof. Bashir Salawu, who by providence became my supervisor and guided me through my Ph.D. thesis. I pray the good Lord will continue to uphold the entire family he left behind. The title of his lecture was **“Fixing the Thorns in Our Roses: Sociological Imagination for Sustainable Development”**. This was delivered on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2023. My own lecture is the fourth in the series, and the first by a female Professor in the Department of Sociology, University of Ilorin. The title of the lecture, **“Breaking the Glass Ceiling for African Women: Insights from Gender Studies”**, is chosen and suggested by my research interest, and also influenced by my past relationship with gender issues over the years.

## **Concept of Gender, Gender Role and Women Gender Role**

Gender can be defined as socially and culturally constructed notions of maleness and femaleness as distinctively opposed to biologically defined male and female sex. While sex refers to the biological differences between male and female, gender is a broad analytic concept, which highlights women’s roles and responsibilities in relation to those of men (Okeke, 1999). The term “gender” refers to those characteristics of women and men that are socially and culturally determined- that is, the different

behaviour, roles, expectations and responsibilities all women and men learn within the context of their societies. If this concept is situated within the African society, it can be deduced that male and female are expected to perform different roles within the society.

Gender roles are therefore products of socialisation, or the way by which individual learn what behaviours are considered appropriate in society. Gender roles vary in different societies, but hardly is there any society where there is equal balance between men and women in their role expectations. In almost all societies, what is perceived as masculine has more value and a higher ranking than what is perceived as feminine. Most times, male gender is given greater social and economic rewards. Thus, gender is the source of the inequality in many societies. Some of my researches have corroborated this position (**Adekeye, 2006; Salawu & Adekeye, 2010; Adekeye, 2013**).

Women's gender role revolves around characteristics such as helpfulness, passivity and kindness. Traditionally, women are seen as care givers, nurturers, homemakers and helpers, while men's gender roles revolve around characteristics such as dominance, assertiveness and strength, and include bread winner, leader and protection. These concepts were internalised and practiced by traditional African men and women.

### **Concept of Gender Studies**

Gender studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that examines how gender, sex and sexuality interact with other aspects of identity like race, class and religion and how they shape social structure, identities and power dynamics. Sivakumar (2024) defined it as an academic field that explores the social, cultural and biological aspect of gender and sexuality. It examines how gender identity and roles are constructed and how they intersect with other categories like race, class and sexuality. Therefore, Gender Studies analysis the impact of gender on different areas of life, such as politics, economics, education, health and religion. It is broader than women studies because it includes men, women and transgender; even as it investigates the nature of gender and thereby help society and individual to



establish healthy gender-related expectation and models of identity. The outcome of gender studies researches are to influence public policy and promote legal reforms that support gender equality and protect the rights of marginalised groups

### **Concept of Glass Ceiling**

The word “Glass Ceiling” was coined by Marilyn Loden in 1978 to refer to the invisible barriers to success that many women come up against in their career. The term has since been expanded and redefined to include minority experience. According to Akkaya (2020), glass ceiling is usually a result of unconscious bias, innate beliefs about ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, social class and religion. In the opinion of Babic and Hansez (2021), glass ceiling refers to discriminatory barriers that prevent women from rising to position of power and responsibility and advancing to higher position within an organisation simply because they are women. It is because of these barriers that women are more likely to face restricted access, limited opportunities, low esteem and low compensations in many areas of human endeavours especially in the developing world.

The United Nations Department of Labour in 1991 established Glass Ceiling Commission to address concerns about obstacles hindering the progress of women and minorities. The Commission’s task was to identify barriers and recommend policies to enhance diversity at management and executive levels of companies. Following the recommendations from the Glass Ceiling Commission, the Glass Ceiling Index of 2017 indicated that the gender gap is becoming narrow in the developed countries such as US, Germany, Japan and Turkey, but the same thing cannot be said of African countries. The belief of women glass ceiling is similar to the patriarchal thinking, where a woman’s place is believed to be in the kitchen. Hence, when given a chance to work, it has to be in a similar environment, where she will be taking order and instructions, and not the other way round. Breaking the glass ceiling, therefore, means overcoming the barriers set to prevent access to advancement,

and also removing barriers for others that are experiencing the same struggles.

### **Theoretical Framework of Gender Roles**

Theories are very important in Sociology, because they form the anchor on which all the interactions experience in every society are based. Therefore, there is the need to discuss some of the theories that explain glass ceiling. Two of the classical theories in Sociology, Functionalism and Conflict theories explained glass ceiling, especially in the family, and by extension, the larger society. The Functionalist perspective sees society as a complex system, whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. Talcott Parsons, one of the proponents of functionalism, belief that a clear division of labour between men and women is essential for the stability and efficiency of the family and the society. He argued that men perform “instrumental roles” as the family’s breadwinner, focusing on tasks and providing material support, while women perform “expressive roles”, which involves emotional support, nurturing and maintaining the home. Parsons believed this complementary division of labour created a stable and efficient nuclear family structure, with each gender fulfilling necessary and distinct functions, to have a harmonious society. The theory has been criticised for justifying gender inequality by portraying discriminatory roles as natural and beneficial, without acknowledging the power imbalances that they create and secondly for reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes and limiting individual opportunities, particularly women, without envisaging the significant changes in gender roles in modern society.

The Conflict Theory, on the other hand, explain glass ceiling as a result of power imbalances in the family and the society. The theory argued that family as social institution, can reinforce social inequality rather than provide stability, because the family, as an arena of power struggles driven by competition for limited resources like money and status. It suggests that family reinforces social inequality by transmitting wealth and opportunities unequally, and that patriarchal structures within

families create imbalances, where men often hold more power and authority, particularly in traditional family model. Conflict can arise from unequal division of labour, financial control and different expectation from family members. The Conflict Theory has been criticised for over emphasising conflict and inequality, but often neglect positive aspect of family relationships.

The explanation of these classical sociology theories form the basis for the understanding of gender roles and glass ceiling in the family, and by extension, the society. However, the most recent theory to explain gender role and glass ceiling today is the Social Role Theory that was developed by Alice Eagly in 1987. According to her, behavioural sex differences arise from the differential social roles imbibed by women and men, especially those concerning the division of labour (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2007; Ajibade, Mordi, & Iwowo, 2021). Historically, because of economic, ecological, social, and technological pressures, women and men were assigned to tasks that were suitable to their physical attributes. Thus, naturally, men were more likely to fulfill tasks that required speed, strength, and the ability to be away from home for expanded period of time. On the other hand, because women were primarily responsible for childbearing, they were more likely to fulfill tasks related to home and family. As a result of these differential social roles being played by men and women, and on the basis of this division of labour, gender roles were developed around expectations about the characteristics and behaviours of women and men (Wood & Eagly, 2002; **Adekeye**, 2006; **Adekeye**, 2013).

Eagly and Karau (2002) explained further that these norms of behavioural predisposition over time tend to be considered desirable and accepted for each gender, which eventually form stereotypes that become the basis for typical social and organisational roles assigned to women and men. Furthermore, Eagly and Carly (2007) argued that these stereotypes formed the basis of most organisational policies, which were enacted by men dominated top management, which by its nature is skewed in favour of male gender at the expense

of their female counterpart. Thus, the Social Role Theory explains gender roles, authoritative roles, roles that are specific to situations, role switching, and stereotypes. Gender roles are therefore a reflection of the expectations that are associated with various roles of men and women in human societies.

Furthermore, the Social Role theory is relevant to breaking the glass ceiling for African women, because most African societies are patriarchal in nature. However, with the coming of the missionaries, technological advancement, education and improvement in health services, the traditional gender roles are changing (Maxamuud, 2011). Many women, today, have taken up jobs that were previously exclusive to men, and are breaking the barriers to reach the top of their career by breaking the glass ceiling.

