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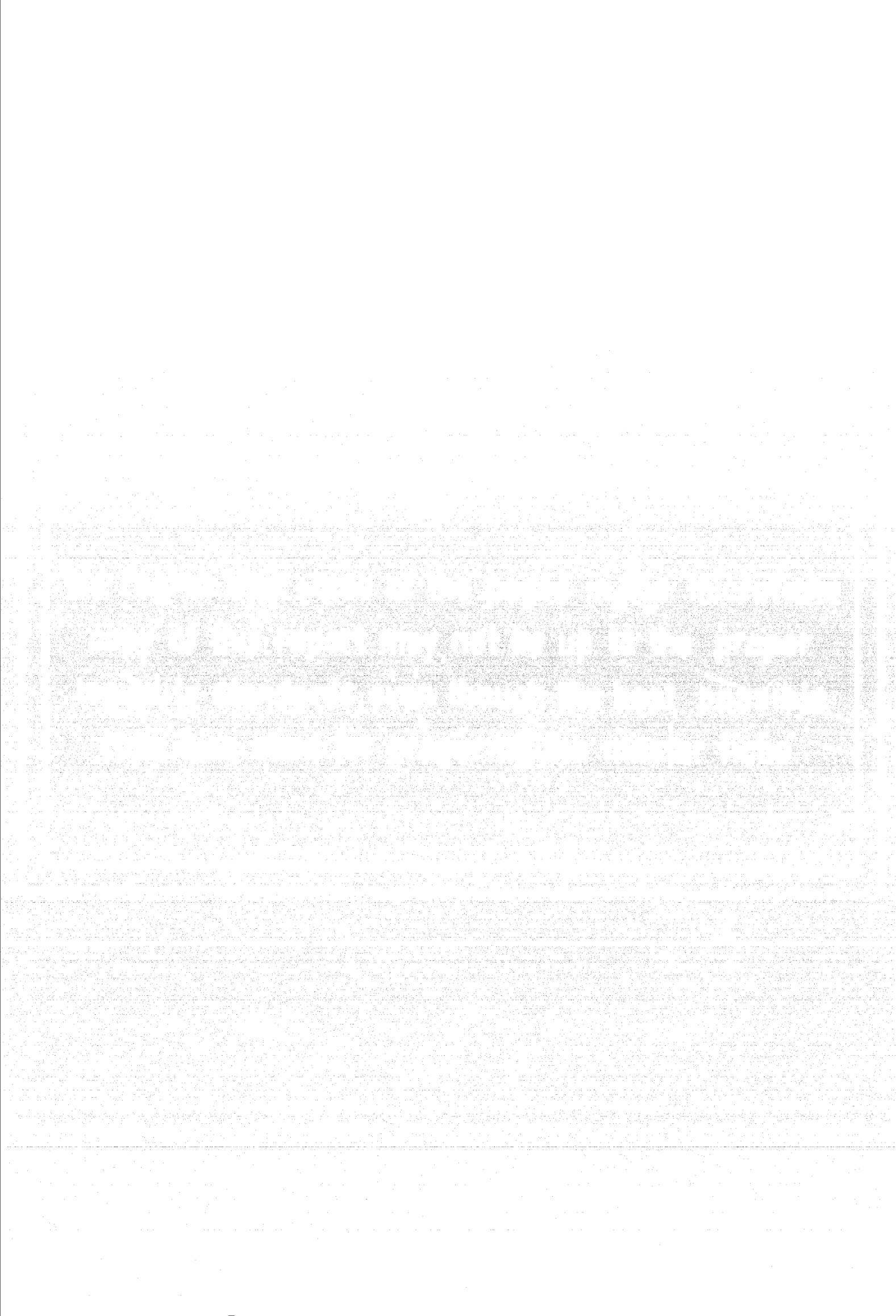
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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRIALIZATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Country paper on Nigeria *

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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRIALISATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Introduction:

The Nigerian industrialisation experience provides a good illustration of the Role of Women in industrialisation in developing countries in view of the fact that most developing countries share similar colonial, historical and political past as well as similar development parameters such as population, education, natural, physical, geographical and geological endowments as well as financial resources.

