

## Re-Socialization, Gender Equality, and Women Access to Justices in Nigeria

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### Abstract

The ability to seek and obtain a remedy through formal or informal institutions of justices for grievances in compliance with human rights standards is open for all. However, when people lack information or knowledge of their rights together with a weak justice system, access to justice becomes a mirage and abysmal. In Nigeria, women and girls experience rights abuses and infringements in various degrees without obtaining justice nor remedy for their pains. Rights denial, physical, sexual, emotional, social and economic abuses amongst others are more predominant with the female folk than their male counterparts in Nigeria. In some cultures, women perceive injustices and dehumanization as deserving and repercussions and therefore do not seek justice for their pains and grievances in marriage, sociopolitical, economic and cultural environments. Applying qualitative research design and the theory of justice, the paper provided answers to the following questions: What are the real reasons why women fail to obtain justices for their hurt, is the justice system in Nigeria pro or against women, how can women access justice and remedy for their grievances in Nigeria? The majority of women are ignorant of their rights which stifles the efforts of stakeholders in the struggle for women's access to justice. There is a need for a re-socialization revolution to educate and empower women about their rights. For sustainable access to justice, women need to be equipped and empowered from generation to generation to demand for justice when aggrieved. Civil society and other stakeholders need to be engaged in aggressive women's rights advocacy.

**Keywords:** *Re-socialization, Fairness, Access, Rights, Women*

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### **Background to the Study**

An estimated four billion people around the world live outside the protection of the law, mostly because they are poor or marginalized within their societies. The ability to seek and obtain a remedy through formal or informal institutions of justices for grievances in compliance with human rights standards is open for all. However, when people lack information or knowledge of their rights together with a weak justice system, access to justice becomes a mirage and abysmal. Gender continues to be a powerful barrier shaping the rights, capabilities, and opportunities of the individual and especially women from birth throughout the lifetime. Women and girls experience rights abuses and infringements in various degrees without obtaining justice nor remedy for their pains. In Nigeria, rights denial, physical, sexual harassment, rape, emotional, social and economic abuses amongst others are more predominant with the female folk than their male counterparts. Majority of women in Nigeria maintain a culture of silence in the face of injustice because they stoically perceive injustice and dehumanization as part of womanhood. Others perceive it as deserving and repercussions for their failures in life situations such as barrenness or failure to bear male children Ann mentioned in Otakpo (2005) maintained that childless women whether married or single suffer dehumanizing treatment, stigmatization, discrimination and in some extreme cases ostracism. Cadigan (1998) confirmed that the stigmatization of women especially poor and childless ones can be so extreme in some cultures, where infertile women are viewed as a burden on the economic well-being of a family or community as they are considered cursed by the gods Cadigan (1998) argues that culturally for a woman to be socially acceptable, she should have at least one biological child. Otakpo submits that in most cases the dehumanization of barren women extends to her wider family including siblings, parents and in-laws who are deeply disappointed by the loss of continuity of their family and contribution to the community population growth

On the other hand, Trigs (1997) maintained that women have been marginalized for a long period of time through social exclusion which is considered as a given. In this respect, women themselves see it as the norm of life and the life of a woman and transmit the same to their children especially the girl child. Girls are, therefore, socialized to be submissive, subservient and silent. Trigs (1997) further stressed that women often face multiple forms of discrimination, violence, sexual harassment and are particularly affected by legal and social exclusion. In the workplace women are mistreated, easily cheated by their employers, driven from their land, preyed upon by the powerful, exploited and intimidated by violence yet in most cases women scarcely seek redress nor press charges neither culturally nor through the legal constitutional institutions. Charon (1989) laments that women have been degraded and not respected for a long time even in religious settings. Arguing that in most churches women attend churches to be prayed for by men, listen to the gospel preached by men, clean the church used by men and cook during ceremonies officiated by men (Charon 1989). To Klasen (2012) inequality, discrimination and exclusion remain severe obstacles to universal human development.