### **Traditional Roles of African Women**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, it is pertinent at this juncture to mention some of the traditional roles of African women. Generally, in African societies, women play the role of helpmates offering companionship and friendship. Women sacrifice their personal ambitions and pleasure, and set certain standard that help to relieve the strain, stress and tension of their husbands. Another important role performed by women in the traditional Africa societies is the role of motherhood. They are responsible for giving birth to the young ones. They are majorly responsible for child upbringing and child's behaviour, and mothers are the first contact in the formative stages of children. Women also play the role of a teacher by passing on the cultural and social heritage to the children. The children are able to learn the norms and moral codes of the society, which play a key role in shaping the character of the children, such as being responsible, respectful and honest. One of the ways by which women achieve this is through inculcation of moral values through proverbs, songs, tales by moonlights (Rojas, 2017). For example, in the Western part of Nigeria, women gather the younger ones after food in the evening to tell them stories, from which lessons would be drawn.

Throughout history, women in Africa have played significant roles in the development of their communities, serving as caretakers, farmers, entrepreneurs and sometimes, warriors. Some of the titled women in African history include: Fatim Beye, Ndoeye Dembe and Ndate Yalla Mboji of Senegal, Moremi, Idia, Amina, Nana Asmau and Efunroye Tinubu, Funmilayo Ransom Kuti of Nigeria, Yaa Asantewaa of Ghana, Yennega of Bukina faso, Hangbe of Benin Republic, Makeda of Ethiopia and Nandi of South Africa, to mention but a few (Hunt, 1989). Lastly, women form part of the extended family that encompass multiple generations of individuals, including biological parents, children, in-laws, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins (Hessel, 2023). Extended families have common cultures, exhibit interdependence and share familial responsibilities, including child-rearing roles (Qizi, 2023). Typically residing together, extended family members pool resources and collaborate on family duties. Their multi-generational bonds and increased resources contribute to the resilience of the extended family, and their ability to meet the needs of the children (Mohangi, 2023).

### **Factors Responsible for the Change in Women's Cultural Role**

Vice-Chancellor Sir, many factors have contributed to the dynamics of the transition of women from the traditional to the modern society, and some of the factors that are responsible for this change will be highlighted. The first factor is the colonisation of Africa. The partitioning of Africa continent at the Berlin Conference of 1885 led to the colonisation of many African countries. The colonisers came with their culture and ways of doing things that were mostly different from African perspective; leading to cultural diffusion, which affected many aspects of African ways of life. According to Strobel (1999), the colonial era brought profound changes to African societies, including shifts in gender roles. Colonial powers introduced Western ideologies that often marginalised indigenous cultural practices, including traditional roles of women. This period

marked a transition towards more stratified gender roles influenced by colonial administration and Christian missions.

The colonial masters brought their own educational system and the spread of formal education empowered women with literacy and numeracy skills. Formal education was one of the major factors that enabled women to break down barrier of the glass ceiling (**Adekeye**, 2024). Education has given women the opportunity to become professionals in many fields of human endeavours; and the more educated a woman is, the more likely it is that she is going to venture into spheres traditionally considered as male areas. These factors have important implications for women's empowerment and their ability to contribute to the overall development of not only the household, but also the nation.

Another major factor that assisted women in breaking the glass ceiling is the mass participation in the work force. According to Global Gender Gap Report (2024), the percentage of women in work force around the world is 45.5%. The role of women in the urban and rural workforce has expanded exponentially in recent decades (**Adekeye**, 2009; **Adekeye**, 2010). This increment can be attributed to the efforts of women organisations over the past four decades. Many women organisations have successfully advocated increased political representation for women, improved access to education and economic opportunities, and a reduction in violence against women. The recognition of gender equality in development, influenced by international agreements like Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration of 1995, has played significant roles; just as various feminist movements also supported the enlightenment and women liberation. Therefore, some of the traditional beliefs about gender roles are gradually changing, and improving, with intercultural relationships, the education system, new technologies and scientific development (**Barker & Ricardo**, 2005).

## **Factors Responsible for Glass Ceiling and Barriers to Women Full Participation in all Sectors**

Many factors have contributed to the changing roles of women in the contemporary society. Despite the progress that has been made, women in African culture still face a number of barriers militating against their full participation, especially at the top echelon of social and economic organisations, which is normally attributed to glass ceiling (Sivakumar, 2024). Today, in many African countries, women are still under-represented in many areas such as politics, education, economy, religion and the problems in family institution affect women more than the other gender (**Adekeye**, 2015). Some of the barriers in the social institutions are discussed below

It is still an obvious fact that Patriarchal mentalities are still alive in most African countries. Cultural barriers are associated with prejudice and bias concerning gender roles. Women are saddled with major child-caring and elderly care responsibilities. She is also responsible for the greater part of the unpaid housework. Most of the time, being a mother is a job without a salary, promotion, day-off or overtime payment (**Adekeye**, 2009). The family institution is also encountering a number of social problems today, and women are mostly affected by the situation. Some of these problems include family disorganization, divorce, separation, annulment, living in empty-cell family, illegitimacy and disobedient children (**Adekeye**, 2006; Salawu & **Adekeye**, 2010; Raji, Raji, **Adekeye** & Abdulbaqi, 2019).

The participation of women in politics is also a matter of concern in gender studies. According to Dube (2022), historically, women have been disadvantaged in participating in politics. As of 2021, across Africa countries, there was 24% women representation in parliament. In Nigeria for instance in 2023, there are only 4(3.6%) out of 109 seats in Senate and 16(4.4%) out of 360 seats in the House of Representatives. There is no single female Governor out of the 36 Governors that we have in Nigeria. There are just six Deputy Governors out of the 36 of them. At the State level, no woman was elected into the

State House of Assembly in 15 States. This gross under-representation of women in politics and leadership positions are not unconnected with a number of barriers facing women. Some of these challenges include patriarchy, political violence, finance, low level of education, stigmatisation, religious barriers, cultural barriers, meeting at odd hours, high cost of registration forms for elective posts, sexist, and patronage based political culture (**Adekeye**, 2007).

To buttress the sexist nature of Nigeria politics, on the 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2024, during the plenary session, Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan commented on a motion without the permission of the Senate President, an action, which contravened the Senate Standing Rules. In response, the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, publicly reprimanded her, instructing her to seek permission before addressing the Chamber, asserting that the Senate floor is not a "night club." The choice of words and manner in which Senator Akpabio addressed Senator Natasha has been met with significant backlash from both traditional and social media circles. Many criticised the Senate President's remarks as vulgar, irresponsible, and demeaning; particularly considering his role as the third highest-ranking official in the country (This Day, 2024). Even though the Senate President apologised a week later to Senator Natasha, that episode is enough to discourage many women from going into politics.

Education serves as the foundation for acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, necessary for individuals to contribute meaningfully to their community. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 emphasised the importance of ensuring inclusive and equitable education, and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015). Despite this global emphasis on education, many African countries still maintain disproportionate gap in gender enrollment (**Adekeye**, 2011). The gender gap in enrolment across different regions is due to a number of problems facing the girl child, which include high rate of dropout of school, especially at primary and secondary school levels, unwanted pregnancy, child marriage, poverty, sex discrimination,



insecurity, and religious belief. Vice-Chancellor Sir, at our local level in 2024, out of 411 Professors that are permanent members of Senate at the University of Ilorin, only 76 are females, which is just 17.7% of the population, and this trend is not peculiar to the University of Ilorin, but it cuts across almost all the Nigerian universities.

In the economic sector, the plight of women cannot be over emphasised. It is true that there has been a steady increase in the number of women entering the labour force; but it has been observed that the rate of participation in terms of quality and quantity cannot be compared with their male counterparts. With education, women are allowed into the modern industrial sectors, but the majority of them are employed in secondary sectors that consist of service-oriented occupations, such as teaching, nursing and midwifery, social work, library, home economics, and catering services (Gwong, 1991). Most of the barriers militating against women's full participation in labour force, and especially at the primary sector of the economy, include education, African culture, beliefs and attitudes, unlimited procreation, motive to avoid success, house chores, religious practices, time budget, unemployment and under employment situations (**Adekeye**, Ajayi & Adeleke, 2020).