2. Developing economies are characterised by the dominance of agriculture which usually accounts for over 60% of the total gainful occupation of the countries while manufacturing and crafts account for about 17%, with distribution sector taking about 13%. Such economies are therefore faced with the challenge and opportunity of creating an industrial base that can guarantee self-sustaining growth.

Parameters for Development:

3. Some of the parameters for self-sustaining development include natural endowments, population, executive capacity, financial resources and size and dynamism of the entrepreneurial group. A dynamic and progressive Government then faces the challenge of

harnessing and articulating the various resources to maximize the national output.

The Role of Women in the Industrialisation Process:

4. The contribution of women to the industrialisation process can be assessed by many factors, especially by their composition in the population mix, the country's customs and taboos, educational opportunities, domestic challenges and societal values. Statistics show that females are increasingly accounting for about 50 per cent of the population of many countries. In 1963, the population of Nigeria was put at 55.6 million and women accounted for about 50%. Their positive contribution to the economy is closely related to the educational opportunities that are open to them as well as societal values placed on women's education. The struggle for women's emancipation in Nigeria was a reaction to anti-women orientation in so far as their education and their societal roles are concerned. In the recent past in the pre-dominantly moslem Northern Nigeria, women were largely to be seen, not heard. It was even difficult to see them in public because of the purdah system that is operational in that part of the country, maybe as a result of religion and custom that are embraced in that part.

5. The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is conscious of the inter-relationship of education and the role of women in the development process. The period up to the first quarter of the 20th century saw very little of women's formal education. The little achievement recorded could be attributed to the activities of the early missionaries who helped in the education of women through the establishment of institutions for primary and post-primary education, although the few schools that existed were filled with male sex. Many parents saw the role of women as being confined to the home. Even where elementary education was provided, there was little or no incentive to go further since there were little or no opportunities to practise the known professions. In spite of this observation however, Nigeria is known to have produced women leaders in the field of education, medicine, law and politics. In this connection, one may place on record the inspiring activities of Mrs. Ayo Manuwa, Mrs. Ransome-Outi and Mrs. Abimbola Awoliyi all of blessed memory.

6. Government educational policy provides for equal opportunities for all citizens, both male and female. This policy is manifested by the admission of candidates into post-primary institutions. One of the country's Polytechnics will be used to illustrate this point.

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS INTO ONE OF NIGERIA'S POLYTECHNIC BY SEX 1974/75 - 1976/77

1974/75		1975/76			1976/77			ALL TOTAL			
M	F	TOTAL	M	F	TOTAL	M	F	TOTAL	M	F	ALL
1,988	601	2,589	1,803	612	2,415	2,296	716	3,012	6,087	1,929	8,016

A BREAKDOWN OF ADMISSION IN THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES IN THE SAME POLYTECHNIC FOR 1977/78 ACADEMIC YEAR

1. Department of Electrical Engineering

MALE 119
FEMALE NIL

MALE 153
FEMALE 6

2. Department of Mechanical Engineering

MALE 168
FEMALE NIL

MALE 219 65
FEMALE 19 7

4. Town Planning and Architecture Estate Management and Fine Arts

Members of the Academic Staff

Department of Electrical Engineering

MALE 10
FEMALE 1

Department of Environmental Sciences

MALE 8
FEMALE 1

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS INTO ONE OF NIGERIA'S UNIVERSITIES -
 FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY - THE FIRST INTAKE WAS
in 1972

Department of Petroleum
 Engineering
1974/75 Post Graduate

MALE 12 4
 FEMALE NIL NIL

1975/76

MALE 22 5
 FEMALE NIL NIL

1976/77

MALE 18 1
 FEMALE NIL NIL

1977/78

MALE 28
 FEMALE 1

Department of Agricultural
 Engineering
1975/76

MALE 7
 FEMALE NIL

1976/77

MALE 8
 FEMALE NIL

Dept. of Forestry Engineering

MALE 2
 FEMALE NIL

Dept. of Wood Engineering

MALE 4
 FEMALE NIL

Department of Food Technology

1976/77

MALE 12
 FEMALE 2

1977/78

36
 3

7. As would be observed from the above Tables, there has been gradual improvement in the advancement of women in the field of technical education. The point must be stressed that there is no discrimination in the admission policy of post-secondary institutions in Nigeria as long as prospective students possess the educational requirements. And women are gradually taking their place in the various professions.