Contending that people living in poverty and marginalized groups may not be aware of their legal rights and often lack legal protection and access to mechanisms to remedy their grievances, resulting in increased vulnerability. Meyer (2006) confirms that women in some

churches are not allowed to participate in liturgical service because they are women and not because they are not qualified to do so. Mill in Subrata and Sushila (2007) maintained that women acquiesce themselves to these treatments, are consenting parties to them even as they police their own marginalization because they have been socialized to conform to the situation as a given. Women's marginalization as pointed by Charon (1989) is passed from generation to generation of women through socialization even by women to their daughters. The marginalization and social exclusion of women, only means that a part of humanity has been condemned to the status of slaves, even in the house of God, where all are supposed to be equal in the quest to find common salvation for all. Robertisan (2002) believes that social exclusion is multidimensional appearing at different levels of human life, affecting not only individual persons but also the whole group and is a major problem in the world. Kibeetal (2017) submit that there are cultural values that have come up with myths that portray women's image negatively leading to negative perceptions of their performance and denial of opportunity for women. Hence social exclusion is also synonymous with poverty and poverty is feminized then, this explains the economic and emotional dependence of women (the marginalized) on the perceived holders of power (men).

The consequence of prolonged marginalization of women is that most women tend to be emotionally dependent especially on men. Fromm mentioned in Pualo Freire (1987) referred to this form of dependency as necrophilia behavior; the destruction of life - their own or that of the oppressed fellows. Fromm explains why individual women and women organizations have continued to make a social appeal to men to give them power and to carry them along in politics, economy and in other social relationships.

Consequently, much of the powers women have today politically seem to be granted from men. Women are intelligent and influential beings who are capable of achieving power by themselves. Women need a re-socialization to unlearn what they have been taught over the years through socialization and to impact the same to a subsequent generation of girls. Women arguably, lack information and knowledge of their rights as human beings and subsequently lack access to justice. However, the importance of women's access to justice cannot be over-emphasized if there must be gender equality and parity in political, social and economic systems.

The crux of *Re-Socialization, Gender Equality, and Women Access to Justices in Nigeria* is to uncover the reason why women are marginalized, to reveal if the Nigerian justice system is pro or against women and to discover how women can access justice and remedy for their grievances in Nigeria? As long as women remain unaware of their rights but fatalistically accept their exploitation, access to justice and gender equality will also remain a mirage and abysmal for women in Nigeria.

### **Philosophical Issues**

Access to Justice means different things to different philosophers and theorists alike. In its narrowest sense, it represents only the formal ability to appear in court. Comprehensively, access to justice engages a much larger social context of our court system and the systemic

barriers faced by different members of the community. Aristotle 384-322BC quoted in Subrata and Sushila (2011) for instance, conceded that justice is a moral and ethical concept to deal with the concrete relationship in our day-to-day life. He believes that justice embodies an ideal and it symbolizes perfection and a dynamic idea hence realization of the ideal of justice is a continuous process. Stretching that, the establishment of just social order depends on the development of social consciousness. For instance, in ancient and medieval Europe, slavery and serfdom and untouchability of certain privilege people like the kings were widely justified. However, during the Enlightenment and the development of the justice system, such acts were discovered to be inhuman. Justice is essential to eliminate the impact of various actions performed by man. Again in the stoic philosophy, justice is identified with righteousness or virtue. Spiritually in that era, justice means that all men are equally created and are equal before the eyes of the creator. The notion of good or bad is determined by the concept of justice. Anything that fails to conform to the standard set by justice is considered bad. Simita Srivastava (2012) stressed that in the Greeks writings justice was equated with harmony.

Justice is an ideology that emerged on the bases of conceptuality. It is a way of life or to defend the notion of equality or to justify the act or rather to forbid an act, which is prohibitive like racism. It is a means to protect the weak from the strong. Still, for some, it is an ideology to protect the need of the so-called people. Marxism came as a reaction against the dangers of capitalism and cumulated in the elimination of the idea of states. Justice implies the rights of the classes that are deprived or it can also mean the rights of the so-called classes who lack bargaining power. In a democratic system, we can adduce also that justice as an ideology function on the bases of rationality, which is the reflection of the due process of law and also the rule of law. For Cepalus, justice means speaking the truth and paying your debt Polemarchus, the child of Cephalus believes in giving to each man what is proper to him. The word proper in the cause of the discussion to the assumption of justice is an art, which gives good to friends and evil to enemies. Plato also quoted in Subrata and Sushila (2011) interprets justice to mean the interest of the stronger.