The religious institution is not exempted from the discrimination against women. For instance, religion, tradition or customs, such as the 'Pudah' system, prevents some women from contributing their quota to national development. Yakubu (2001) opined that the practice of pudah or keeping women in seclusion in the Northern Nigeria is regarded as part of cultural norms that has led to low participation of Hausa women in the industrial sector. This practice can be regarded as part of the barriers to women's full contribution to the economy. Apart from the issue of pudah, women are the largest members of many religious group, but they are to be seen and not to be heard. It is only in few instances that women are allowed to participate fully in all religious activities (Alanamu & **Adekeye**, 2009)

The same discrimination also exists in the health institution. Women face a number of challenges in relation to

their personal health, and in accessing quality health care. Some of the factors militating against the well-being of women include socio-economic constraints, cultural norms, religious belief, and geographical remoteness. There are times that women are disallowed from making decision about themselves, which had resulted into early marriage, genital mutilation and uncontrolled procreation. For instance, family planning is forbidden in the Catholic Church. In a study conducted by Hussain (2024), it was reported that, in many places in Northern Nigeria, men hold the primary decision-making power in the society; and the decision to go to health facility in emergencies must always wait until the husbands or in-laws give their consents. The above highlighted barriers are enough to discourage women; and many of these obstacles are detrimental to full participation and contributions of women to African national development. Despite the enumerated odds, many African women are breaking the glass ceiling and paving ways for their gender.

### **Benefits of Breaking the Glass Ceiling and Overcoming Barriers**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, let me mention the benefits of breaking and overcoming barriers. African women have experienced significant shifts in their roles from the traditional expectations to modern opportunities available in the economic, social, education and political landscape. The benefits include the following, among others. African women have enjoyed the benefit of empowerment, which has translated to more control of their lives and participation in decisions that affect them, thereby redressing power imbalances through the acquisition of skill, knowledge, confidence and the opportunity to claim and express their rights. According to Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2011), empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and transform the choices into desired actions and outcomes. Specifically, Batliwala (2007) opined that women empowerment entails transforming them economically, socially, psychologically, politically and legally. Contemporary women are more empowered than their traditional counterparts; partly because of increased access to education and

employment opportunities, which enable them to contribute significantly to household incomes and national economy. Thus, empowerment fosters economic growth and reduces poverty levels, thereby enhancing overall societal stability.

The issue of empowering women has, no doubt, become an integral part of the contemporary topics of interest in the realm of development and democratisation worldwide (**Adekeye**, 2013; **Adekeye**, 2015; **Adekeye & Ajayi**, 2020). For instance, the year 1975 through 1985 was declared by the United Nations as the "Decade for Women". The conferences held in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995, were all directed at discussing how to ensure good life for women. Other issues like violence against women, women's right as human rights, women's reproductive health, unpaid activities, and poverty, among others, were discussed during the conferences. Consequently, women empowerment has become one of the central themes in global treaties, conventions, and declarations, principally due to the understanding that it is a catalyst to the clear-cut development strategies that are targeted at poverty reduction, improved living standards, good governance and profitable productivity (Ejumubo, 2013).

In the area of politics, the Nigerian women folk, like their counterparts in other less developed countries, have proved to be more than a mere bench-warming spectators, even in the midst of the male dominated congregations (Gusim, 2012). Their prominent rise in professions like law, medicine and accounting, among others, is a strong indication of their indispensability to the society. There has been a notable increase in the political representation of African women. Some of the notable figures include former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who ruled between 2006 and 2018; Meaza Ashenafi, the first female Chief Justice of Ethiopia; Alice Banze from Mozambique, a member of the United Nation Women Leaders' Network. Jaha Dukureh, a renowned Gambian activist, and the regional United Nations Women Ambassador for Africa. Phumzile Mianbo-Ngcuka is a South African politician and the Under-Secretary General of United Nations from August 2013 to August 2021.

In Nigeria, there are a lot of distinguished women that can be regarded as astute politicians. During the colonial period, Funmilayo Ransom Kuti, Amelia Osimosu, Victoria Adetutu Soley and Nusratu Odunola, made history as the first set of women that were elected into the Egba Central Council in Abeokuta Province (Agunbiade, 2022). Since then, women have contested and won seats at Senate, House of Representative and State House of Assembly. Table 1 shows the number and percentages of women in Senate and House of representatives from 1999 to 2023 (Adekeye, 2025).

**Table 1:** Number and Percentages of Women in Legislative Arm between 1999-2023

Fourth Republic	Senate	Total	Percentage	House of Rep	Total	Percentage
1999	3	109	2.8%	13	360	3.6%
2003	4	109	3.6%	21	360	5.8%
2007	8	109	7.3%	27	360	7.5%
2011	7	109	6.4%	25	360	6.9%
2015	7	109	6.4%	21	360	5.8%
2019	7	109	6.4%	11	360	3.0%
2023	4	109	3.6%	16	360	4.4%

**Author's Compilation, 2025**

The four current female senators are Ireti Heebah Kingibe, Ipalibo Harry Banigo, Idiat Oluranti Adebule and Natasha Akpoti Uduaghan. Nigeria has also produced female Deputy Governors at different times. The Deputy Governors include Alhaja Latifat Okunu, Mrs. Pamela Sadaku, Alhaja Sinatu Ojikutu, Mrs. Cecilia Ekpenyong and Mrs. Titilayo Laoye Tomori. At the Supreme Court of Nigeria, two females have occupied the highest position of Chief Justice of Nigeria. They are Chief Justice Aloma Mukhtar 2012 to 2014, and the current Chief Justice of the Federation, Chief Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun.

Another important benefit of breaking the glass ceiling is glaring in the educational sector. There is a popular saying that if you educate a man, you have educated just one person, but if you

educate a woman, you have educated a nation. Women in Africa have made giant strides because of the improved access to education (**Adekeye**, 2007). Education equips them with skills to pursue careers and leadership roles. In the academics, there are lots of women that are contributing their quotas to the development of education at various levels. Dr. Raffaella Guzzelino is an educator, academic and a Professor. She is the first Dean of the Sea Campus of the Atlantic Technical University in Cape Verde. Since Professor Grace Alele Williams broke the jinx by becoming the first female Vice-Chancellor in University of Benin in 1985, more than thirty female professors have occupied the seat in various universities. Some of the current ones include; Prof. Florence Obi (UNICAL), Prof. Nnema Oti (FUTO). Prof. Ibiyemi Bello (LASU), Prof. Folashade Ogunsola (UNILAG) and from our own University community, Prof. Adenike Oladiji (Federal University of Technology, Akure), Prof. Olayinka Kareem (Fountain University, Osogbo), Prof. Nasmah Surajudeen Bakinde (University of Applied Science Engineering and Technology in The Gambia), and Prof. Medinat Folorunso Salman (Kwara State University of Education, Ilorin). As of the time of preparing this lecture, University of Ilorin has 76 female Professors of 411 Professors at University of Ilorin. This is possible because of the resilience and unwavering attitudes of present day women.

The benefit of breaking the glass ceiling and active participation of women in the health sector cannot be overemphasised. The availability of improved medical facilities enhances the quality of life and reduces maternal and child mortality rates. Today women are contributing significantly in the health sector. Many are fulfilling purpose in diverse areas such as teachers, doctors, nurses, health worker and social worker. Some of the noticeable women in the health sector include: Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng, who is a medical doctor and social and reproductive health and human right activist. She currently runs asexual health clinic in Sandton. In 2014, Dr. Ameyo Stella Adadevoh saved our nation from a deadly disease. She prevented Nigeria's first case of Ebola outbreak from

leaving her hospital after identifying the symptoms of the virus (May her soul rest in peace). A Nigerian female doctor in person of Dr. Amarachukwu Allison also identified the first case of COVID-19. Dr. Ebere Okereke is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the African Public Health Foundation with over thirty year's experience, and has worked in England, Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Trinidad and Tobago. Dr. Tochi Okwor is the Chairperson of Nigerian's Antimicrobial Resistance Coordination Committee and Head, the Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) Unit of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control. Dr. Chewu Luo is the Associate Director, Programme Division of HIV/AIDS Section in Zambia.