Structure and Problems of the Industrial Sector:

8. The growth of the manufacturing sector over the past decade has been rapid and sustained. Between 1962-63 and 1972-73 value added in manufacturing and craft grew at a compound rate of 10% per annum with manufacturing alone growing by 12.2%. As a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product, the manufacturing sector was 5.64% in 1962 and 7.79% in 1972. This percentage share compares unfavourably with the 15 to 20% share attained in many developed economies. However, the potential growth of the sector is considerable.

9. The scope for the contribution of women to industrialisation maybe better put into focus if one examines the structure of the manufacturing sector. First is the dominance of low technology light industries such as food, beverages, tobacco, textiles and wearing apparels. All these take about 51% of the value added in manufacturing. Women are very active in this sub-sector especially

in rural and cottage industries in which weaving, pottery, carving and ornamental decorations feature prominently. Women in Kabba area of Kwara State are very active in weaving. Another sub-sector takes care of metal furniture and fixtures, structural metal products and fabricated metal. Unfortunately, the engineering sub-sector, namely the manufacturing of agricultural and special industrial machinery, household electrical apparatus, transport equipment etc., account for only 2.3% of value added in manufacturing. Quite naturally and expectedly, the share of petroleum refining sector is relatively high, taking more than 10%. This high proportionate share of refining and allied activities emphasises the roles of natural resources in determining the industrial structure of the economy.

10. The scope for the operation of men and women in the industrialisation process is a function of the development, and growth of that sector. But unfortunately, the industrial sector suffers from some constraints such as:

- i) the declining agricultural output which affects the quality and quantum of agricultural products, food etc., available to the industrial sub-sector;
- ii) in-adequate infrastructure which increases both the initial and operational costs of projects thereby

compromising the commercial feasibility of economically desirable projects;

- iii) restrictive industrial policy and administrative practices;
- iv) shortage of industrial manpower and the relative unattractiveness of manufacturing to indigenous businessmen as compared with quick returns from ordinary trading activities;
- v) slow implementation of the public sector manufacturing projects, and
- vi) shortage of development capital.

ii) Although there are policy objectives directed towards the solution of some of the identified constraints, the effects of the policy measures are slow to materialise. The female sector of the population is also handicapped by some factors such as:

- (a) difficulties in raising substantial finance to pursue industrial projects;
- (b) social customs and taboos in restricting women to certain jobs; and in limiting their educational opportunities;
- (c) the legal restrictions on the self-identity and independence of married women;

- (d) the inadequate infrastructure which make it difficult for women to combine domestic responsibilities with industrial ones, and
- (e) the complex and energy-sapping nature of many industrial undertakings.

However, in spite of the identified constraints, Nigerian women successfully rub shoulders with their male counterparts in the following areas:

(i) Building/Construction:

There are women architects, designers, valuers, a few building engineers as well as town planners etc.

(ii) Petroleum:

Looking at Table III once again one could see a breakthrough as it were. There are a few female chemical engineers in Port-Harcourt (Rivers State) working in the oil fields for instance. Also at the Federal Research Institute, Oshodi, Lagos, there are women Chemical Engineers and others holding top managerial/executive posts. There are ladies doing their postgraduate courses in the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Ife.

(iii) Food/Hotels Industries

Women dominate these lines both in production and in research institutes in the country. They control the entrepreneurship of quite a substantial part of the hotel industry. It is remarkable to note that a woman is the Assistant Production Manager of a company where edible vegetable oils, Vegetable Oils of Nigeria (VON) are extracted mechanically.

(iv) Manufacturing

(a) Pharmaceuticals:

There are no women entrepreneurs among the few men engaged in this line in the country at the moment. But happily there are many women professionals such as pharmacists and chemists in the employment of such organisations.