Furthermore, in the *Republic*, Plato emphasized on the principle of functional specialization and principle of non-interference or non-meddling. The epicureans, however, believe that there was never a notion of absolute justice but only a convention made in mutual intercourse. Justice to Aristotle is complete virtue, though not absolute it is in relation to one's neighbor. Both Plato and Aristotle believes that the primary task of a state is to ensure justice. Aristotle distinguished between distributive, corrective or remedial justice. Distributive meant that the offices and wealth, rewards and dues that could cause agitation among social classes. This has to be distributed according to their contribution based on merit as defined in the constitution. In an oligarchy, merit meant wealth while in aristocracy it is related to virtue. In an ideal state, merit meant virtue. In Aristotle's perception, the objective end of the state was to ensure and promote a good life. For him, the group that contributed to this end could legitimately claim the most of the society's honors. On this premise, he believes that a virtuous minority or an aristocracy supplies the most direct and significant benefits to society. Besides virtue and wealth, Aristotle, 384-322BC quoted in Subrata and Sushila (2009) recognizes freedom as an

important criterion with regard to the end of the state. Freedom meant free birth and also being independent of others. He thus giving a share to everyone in a political process is justice. Distributive justice can be considered proportionate to equality and is linked to the theory of just reward or equal shares according to the merit of the recipients.

Rawls in his *theory of justice* asserts that many things may be considered just and unjust. Believing that not only laws, institutions and social systems could be said to be unjust. Rawls (1971) in his theory of justice asserts that many things may be considered just and unjust. Believing that not only laws, institutions and social systems could be said to be unjust. To him actions of many kinds- decisions, judgments, and their implications. Attitude and dispositions of persons and persons themselves could be called just or unjust. Rawls believes that there are many kinds of subjects that can fall under the rubric of justice and injustice. The conception of justice, however, concentrates on what he refers to as the primary concern of justice which to him is the basic structure of the society. The basic structure of society to him covers not only the entire set of legal rights and duties but also sociopolitical and economic institutions, and indeed everything that can result from social cooperation. Rawls believes that the major function of the basic structure of society is to distribute the benefits and burdens of social cooperation among the members of that society. The benefits of social cooperation include wealth and income, food and shelter, authority and power, rights and liberties while the burdens of social cooperation include duties obligations and liabilities.

He believes that the basic subject of justice is the basic structure of society because it exerts a profound influence on individuals' rights, prospect, desires, aspirations and self-image. Rawls (1971) also contends that the influence of the basic structure on individuals are present at birth and continues throughout life. The primary problem of justice according to him, is to fashion and justify a set of principles that a just structure must meet or satisfy. These principles of justice according to Rawls would lay down how the basic structure would distribute what he calls the primary goods of society among its members, primary goods include basic rights and liberties, powers authority and opportunities as well as goods such as income and wealth. He calls all these basic goods in order to stress that they are the goods men would desire, these are the goods every rational man is presumed to want. He, therefore, views the principles of justice as very important because these principles will regulate the basic structure of society which will in turn determines the place, duties and rights of males and females in the society.

### **Brief History of UN Treaties on Women and Why Women Fail to Access Justice**

In 197 the United Nations approved the celebration of International Women's Year. As part of the celebrations, they held the first conference on women in Mexico City. It resulted in the declaration of Mexicoe *quality of women and their contributions to development*. At the meeting, it was proposed that the following decade be proclaimed UN decade for women and follow-up meetings to assess the progress made in 1980 and 1985. Consequently, the UN General Assembly adopted a world plan of action with recommended targets for governments to integrate women's equality in development and participation in peace initiatives. The Second World Conference on women was then held in Copenhagen 1980. The conferences agreed that 1979 convention on the CEDAW was an important milestone and acknowledge the gap

between rights and being secured for women and women's ability to exercise those rights. The conference also agreed that action on three major areas- equal access to education, employment opportunities and adequate healthcare services are essential to achieve the goals set out in Mexico City.

Following the second was World Conference on Women in Nairobi Kenya in 1985 following the second conference as the third in the rung of women conferences. This particular conference set out areas by which progress in women's equality could be measured and these include; constitutional and legal measures, equality in social participation, political participation, and decision making. The conference acknowledged that women need to participate in all other areas of human activity and not just the areas that relate to gender. Unlike the two previous conferences, this 3<sup>rd</sup> conference marked the first time lesbian rights were introduced in an official meeting of the UN. It was also the turning point when violence against women emerged from being hidden topic to one which needed to be addressed. Recognizing that the goals of the decade for women have not been met.