Many of the benefits of breaking the glass ceiling is evident among women in the world of Business and Entrepreneurship. Women have occupied leadership positions in the corporate world, and have reached enviable heights. They have contributed in diverse ways through strong leadership, skills and commitment to innovation. Their contributions are essential to driving economic growth and creating more equitable and inclusive society. The increasing number of the female in workplace has brought a number of benefits, such as exceptional communication skills, empathy, inclusiveness; efficient productivity and building strong relationship that has translated into creating a working environment that value collaboration and mutual respect (Dana, 2024). Examples of successful women entrepreneurs include Freda Duplan (Ghana), Ibukun Awosika (Nigeria), Rebecca Bestman-Harris (Liberia), Babyale Proscovia Arima (Uganda), Folorunsho Alakija (Nigeria); to mention but a few. In the corporate world, there are quite a number of women holding the leadership positions.

For instance, over ten women are currently Managing Directors and Chief Executive Officers in Nigerian Banks. These include Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe (Fidelity Bank), Yemisi Edun (First City Monument Bank), Halima Baba (Sun Trust Bank), Ireti Samuel-Ogbu (Citi Bank Nigeria Limited), Kafilat Araoye (Lotus Bank), Yetunde Oni (Union Bank), Tomi Somefun (Unity Bank), Bukola Smith (First Security House Limited, Merchant

Bank), Bolaji Agbede (Access Holding), Adaora Umeoji (Zenith Bank), and Mariam Olusanya (Guaranty Trust Bank).

In the media and entertainment industry, women are no longer taking the back seat; as they are contributing their quotas in print, broadcasting, social media, magazines, television, Internet and digital media. Women are also contributing to the entertainment world across Africa. There are a lot of them in Nollywood (Nigeria), Ghallywood (Ghana), Swahiliwood (Tanzania), Ugawood (Uganda), and Collywood (Cameroon). Examples of media personalities include Stella Bangura (Sierra Leone), Ame Oceane Codjia (Togo), Fatou Ellika Muloshi (Gambia), Mariam Colley (Gambia), Nadine Foetees (Cape Verde), Aminata Mody (Niger), Emily Joaf (Mali), Kadu Tuckar (Chad), Lady Amar (South Africa), Elizabeth Apampa (Togo), Modupe Ogun (Nigeria), and Morayo Afolabi-Brown (Nigeria). In the world of entertainment, examples include Josely Canfor Dumas (Ghana) Terry Pheto (South Africa), Menna Shalaby (Egypt), Vinbai Mutinhiri (Zimbabwe), Bonang Matheba (South Africa), Angeique Kidjo (Benin), Maria Borges (Angola), Wanuri Kahi (Kenya), Yvonne Nelson (Ghana), and in Nigeria, we have the likes of Genevieve Nnaji, Omotola Jolade-Ekehinde, Funke Akindele, Toyin Abraham Ajeyemi, Mercy Aigbe, Omoli Oboli. In the music industry, prominent names include those of Tiwa Savage, Yemi Alade, Seyi Shay, Omawumi, among others.

Another great benefit of breaking the glass ceiling is that there is now a paradigm shift from the traditional norms and stereotypes of women in term of expectations from the families and society. This cultural shift fosters respect for women's rights in many aspects, such as the right to vote, widow inheritance, and land inheritance for female. For instance, a woman filed a case against land inheritance denial and won at the Supreme Court. In 2014, the Supreme Court Judges, in the landmark case of **Ukeje V Ukeje** (2014) **LPELR-22724(SC)**, affirmed the rights of Nigerian women to inherit from their deceased parents, reinforcing constitutional provisions. This decision solidified a female's entitlement to her late father's estate. According to the unanimous judgment given on 14/04/2014:

*No matter the circumstances of the birth of a female child, such a child is entitled to an inheritance from her late father's estate. Consequently, the Igbo customary law which disentitled a female child from partaking in the sharing of her deceased father's estate is in breach of Section 42(1) and (2) of the constitution, a fundamental right provision guaranteed to every Nigerian. The said discriminatory customary law is void as it conflicts with Section 42(1) and (2) of the constitution (per Rhodes-Vivour, J.S.C. (P.25, Paras.B-C).*

The advancements in technology have connected African women to global networks, providing platforms for knowledge-sharing, entrepreneurship, and advocacy. Digital platforms enable them to amplify their voices, mobilise communities, and access global markets, thereby expanding opportunities beyond local confines. This has enabled the development of organisations that have brought greater connectivity among women and girls by providing worthy mentors. For example, the Association of African Women for Research and Development was established in 1977 for network and research. Womankind is an organisation established to pursue feminist global women's rights and works in solidarity with women's movement around the world to bring about lasting change in women's lives. The organisation was founded in 1989 with the objective of supporting women in their efforts to change discriminatory laws and policies. The organisation has supported over 18 million women and girls in more than 70 countries (Our Impact, Womankind, 2024). African women have also successfully promoted agreements that advanced their rights. By the end of 2023, 51 of the 53 AU member countries had ratified the Convention on the CEDAW, adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, and which is often described as the International Bill of Rights for Women.

The current contributions of women in various sectors of the society emanate from the determination to challenge stereotyping, and break barriers that impede them from reaching the pinnacle of their endeavours; but there is still room for



improvement. I have suggested ways to improve women participation in all societal institutions in my various research works through education, inclusive policies, improved capital formation, and resisting all forms of gender discriminations among others (**Adekeye**, 2006; **Adekeye & Mahmud**, 2007; **Adekeye**, 2010; **Adekeye**, 2015; **Adekeye & Adedeji**, 2024).

### **My Contributions to Knowledge**

Vice-Chancellor Sir, permit me to highlight some of my contributions to knowledge, since I joined the University in 2005. The issue of women experience, well-being and contributions has always occupied my mind, and it has dominated my research efforts. In all my research, I have discussed some cogent roles of the women folks and some of the problems militating against their full potentials. These research areas include Family, Politics, Economy, Religion, Education and Health.

#### *Improving Gender Relations in Nigeria: A Sociological Perspective*

The family institution is the bedrock of all societies and the sanctity of the institution determines most of the time, the quality of life in such society. A number of my researches were conducted to assess the contributions and challenges of women in the family institution. **Adekeye** (2006) conducted a study on the gender relations in Nigeria, which is patriarchal in nature, and therefore, male dominated. Therefore, whether in a matrilineal or patrilineal community, or whether in the upper or lower classes of society, men always impose themselves and insist on the subordinate status of women. This situation constitutes one of the problems of gender relations in many societies.

The study closely examined the gender relations in the Nigerian society and it revealed a lot of discrimination against women. Women experience gender inequality, simply because they belong to the female gender. The discrimination in Nigeria, like in other African societies, starts right from the womb. Girls, in some traditional Nigerian societies, are denied even the simple

right of existence in the minds of their fathers, who are the family heads, because they give special regard to boys. This is a clear indication of the boys' preference, detrimental to girls in the family. Gender divisions permeate all aspects of Nigerian life. It starts from the family institution. In some Nigerian communities, particularly in the closed, patrilineal communities, girls are considered to be transitory members of their families, because the ultimate aim of their parents is to marry them-off into other families. Male family members therefore try to take advantage of the transient nature of girls in their birth-homes to buttress the idea that they do not benefit their families, and are therefore, of less value to their birth families (**Adekeye**, Adeleke, Adeyemi & Adeleke, 2020). The study concluded that there should be cultural re-orientation towards equality of person, irrespective of sex, and that the Nigerian government should enforce the provisions of the international conventions on sex discrimination, being a signatory to the convention. The study advocated for improvement in gender relations in Nigeria families in order to discourage disparities among gender.