(b) Beds and Mattresses (Foams):

One of the leading bed and foam manufacturing companies in the country is owned by a woman entrepreneur.

(c) Electric and Electronics

This is yet at a humble beginning in the country for both males and females, although there are

women entrepreneurs rendering electrical engineering services to construction companies - Lecem is owned by a woman electrical engineer. The University of Ife in Oyo State renders courses in electronics and already a woman has successfully completed the course. Women are employed as programmers in the few computer centres in the country.

(d) Printing, Publishing and Allied Industries:

There are many women in the field of publication. They engage in writing and publication of such work. The printing trade has not attracted many women.

(e) Insurance/Banking:

There are many professional women insurers in the employment of other insurance companies as well as in Banking. There are also many women holding Chief Executive/Managerial posts in the banking industry.

Strengthening the Contribution of Women:

11. In the preceding paragraphs, we have tried to X-ray the problems and prospects of the industrial sector, and the role of women in the process, it is now pertinent to mention very briefly measures that may be taken to strengthen the contribution of women to the industrialisation process. In this

connection, there are some parameters that readily come to mind. The role that is envisaged for women in this direction may be a product of national policy and planning designed to uplift the status of women, enhance their educational opportunities, remove identifiable constraints, re-structure the industrial mix and possibly develop programmes that will facilitate technology transfer.

12. In so far as educational policies are concerned, Nigeria does not give discriminatory treatment to its citizens as there are equal opportunities for both men and women. There are many co-educational secondary grammar/commercial schools and the universities are open to both males and females. The constraints that exist are the result of social conventions which are now gradually dying out; viz the feeling that girls are better kept at home, and that boys need all the education they can get. This accounts for the relatively poor participation of women vis-à-vis men in the higher levels of the industrial sector of the economy. There are women factor, hands in quantum in e.g. electronics industries, but no women of managerial status.

13. The participation of women in national policy making and plan implementation is a function of their level of education and their political awareness. Nigeria is witnessing an increasing number

of women particularly in the field of education. With the impending return to civil rule, it is hoped that women will make their impact in politics.

14. Another social constraint is the acceptability of women in the corridors of power. Nigeria gives equal opportunities to men and women and it is the contribution of each individual that counts, irrespective of whether he is a man or a woman. However, physical constraints which make it difficult for women to combine domestic and public roles, the unwillingness of employers and government to take adequate cognisance of this factor by provision of liberal maternity leave, day care centres etc., often prevents the woman of ability to scale the same heights as the man. However, contribution of women to the domestic and public economy is now acknowledged.

15. The various governments can therefore assist in promoting the active participation of women in the industrialisation process by providing nursery and day care centres where women can safely put their children during working hours. There should also be arrangements for part-time employment opportunities for women and, as part of the programme for the upliftment of the status of women, adult literacy classes should be organised for women traders.

16. Since Government is made up of people, an appeal should be

made to the menfolk to allow their wives full participation in the social, economic and political programmes for the development of the country. Knowledge, intelligence and wisdom are not only the preserves of men. Women also have natural endowments and native intelligence. A conducive environment should be created for the full realisation of the potentialities of the women folk.

17. Finally, one must recognise that the factors of production are land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship. Nigeria is fortunate to have enacted the Land Use Decree, 1978, which gives easy access to the ownership of land for developmental purposes. The decree admits of no discrimination sex-wise. On the labour market, men and women are free to contribute their labour depending on the level of physical exertion that is involved in the production process. Entrepreneurship depends on the ability of each individual to innovate and take risks. The big constraint may be accessibility to development finance and it is here that appeal should be made to banking institutions and finance houses to be liberal in their lending policies and accord dignity to women. Where possible, governments should remove legal constraints that impede the totality of development efforts by the women folk.

18. During the International Women's Decade, a forum for the dissemination of information on the status and role of women in a changing world of technology should be created with the assistance of UNESCO, UNIDO, FAO and other international organizations for the exchange of views on problems facing the women folk and womanhood in the development process.



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