The Conference also recommended that the UN Assembly approved an on-going evaluation of women's achievements and failures through the year 2000. These conferences struggled with the divide caused by cold war politics and needs of the developing world such as debt crisis soaring in Africa and Latin America, Protectionist policies under Margaret Thatcher, and Ronald Reagan causing widespread uncertainty, stagnation of USSR, the arms race build-up, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The question then was whether the conference would remain focused on women issues in the face of Soviet accusations and warmongering tactics which were undermining the goals of the decades for women. The US concern was that the Eastern Bloc attempts at politicization would derailing real improvement in the unique problems faced by women. Conference on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international conference adopted in 1979 by the United Nations' General Assembly otherwise described as the international bill of rights for women which was instituted on 3/9/1981 and has been ratified by 189 states. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. (The fourth UN c on w in bejing 1995), ([www.women's national commission UK](http://www.women's national commission UK). Retrieved April 2014).

The fourth World Conference on Women was the Beijing conference in China 1995 was titled equality, development, and peace. In the conference delegates prepared a declaration and platform for action aimed at achieving greater equality and opportunity for women (3<sup>rd</sup> 1985 WCW 1985), Be it distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other fields. By accepting the convention states commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms (un treaty collection un.org Sept 2015).

These established hallmarks were meant to enable the woman enjoy human rights and achieve equality yet women are still marginalized in their communities. Like the feminist's radicals believe the persona is political. Despite all the conferences and treaties women are still marginalized and mistreated politically, socially as a group and individually in their families by husbands and other relatives without redress because the persona remains political. Most women are domestically subdued and intimidated. These categories of women feel inadequate, shy and incompetence. This explains why most women would not **via** for political and elective positions because they consider themselves incompetent and also see their fellow women as such. Paulo (1987) explained that this kind of attitude is as a result of prolonged oppressed which often also manifest as a type of horizontal violence causing the oppressed to strike out at their own comrades for any pettiest reason. This phenomenon is especially prevalent in the middle class that were arguably oppressed who yearn to be equal to the eminent men of their upper class. Following Paulo' (1987) *Pedagogy of the oppressed* one of the reasons women fail to access justice could be attributed to self-depreciation which is one of the characteristics of the oppressed.

According to Paulo (1987) deriving from their internalization of the opinion the oppressor's hold of them. So often do the oppressed do hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything – that they are sick, lazy and unproductive – in the end, they become convinced of their own unfitness. Almost never do they realize that they, too, know things “they have learned in relation with the world and with other men (Paulo 1987). Given the circumstances which produced their duality, it is only natural that oppressed distrust themselves. Freire (1987) found that lack of trust can be attributed to being one of the reasons women are not entrusted with certain reputable and juicy leadership and political positions both at appointive and elective positions, even on merit bases. When women merit some positions they are shortchanged for it because men do not trust their ability to perform on those positions.

### **The Nigerian Justice System and Women's Access to Justice?**

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (promulgation) decree no.24 which birthed the 1999 Nigerian constitution as amended in 2011 though very masculine started by declared that its provisions shall have binding force on authorities and persons throughout the federal republic of Nigeria. Declaring as follows” Whereas the federal military government of the federal republic of Nigeria in compliance with the transition to civil rule has---. The constitution by this declaration lumped males and females together as though they are one and of equal strength and equal opportunities in all spheres of life (politics and governance and the economy). The constitution was not specific as to who are the persons referred to, obviously the men who are at the helm of affairs. Constitutions like that of America with a more gender-friendly outlook categorically mentioned the sexes/genders (men and women) to avoid exclusion. Mentioning the sexes is to avoid succinct or obvious marginalization of any of them. The lacuna therefore in the Nigerian constitution makes the exclusion and marginalization of women in Nigeria easy for those who want to do so. All through the constitution, there was no mention of how many men and women are expected to occupy positions of authority. No percentage of each sex or gender to be represented or whatsoever.