#### *Impact of Moral Decadence among the Youth in Nigeria*

**Adekeye** and Ajayi (2017) assessed the impact of the family institutions and other sociological factors on moral decadence among the Nigerian youths. The study identified biological and sociological factors responsible for the noticeable moral decadence among the youths. The study showed that parents and other members of the family are the primary source of socialisation in every community. It is through the home and parents that a child gets to know the language, culture, and the values of a given community. Parents are supposed to transmit the value of society to the child in order for him or her to fit well into the society. The extent to which a child is cultured, therefore, depends on the parents. That is why it is so often said that 'charity begins at home'. This view was also corroborated by Atkinson (2000), who stated that civilisation is a shared understanding, and the only way civilisation can maintain this understanding from generation to generation is by passing the understanding from parents to the children. The nature of the

understanding depends upon its founding values, which makes morality (the actual values adopted) the vital concern for parents, with the early experiences of infancy being the most critical for the formation of understanding in a child.

This means that the lessons taught to the infant during the first weeks or months of its existence are the most important, as every subsequent value must reflect those values already adopted by the maturing mind of the person. Once the foundation of values is set, it is for life, and the values taught during child socialisation become a permanent part of the adult's understanding. Other factors, such as peers, social media, science and technology, urban community, and poverty, have influenced the moral development of many children nowadays. These social changes have negative impact on the individual behaviour, and may in turn, lead to deviant behaviours, such as armed robbery, prostitution, and drug trafficking (**Adekeye & Ajayi, 2017; Adekeye, 2024**).

The study concluded that most of the accepted good moral values of African societies such as kindness, compassion, generosity, hospitality, faithfulness, truthfulness, and concern for others, which hitherto brought peace, justice, dignity, respect and happiness, are now being neglected. These moral values are now being replaced by attitude that are considered as bad morals, including drug or substance abuse, alcoholism, cultism, indiscriminate sex, violence, nudity, indecent dressing, prostitution, stealing, backbiting, selfishness, lying, adultery, rape, incest, murder, and suicide, which are signs of moral decadence, among today's youth. The study recommended that the family, teachers and religious leaders should serve as good role models and emphasised the need for general re-orientation for the youth in order to have a peaceful and orderly society.

### *Nigeria Women in Politics: Challenges and Prospects*

One of my researches also investigated the role and participation of women in politics. **Adekeye** and Mahmud (2007) focused on women participation in politics and acknowledged that gender disparity in politics is a global phenomenon. The study established that women participation in

politics can be taken as an index of the level of democratic politics in a country, since women often constitute half of the population of most countries. In Nigeria, the participation of women in politics has been generally low, which can be attributed to certain socio-cultural and economic factors. The study took a cursory look at the level of women involvement in democratic politics during the Fourth Republic (1999-2007). The study highlighted the fact that Nigerian women are in active politics, but mostly as voters, party supporters, and they usually attend political rallies in large numbers to listen to politicians. Despite their numerical strength, they are often being discriminated against and marginalised in politics.

An examination of the country's political climate in the early part of the Fourth Republic revealed that there was only one woman Deputy Governor (Mrs. Kofoworola Akerele Bucknor of Lagos State) among the 36 Deputy Governors, nationwide. There were also three female Senators (Stella Omu, Florence Ita Giwa and Khairat Abdul Rasaq-Gwadabe) in a Senate of 109 members, and 12 female members among the 360-member Federal House of Representatives, respectively. Out of the 36 Heads of the Legislative Houses in the country, only one, Mrs. Magraet Ishen, was the Speaker of Benue State House of Assembly. Of the 774 Local Government Party Chairmen in the country, there was only one female (Mrs. Esther Nakhcre Arnadasun). More importantly, out of 70 political (ministerial) appointees, less than 10 of them were women. In addition, out of more than 200 appointments into federal parastatals and government agencies, less than 20 women benefited from this largesse (Omede, 2002).

During the second part of the Fourth Republic (2003-2007), women occupied 13% of political positions at the Federal level, but at the State levels, in some cases, it was zero (Sunday Tribune, 2007). A cursory look at the political terrain during this period also showed that there were two Deputy Governors, among 36 Deputy Governors, nation-wide. They were Alhaja Salmat Badru, Ogun State; and Erelu Obada, of Osun State. Three women indicated their intention to vie for

the presidential position under the then ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2007 April Elections, but did not make it, as the position went to the men folks. Out of 474 Governorship aspirants, only nine were women, but none of them was elected as Governor. Of the 25 presidential aspirants, only one was a woman in person of Mrs. Moji Adekunle Obasanjo (The Nation, 2007). This scenario indicates the level of political consciousness of the nation.

The study identified a number of challenges that have constituted a clog in the wheel of women's active participation in Nigerian politics to include political violence in the Fourth Republic that served as inhibitive factor to women's active participation in politics, especially during the campaigns, and election proper. Since 1999, the political climate has been characterised by wave of assassinations, thuggery, electoral violence, and party clashes, among others. Given the abhorrence of women for violence, many women were discouraged from participating in elections. Another inhibition is the monetisation of the political process by the state and the political class, which serves as a disincentive to the participation of women in contesting for elective offices in the existing political parties. It was noticed then that the cost of nomination for elective positions is exorbitant. For example, gubernatorial aspirants from one of the prominent political parties were to pay a non-refundable nomination fee of N3 million each as at 1999.

Another great challenge facing women is the socialisation process. Socialisation of women, which has hitherto reflected the traditional roles they are expected to play in the society, is a strong constraint on their political participation. The fact that women, especially in Africa, like their counterparts elsewhere, are socialised to play a subordinate role to their male counterparts. This does not provide conducive atmosphere for effective and widespread participation of women in politics. The socialisation process also has the positive and negative reinforcement that has continued to hinder women participation in politics. Women, unlike their male counterparts,

are not likely to receive positive reinforcement for participation in politics, because it often conflicts with their traditional role. A good public office holder, for example, is expected to place public interest above private consideration in the exercise of one's public duties.

Tradition is another great constraint to full participation of women in politics. The traditional role of women is limited to that of domestic work, and this is paramount over every other issues. Such traditional belief include early betrothal of girls, which denies them the freedom of choice and social justice; female circumcision, which could lead to untimely death or damage of the genital; early marriage, which exposes women to health hazards such as Visco Virginal Fistula (VVF); widow inheritance, which reduces women to mere property to be inherited by men and degradation of widows. In order to enhance women's full participation in future politics, the study recommended an increased level of public awareness on politics among women in order to provide information and motivate them to join politics. In addition, women education is a very strong instrument for effective political participation (**Adekeye**, 2007; **Adekeye**, 2010; **Adekeye**, 2015).

#### *Women Participation in Modern Labour Force: A Overview of Some Barriers in Nigeria*

I have also carried out some researches relevant to the development of our economy. In the world of work, women have contributed, and are still contributing to the development of the economy and the nation in general, despite the various obstacles in the world of work. **Adekeye** (2009) investigated some of the barriers militating against women's full participation in modern labour force. There has been an increase in the employment of women into the labour force in many countries. In Nigeria, there has been a steady increase in the number of working class women, despite the popular saying that "a woman's place is in the home". Very few families today can do without the additional income of the wife or fulfill all the social and

economic obligations of the family solely from the husband's income.

Women played many roles in the traditional sector, but the participation dropped drastically with the introduction of modern economic and employment system. They constitute about half of the population, but their participation in modern workforce is less than half, due to a number of factors militating against women's full participation in labour force. The study identified the following factors as being responsible for the situation. The level of education of most women has been an hindrance to their full participation in modern economic sector, especially on those jobs that require high level of education or specialised training. Most of the times, social and psychological factors restrict women's choice and pursuit of careers, especially in sciences and technology.

Another factor that is responsible for the low participation is that socially, there are certain belief and attitudes held by society, which have crystallised into laws. One of them is the subordinate position or second-class citizenship accorded to women. Such prejudices include the idea that no matter how highly qualified a woman is, she cannot be as good as a man in most jobs, especially those of the executive nature. Furthermore, there is the idea that in work life, the woman is expected to give support to her husband, and enhance his progress by adjusting her life and programmes to meet the employment of her husband (Ogwokhademhe, **Adekeye** & Agboola, 2013).

There are also certain religious practices that encourage the non-employment of women, such as purdah in Islam, which acts as a barrier to women employment. The issue of family planning is not also widely acceptable in some places because of religious implication. A good example is the Catholic Church that discourages her members from embracing family planning. There is also the norm of according priority and recognition to unlimited procreation in African culture, which also serves as a barrier to women's desire to participate actively in economic activities. Culturally, the main purpose of marriage is considered

to be the perpetuation of a race, and to take care of the home. This idea stands at odd with the arrangement of modern wage employment, which involves the employees staying away from home for long hours.

The issue of high unemployment and under-employment in Nigeria is another major factor. Most employers are brought up in a cultural environment that emphasises female inferiority. So, most of the time, employers are biased against women, and the ones that are employed are kept in low pay and low status jobs with little or no opportunities to get position of high responsibilities. The last factor that was considered is the time budget of working women. Many women get up in the morning as early as 5am to take care of the household and children before going to work. She works for the same number of hours as her male counterpart outside the home and she is expected to come back home after work and put in many hours for household duties. So, women work for longer hours, but get rewarded either monetarily or otherwise on lower scale than their male counterparts. In some cases, the women have to sacrifice success at work for peace at home. A typical scene in a woman's life is shown in Figure 1.



**Fig. 1:** A Typical Scene in a Woman's Life, as posted on the International Women's Day. 19/11/2024



The study concluded that in order to encourage more participation of women in modern work force, and to boost economic development through their contributions, the following actions must be taken. There must be a change in the stereotype socialisation, discourage early marriage, reduce the belief in African patriarchy system, encourage girls education, and embrace family planning, while men should be encouraged to participate in house chores and childcare.

*Ethno-Religious Violence and its Implications for the Family Institution in Nigeria*

The Vice-Chancellor Sir, my research interest also focused on the issue of women in the religious institutions. Nigeria has witnessed a number of ethno-religious crises and family institution is the major casualty of these riots. **Adekeye** (2006) did a theoretical exploration of ethno-religious violence and its implication for the family institution. The study emphasised the increase in conflicts situations across the country fueled by politics, ethnicity and religion, which had resulted in destruction of lives and property, accompanied by tension. The main aim of the research was to examine the implications of violent ethno-religious conflicts on family life, using the period 1999 to 2005 as the focus of the study.

Some factors were identified as responsible for these. First, Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with cultural differences, with the diversity resulting in two major consequences namely, problems arising among the larger ethnic groups and the hostility that is derived from competition among people for wealth and power. Thus, the heterogeneity of Nigeria was found to be responsible for the series of ethnic and religious suspicions and resultant conflicts. Second, poverty is one of the socio-economic factors breeding and nurturing ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. The economic and industrial retardation of the country has created unemployment among the youth, turning them into a pool of idle and restless group that can easily be mobilised to cause riots leading to civil unrest. Poverty manifests in insecurity, because people are forced to take certain unsavoury

actions in order to sustain a living. In such circumstances, people are willing to compromise. Poverty has the cumulative effect of raising tension that easily explodes on the slightest excuse. The noticeable mass poverty is a breeding ground for extremism-religious, ethnic, and class-consciousness. This, thus, explains why, in many cases of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria, the youths and the poor are often manipulated to advance the cause of such violence (Alanamu & **Adekeye**, 2009).

Third, the heterogeneity of the urban population in Nigeria reflects ethnic, occupational, social and religious diversities. The culture shock, resulting from contacts among these people of conflicting backgrounds is a precursor of violent conflicts, most especially when they are not prepared to tolerate each other's differences. Ethnic nationalism and formation of ethnic militias are also responsible for the promotion of ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria. The cases of Oodua People's Congress (Yoruba). Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) in the North (Hausa/Fulani) and Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP in the Niger Delta), represent good examples of these perspectives (**Adekeye**, Ajayi & Fawole, 2019).

Furthermore, the role of the elite in the creation of ethno-religious violence cannot be dismissed. The elite represent essentially the capitalists, who depend on the state machinery for survival. They are also key players in the ethno-religious game for exploitation and manipulation of the non-elite, usually directed towards personal or elite group interests, which mostly promote division and hatred among people in pluralistic societies. The elite use ethnic and religious sentiments to achieve their political and socio-economic goals. Below are some of major incidences of ethno-religious violence witnessed between 1999 and 2005:

- i. On November 25-28, 1999, 144 people died in an ethnic clash between Hausa and Yoruba traders in Mile 12, Ketu Lagos, over leadership of the market tussles (Olukorede, 2002).

- ii. On May 31, 1999, Ijaw and Itsekiri militias engaged in a violent clash in Warri town, Delta State. The conflict erupted over the Olu of Warri's throne and recognition (Okechuckwu, 2003).
- iii. On May 4, 2001, many lives were lost in the communal conflict between Ife and Modakeke communities in Osun State (Asamu, 2005).
- iv. From September 7 to 12, 2000, Jos experienced ethno-religious violence, in which over 500 persons were killed and about 1,000 others injured (Olukorede, 2002).
- v. In October 2001, a violent protest by Muslim/Hausa youths in the streets of Kano over the US-led military action in Afghanistan, led to the death of 150 persons (Nduhjihe, 2004).
- vi. From May 22 to 23, 2003, Kaduna was again brought on its knees in an ethno-religious riot, which claimed over 300 lives (Olukorede, 2002).
- vii. In June, 2002, several people were killed in a clash between some Christians and Muslims in Yelwa, Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State, over land and indigeneship (Ayinla, *et al.* 2005).

The enumerated crises above have a lot of impacts on the family, because after every major crisis, the family suffers the devastating effects of the conflicts. The most damaging effect has been the irreplaceable loss of lives and property. Innocent souls have been lost to the various violent conflicts that have engulfed the nation during the period, leading to disruptions in family life, as husbands have become widowers; wives turned to widows; and most children orphaned. For example, in all ethnic and religious crises that engulfed Plateau State alone between 1999 and 2005, about 46,787 persons lost their lives. A breakdown of the casualty figure revealed that 11,931 were men, 17,397 women and 17,459 children lost their lives. Women and children often constitute the largest victims of violent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. Another major effect of ethno-

religious uprising on the family institution is the loss of psychological support, which family life provides for its members. In other words, the traditional family structure guarantees its members adequate emotional and psychological protection; that is, members shared grief, sorrow, joy, achievement as well as failure. No individual was left to cope with his personal problems alone. However, the eruption of these violent conflicts tends to destroy this good family relationship and other interests.

The research on ethno-religious crises put forward a number of suggestions to curb or reduce the violence in Nigeria. It was suggested that there is the need to mobilise Nigerians, who are divided along ethnic, cultural, economic and religious lines, in the task of national development by establishing a more humane social order. Constitutional reforms that will take into consideration the diversity of Nigeria as a country; the design and implementation of a state-sponsored programme of mass education and enlightenment; as well as the establishment of inter-religious and ethnic committees that will provide fora for discussions with a view to resolving many ethnic and religious issues, instead of resorting to violent conflicts. In addition, a centre for the study of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations should be established in all the States of the federation. The centres, when established, should be charged with the responsibility of organising courses periodically for traditional and religious leaders, government functionaries and the general public, for the promotion of peace and harmonious co-existence.

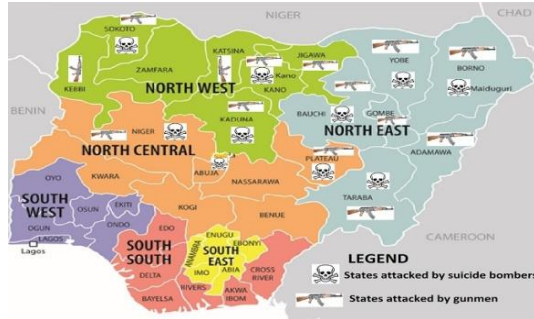
Lastly, the implementation of the poverty alleviation programme by government was another practical measure towards eliminating the problem in Nigeria. As a way of preventing the conflicts, security networks should be beefed up with effective policing, and the police personnel should be well equipped and properly trained for the task of ensuring security of lives and property of the people.