Again, Aristotle the distribution of the commonwealth should be defined in the constitution. But when the method of distribution is not stated explicitly and expressly equity and equality could be murdered on the altar of politics in determining who gets what when and how. This is why Rawls argued that the major function of the basic structure of society which is to distribute the benefits and burdens of social cooperation among the members of that society would be defeated. The benefits of social cooperation (Aristotle in Subrata M. Sushila 2007). Rawls stresses that the benefits include wealth and income, food and shelter, authority and power, rights and liberties while the burdens of social cooperation include duties obligations and liabilities. This to a large extent explains the marginal position of women in Nigeria and their lack of access to justice. The Lacuna of not stating expressly the proportion of men and women to be represented in the power structure and other basic structures of the society made room for the strong (men) to dominate and exploit the weak (women) in the enjoyment of rights and benefits of the wealth of the state. Men latch in on this loophole and have and exclude women and make access to justice difficult for women. It is ironical that some of the constitutional provisions basically designed to guarantee the protection of fundamental rights, unwittingly have the effect of precipitating delays in the judicial process. This has made access to justice difficult for most women because of the constitution in gender-neutral especially in a patriarchal society like Nigeria. Aside from the gender blindness of the constitution other factors that hinder women from accessing justice according to Nlerum (2005) is the overused concept of *locus standi* which implies the right standing to sue or stand for a case.

Locus standi is a concept that refers to the standing to sue. It refers to the right of a party to an action to be heard in litigation before a court of law or tribunal or the legal capacity of instituting, initiating or commencing an action in a competent court of law or tribunal without any inhibition, obstruction or hindrance. (Nlerum 2005). In other words, "for a person to have *locus standi* in an action he must be able to show that his civil rights and obligations have been or are in danger of being infringed. Thus, the fact that a person may not succeed in an action does not have anything to do with whether or not he has the standing to bring the action in this instance. For instance, in the issue of rape, the woman /girl has to prove beyond a reasonable doubt with evidence and exhibits to prove her rape. When some women summon up the courage and approach the court for justice inordinate delay in the administration of justice constitute another obstacle for them to obtain justice.

Again, during the Oputa tribunal panel was a case that was made for the phenomenon of delayed justices for several decades without proffering a lasting the solution to it. Nlerum (2005) also stressed that at the panel it was argued that very often, Nigerians see ordinary cases of unlawful termination of employment or even those for the enforcement of fundamental rights lasting between three to five years or even more in court before they are concluded. Under such circumstances, citizens especially women would naturally be reluctant to initiate actions for the enforcement of their basic rights. Moreover, litigation expenses in Nigeria also are so high. The implication is that the majority of Nigeria, women in particular who are mainly considered poor can hardly afford proper litigation representation in Nigerian courts. This pose as an impediment when women have needs to press charges for their pain and injustice meted out to them by either husband, employers, government amongst others.



Following this, since most women are consistently preoccupied with how to feed their child and the entire family with their lean the purse will then prefer to bear their pain than approach the court for justice.

### **Re-socialization and Women Access to Justice in Nigeria**

Socialization which according to Merriam Webster's dictionary is the process of learning to behave in a way that is acceptable to society starts with the pre-school in the life of a Homo sapiens. Socialization also is the process that begins during childhood by which individuals acquire the values, habits, ideologies, and attitudes of a society that they internalize and exhibit as they interact with their environment. According to Clausen, John A. (ed.) (1968) socialization encompasses both learning and teaching and is thus "the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained (Cromdal, 2006). To the MLA socialization is strongly connected to developmental psychology which believes that humans need social experiences to learn about their culture and survive (Billingham, 2007) Socialization essentially represents the whole process of learning throughout the life course and is a central influence on the behavior, beliefs, and actions of adults as well as of children. The MLA required social experience is learned through socialization.

Socialization may lead to desirable outcomes—sometimes labeled moral as regards the society where it occurs. Individual views are influenced by society's consensus and usually tend toward what that society finds acceptable or "normal". Socialization provides only a partial explanation for human beliefs and behaviors, maintaining that agents are not blank slate predetermined by their environment (Pinker, 2002). Again, scientific research provides evidence that people are shaped by both social influences and genes (Dusheck, 2002). Genetic studies have shown also that a person's environment interacts with his or her genotype to influence behavioral outcomes. (Kender and Baker 2007). Kender and Baker (2007) were of the opinion that most of us don't remember our first two or three years of life — but our earliest experiences may stick with us for years and continue to influence us well into adulthood. According to Maccoby (2000), there is clear evidence that parents can and do influence their children's behavior. There is equally clear evidence that children's genetic makeup affects their own behavioral characteristics, and also influences the way they are treated by their parents. However, the process by which one acquires these qualities, thus becoming a full-grown and functional adult, is known as socialization.

The society intrudes itself into the socialization process in numerous ways. Society establishes the standards that socialized individuals are expected to achieve in physical development, in skills and capacities, in emotional expression, in intellectual purposeful activities, and in the patterning of their relations with significant others (Inkeles, 1968). In their effort to socialize children, parents are guided by their awareness of such social expectations and by their image of what children must become if they are to live successfully in the world. Parents are also guided by their image of what makes “good parents” and most invest a great deal of time and effort living up to this standard (Clausen, 1968).