### *Terrorism and the Plight of Women in Internally Displaced Camps in Nigeria*

**Adekeye**, Ajayi, and Fawole (2019) conducted another study on the plight of women in internally displaced camps (IDCs) in Nigeria, with a view to examining the nature of challenges faced by women in these camps and the factors responsible for their plight and suggesting measures to curb the identified challenges. The study adopted a qualitative approach and the analysis was based on descriptive and analytical approaches. In-depth interview and Key Informant Interview were used in the data collection process. The target population for the study consisted of women that lived in the IDPs camps in the past and at present. Conceptually, terrorism is a term used to describe violence or other harmful acts. It is a form of unconventional warfare, sometimes used to force socio-political change by convincing a government or population to agree to demands to avoid future harm or fear of harm. It also refers to destabilisation of existing government, motivating a discontented population to join a mutiny, escalating a conflict in the hope of upsetting the status quo, expressing an injustice, or drawing attention to a cause. Terrorism seems to be the biggest threat to the global peace and stability in contemporary times. Since the dawn of the millennium, the incidence of the terrorism has been on a steady increase worldwide, and Nigeria as a country, has experienced a fair share of the activities of the terrorists.

This can be exemplified by the activities of Boko Haram terrorist groups in the Northern Nigeria. The Islamist terrorist group, known as Boko Haram (*Jamā'a Ahl al-sunnah li-da'wa wa al-jihād*), became active in Nigeria in the year 2002, when it was founded by Muhammed Yusuf. Boko Haram carried out a series of kidnappings and suicide bombing across the Northern part of the country. Terror activities have led to a number of deaths and displacements of people, especially women and children. People fled for safety as properties worth billions of naira got destroyed wantonly. As a result, IDP camps were established in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, Nasarawa, Taraba, and Abuja. The map in Fig. 2, shows the

States affected by the activities of Boko Haram terrorists as of the time of conducting the research in 2019.



**Fig. 2:** Map showing States most attacked by the Boko Haram in Nigeria

**Source:** Onuoha, 2013

Based on the objectives of the study, and the research questions, the responses elicited from respondents showed that the nature of challenges faced by women in IDPs camp includes hunger due to shortage in the supply of food, and diversion of raw food and materials to other locations by the officials. Other challenges included sexual exploitation, rape, molestation, restricted movement, poor sanitation due to inadequate toilet, and waste disposal facilities, as well as official corrupt practices. Based on the findings, it was suggested that government should give priority to proper planning and organisation of IDPs in order to avoid chaotic situation and molestations of inmates, especially the women folks.

### *Gender Disparity in Higher Education Enrolment and National Development*

Education is very important in the contemporary world. Various national and international governments have introduced wide range reforms in an attempt to raise educational standard in terms of quality and quantity, in order to prepare the young ones for entry into adult life, and for the eventual development of the nation. As important as this future preparation and development

of the nation is, a critical look at the educational sector revealed a great disparity in the enrolment of male and female in schools. Therefore, a situation in which a high percentage of female was absent in the learning process, especially at the highest level of education, calls for a serious concern, because education, especially, in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics have been found to be the major instrument that can catapult the developing nations to the desired level of development.

In addition, **Adekeye** (2011) conducted a research on gender disparity in higher education enrolment and its effect on national development, largely using secondary data in order to have basis for comparison. Most of the data were sourced from the National Universities Commission and Human Resources Division of University of Ilorin. The study started with the general analysis of the gender enrolment in all the Nigerian universities in order to have a clear comparison of gender gap in the enrolment in Nigerian universities. The study narrowed its analysis down to University of Ilorin in order to have specific overview of the gap in gender enrolment and the number that actually completed their studies.

Based on the enrolment in Nigerian Universities in the 2005/2006 academic session, as obtained from the Nigeria Universities Commission (2006), the study revealed that there were generally less female than male that enrolled in all Nigerian universities. The study revealed that out of the 38 universities, back then, only four had the same or slightly more enrolment of girls than boys. These were Imo State University, Owerri, (54%); Ambrose Alli State University, Ekpoma, (50%); Delta State University, Abraka and Igbenedion University, Okada (60%). The majority of them had less than 50% of girls in their institutions, while some even had below 25% for the girls in 2006.

There were cases of universities like Bayero University Kano, Federal University of Technology Minna, and Federal University of Technology, Akure, which had 17%, 19% and 15% enrolment of girls in their institutions, respectively. Overall, of

the total students' population of 555,202 from universities that provided enrollment data, 204,095 (36.7%) were female, which had a serious implication for school completion, securing job and contributing meaningfully to the overall development of the Nigerian society.

**Table 2:** Sex Distribution of University of Ilorin Graduating Students (2000/2007)

FACULTY	2000/2001					2006/2007				
	Male	Female	Male %	Female %	Total	Male	Female	Male %	Female %	Total
Agriculture	65	34	65.7	34.3	99	131	92	58.7	41.3	223
Arts	118	85	58.1	41.9	203	63	41	60.6	39.4	104
Business & Social Sciences	611	230	72.7	27.3	841	530	254	67.6	32.4	784
Education	397	256	60.8	39.2	653	528	349	60.2	39.8	877
Engineering & Technology	215	26	89.2	10.8	241	281	32	89.8	10.2	313
Health Science	156	42	78.8	21.2	198	103	67	60.6	39.4	170
Law	61	44	58.1	41.9	105	96	79	54.9	45.1	175
Science	244	134	64.5	35.5	378	421	287	59.5	40.5	708
Total	1867	851	68.5	31.5	2718	2153	1201	64	36	3354
Grand Total		2720					3354			
%			68.7	31.3				64.2	35.8	

**Table 3:** Sex Distribution of University of Ilorin Graduating Postgraduate Students (2006/2007)

Faculty/College	Male	Female	Male %	Female %
Agriculture	8	1	88.9	11.1
Arts	33	1	97.1	2.9
Business & Social Sciences	115	40	74.2	25.8
Education	52	50	50.9	49.1
Engineering & Technology	6	2	75	25
Health Sciences	13	2	86.7	13.3
Total	58	27	68.2	31.8
%	285	123	69.9	30.1

**Source:** University of Ilorin Records Section (2008)



The analysis of gender enrolment was then narrowed down to University of Ilorin, as shown in Tables 2 and 3, which revealed that there was a consistent increase in the number of female graduates from the institution especially at the undergraduate degree. Table 2 revealed that there was a general increase from 31.5% to 36.0% in the number of female graduates during the period covered by the study. A steady increase was observed in Faculties of Agriculture (34.3% - 41.3%), Health Sciences (21.25 - 39.4%), Sciences (35.5% - 40.5%), Business and Social Sciences (27.3% - 32.4), and Law (41.9% - 45.1%). However, there was a slight decrease in enrolment of girls in Art (41.9% to 39.4%) and Engineering and Technology (10.8% to 10.2%) in the same period.

The disparity became very glaring as shown in Table 3, when the numbers of male and female that registered and completed their postgraduate programmes were compared. There was less than 15% completion rate from the Faculties of Agriculture, Arts, Engineering & Technology and Health Sciences. It was only Education and Business & Social Sciences that had 25.8% and 49.1%, completion rate in 2007. Although, there seemed to be a great improvement by 2001, when there was no female postgraduate student in Agriculture, Health Sciences and Engineering and Technology. The turnout of students at graduate and postgraduate level is synonymous with the quantity and quality of staff that is expected to take part or work in various establishments across the country. The research revealed some of the factors responsible for the glaring disparity in enrolment and completion rates to include culture, socialisation, poverty, unwanted pregnancy, early marriage, cost of schooling and low self-esteem (**Adekeye, 2011**).

The story is changing gradually, because there have been a positive drastic change in enrolment of male and female in higher education, with that of the female increasing tremendously in the university. The recent Convocation held in October, 2025 at University of Ilorin showed a great improvement in this regard. For instant, the Faculty of Agriculture graduated 933 students out of which 651 were

female. At postgraduate level, the same Faculty produced 47 Master degree holders, out of which 27 were female. There were 18 Ph.D. degree holders, out of which 7 were female. To cap it all, the overall best student at the 2025 Convocation Ceremonies was a female. This is a very good development and a sharp departure from when the research on gender gap in higher education enrolment was conducted in 2011.