With the agents of socialization –family, school system, peer group, television print media amongst others the expected behavioral pattern is therefore transmitted to the new Homo sapiens which they will carry to adult life and possibly till death except a re-socialization occurs. Scholars, educators, business leaders, and government officials have called for a better understanding of why individuals tend to limit their career choices based on gender – particularly women are less likely to work in the STEM fields. Most research on family socialization and gendered occupational segregation as the EVT (Bornstein, 2011), found evidence that family gender socialization experiences in childhood may play a role in the gendered segregation of the labor market.

Consequently, due to the pattern of socialization and lack of awareness of their rights majority of women maintain a culture of silence in the face of injustice because they stoically perceive injustices and dehumanization as part of womanhood. Some women perceive injustice and rights infringements as deserving and repercussions for their perceived inadequacies and failures in life while others see it as art of womanhood. Trigs (1997) argued that from culture to religion, social relations and the institutions of justice, women have been marginalized and poorly socialized. Stressing that women have been marginalized for a long period of time through social exclusion as the situation is seen as the life of a woman (Trigs (1997). In this respect, women themselves see it as the norm of life and the life of a woman and transmit the same to their children especially the girl child through socialization. Girls are, therefore, socialized to be submissive, subservient and silent as they face multiple forms of marginalization and discrimination (Trigs 1997). This pattern of socialization makes women access to justice a herculean task for most women in Nigeria.

Mill quoted in Subrata and Sushila (2007) maintained that due to the pattern of women socialization women acquiesce themselves to marginalization and other poor treatments and are also consenting parties to their marginalization even as they police their own subjugation. Women are oppressed and have been socialized to conform to the situation as a given. This pattern of life is therefore maintained, sustained and transferred, to the next generation of women through marginalized socialization compared to their male counterparts. Charon (1989) argued that stereotype subjugated life of women is then passed from generation to generations of women through socialization even by women to their daughters. Despite the efforts of international bodies such as the UN, and the international treaties to ensure gender equality and women mainstreaming in every facet of life endeavors.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the socialization process that women are subjected to women are lethargic to press for their rights. To further frustrate the effectuations of the treaties women have continued to transfer the docility unto their children. The founding UN charter chapter 111 article 3 of 1945 lays out the principal organs of the UN, and announces nondiscrimination policy for UN hiring, equal opportunity provisions. It bans restrictions on the eligibility of men and women. The charter also includes provision for equality between men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in principal and subsidiary organs. These failures often come from a lack of sufficient knowledge and understanding to implement processes in

ways that encourage women's participation and adequately address both gender-based violations and the gendered consequences of human rights violations. The UN believes that access to justice and legal empowerment helps to translate legal issues and guarantees gender equality into real improvements in the daily lives of women (SDG. 5) by supporting women in protecting themselves from domestic violence, sharing in benefits from natural resources, retaining control over loans taken out in their name, and accessing inheritance or property upon divorce. On the other hand, the OECD (2019) believes that access to justice is integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and inclusive growth (OECD 2019). Emordi (2018) was of the opinion that any development plan without the active involvement of women would be akin to building a development tower of babel which would soon crumble.

To empower women to access justice women need a re-socialization to unlearn the negative things they have learned. They need to be trained to understand their rights as human rights and to stand against any infringements of their rights in their family, workplace and social environment. Women need to begin a re-socialization process to be able to train their children especially girls to resist any form of marginalization and to boldly approach the justice institutions to press for their rights when denied or infringed. Without women being strong pillar of support and encouragement to one another in support of their rights, women access to justice will continue to be a mirage. Women must be re-socialized not to police their fellow women who try to fight for their rights. The training of next generation of girls cannot be over-emphasized. Women need to be re-socialized to stand up for their rights and be encouraged to transmit the same to their children for women to achieve access to justice against any infringements of their rights. Without a re-socialization and proper knowledge of women's rights, women empowerment and access to justice in a patriarchal country like Nigeria would not be achieved. Consequently, access to justice will continue to be elusive and abysmal to stakeholders of women empowerment and access to justice in Nigeria as they continue to allow weak judicial system and breed generations of women who are unaware of their rights and lethargic to approach justice institution when their rights are infringed.

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