*An Overview of 'Hook-up' Syndrome among Females in Nigerian Higher Institutions*

In a study conducted in 2024 after the death of six girls that attended a party at Lekki and were not found again, **Adekeye** and Adedeji (2024) examined the issue of 'Hook-up' syndrome among female in Nigerian higher institutions. The study observed that prostitution has taken on new dimensions in today's world compared to the past; as it gets more advanced, better ordered, and better used. "Hook-up" is a term used explicitly in Nigeria to describe individuals (especially females), who engage in prostitution, involving the exchange of sexual services for money or other benefits. This tendency is common among women aged 18 to 27, who employ various strategies to attract clients. These tactics include going out with friends to bars and lounges, dressed provocatively to catch the attention of potential customers, and utilising social media platforms, where clients search for opportunities. The significant difference between hook-up and general prostitution lies primarily in the demographic profiles, operational methods, and lifestyle choices of those involved. The primary purpose of this study was to examine causes, consequences and strategies for mitigating the menace.

The study found out that some of the reasons adduced for engaging in it include unemployment, moral decadence, peer pressure, lack of knowledge or awareness of the consequences, low self-esteem, parental neglect, greed and media influence. The consequences included health hazard, physical assault and violence and untimely death through ritual killings. Considering the grave consequences of the syndrome, especially among the female, the study advised that there should be value re-

orientation and sound moral inculcation by all the agents of socialisation, especially the family institution. There is the need for counselling education in all our higher institutions and public enlightenment about its evil consequences.

*Impact of Human Immune Virus and Immuno Deficiency Syndrome on Nigerian Women*

The Vice-Chancellor Sir, when the spread of HIV/AIDs was rampant in the early 2000, a research was carried out in 2006 to know the impact of the virus on Nigerian women. It is an undisputable fact the disease affected every continent on the globe with the largest concentration of patients in the sub-Sahara Africa. Its first case was reported in Nigeria in March, 1986, with women and children constituting the largest percentage of the number of victims. The HIV sero- prevalence survey shows that women aged 15-49 years, constituted 56% of the 4.74 million infected. Women also tend to be younger at age of infection (15-35 years), compared to men (20-45). The World Health Organization (WHO) identified three main routes of HIV transmission among the general population to include sexual transmission, blood transfusion and sharing of sharp objects and mother to child transmission.

The study identified the factors that were responsible for increase in HIV/AIDS among Nigerian women to include movement of soldiers, especially those that were sent on peace-keeping operations, who returned with the virus, and later infected their wives; prostitution, traditional harmful practices such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, scarification, tattooing, wife inheritance and polygyny. There are also environmental elements like sanitation, diet, unavailable health care and malnutrition and the general vulnerability of women, which partly accounted for a wide range of female reproductive health problems. The variation in socio-economic and political status by gender also emerged as some of the factors responsible for increasing spread of HIV infection among the Nigerian women.

The effects of HIV/AIDs on women are enormous and some of them included illness that has both personal and public

dimensions. When a woman has HIV/AIDS, she does not only experience pain, discomfort, confusion and other motherly challenges, but it also has serious effect on her family. HIV/AIDS positive women have reduced fertility and mother-to-child transmission of the virus means increase in child mortality rate. Moreover, the epidemic has significant economic and social effects, including high level of orphanhood and widowhood, and the disruption of household management in Nigeria. The study recommended that the alarming rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence in Nigeria with the pandemic toll on women and children should be urgently addressed by government and Non-Governmental Organisations. There should be public awareness and counseling on the preventive methods, to included avoidance of casual sex, staying with one and faithful partner; and for those who are already infected, to be enlightened about the available drugs that can sustain them for a long time, and still make them to be useful to themselves, their family, and society at large.

The above represented some of the studies conducted on gender issues. Most of the experience of female folks in all the major social institutions such as family, politics, economy, education and health were discussed and recommendations were proffered to ensure better life for women.

### **My Contributions to Training and Mentorship in the Field of Sociology**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, apart from my regular teaching in the field of Sociology, I thank the Almighty God, for giving me the privilege to contribute to the growth of some individuals in the field, and related courses as mentor, supervisor and lecturer. I have supervised over two hundred and fifty (250) undergraduate students, over eighty (80) M.Sc. dissertations and six (6) Ph.D. theses. In the last twenty years, I have also served as Internal Examiner to departments such as History and International Studies, Business Administration, Geography and Environmental Studies, and the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, and as External Examiner to some universities around the country.

### *Community Service*

Vice-Chancellor Sir, apart from my contributions to knowledge in academics, I have been involved in various community services, especially those related to my immediate environment. I have served on numerous committees within the Department and the University. Among these are: Level Adviser for different levels (2006-2012); Faculty Representative, UNILORIN Sugar Research (2011-2014); Faculty Representative, GNS Division (2016-2018); Assistant Secretary, ASUU (2008-2012); Faculty Dress Code Committee (2010-2016); Organiser, Master in Labour and Industrial Relations (2011-2016); Business Editor, Faculty of Business and Social Science Journal (2014-2018); Editor-in-Chief, Ilorin Journal of Business and Social Sciences (2023-date); Ag. Head, Department of Sociology (2014-2016), (2018-2019); Ag. Head, Department of Criminology and Security Studies (2016.-2017), Member, Examination Malpractice Committee. Faculty of Social Sciences (2011); Secretary, Local Organizing Committee for National Association of Sociology and Anthropology Conference (2011); Chairperson, Faculty of Social Sciences Welfare Committee (2014-2020); Desk Officer, U6+ Consortium (2023-2024), among others.

Outside the University, I equally served as a member of Kwara State Educational Trust Fund (2023-date); Board Member, United Missionary Church of Africa Seminary (2025-date); Matron, Iludun Oro Students Union (2022-date); Matron, 1<sup>st</sup> Company, Isin Boy's Brigade, Edidi (2022-date); Matron, Superlight Club of Edidi (2019-date). At the national level, I have participated in Census and Election duties at different times, and during which I had meticulously rendered my expertise and professional input successfully.

### **Conclusion**

In concluding this lecture Mr. Vice-Chancellor, it is glaring that women in various works of life are proving their ability to reach the pinnacle of their career by breaking the glass ceiling in various organisations, as they are making significant

contributions to social and economic growth of African countries. Despite the noticeable contributions, the fact still remain that there are still gender gaps in employment, entrepreneurship, politics and top echelon of the corporate world. Women are still under-represented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). To overcome this barrier, women must be ready and be supported to overcome personal, organisational and societal barriers that prevent equal access to quality education, economic resources, politics and leadership at all levels, in order to contribute their quota to the development of Africa.

### **Recommendations**

Vice-Chancellor Sir, in order to improve the strength of gender roles, and enhance development in the society, continual, and increased attention should be focused on gender related issues. The following are few recommendations that can prove gender balance in Africa

- i. The recommendation will start from individual level, especially for women, to challenge all individual barriers such as poor level of education, low self-esteem, time management that may be militating against their aspirations and motive for success. This can be done through proper education; training and mentoring that can assist the individuals in reaching the top of their career or achieving success in their choosing fields.
- ii. All organisations or work settings should do away with such culture as negative working environment, gender discrimination, bias corporate policies and leadership style that are detrimental to the advancement of women in the organisations, and give room for a work-balance environment that will allow women to perform their responsibilities at home, and at work.
- iii. The Federal Government should encourage female education, especially in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), because access to education especially in the STEM will improve the

opportunities for girls and close the gap in higher education enrolment.

- iv. There should be conscious efforts by all members of the society to reduce all the obnoxious norms under the patriarchy system in African countries. These include eradication of gender based violence and harmful traditional practices such as genital mutilation, child-marriage and widow inheritance.
- v. The Federal, State and Local Government Areas, should implement the 35% affirmative action for Nigerian women like their counterparts in other African countries like Rwanda and South Africa, to ensure more women participation in politics.

Vice Chancellor Sir, if some of these recommendations are turned into policies and adequately implemented, more women will have the opportunities to reach the pinnacle of their careers and contribute meaningfully to the development of their countries in particular, and Africa, in general.

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