



Research Article

Challenges of Northern Nigerian women liberation and involvement in trade union movements

Mustapha Alhaji Ali^{1*}

Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author email: alimustapha07@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Nigerian trade union movements were initiated to protect the right and interest of its members. Because of this the paper aim to examine the challenges of Northern Nigerians women's liberation and involvement in trade union movements. Surely, women are encountering numerous challenges in the NTU of the Northern region and are not well empowered in trade union movements of the Northern region. These challenges have repeatedly postured a danger or set back to women participation, empowerment, and representation in the trade unionism of the region. This study is qualitative in nature. Data were obtained through primary and secondary sources of data collection, by the used of semi-structured questionnaires and systematic review of related literature. This aided the researcher in acquiring suitable and right data on the topic under study. In explaining the topic under study Social Constructivism and Liberal Feminist theories was used, the supposition of these theories positioned on gender disparity as man-made not naturally formed. The study found that cultural stereotype, religion factors, unequal access to the education time factor, poverty, among others have harmfully paid to women empowerment and participation in trade union movements of the Northern region. Thus, the research recommends that the government should provide women with free education and different kinds of skills acquisition programmes to empower them to participate in the trade union movements in the Northern region. Religion leaders and parents should enlighten their children/women on the significance of women participation and empowerment in the trade union activities of the Northern region.

Keywords: *Challenges; Empowerment; Movements; Northern Nigeria; Participation; Trade Union; Women*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Nigerian societies, women are not equal to men in all sphere of life. The status of women in society is very little than men counterpart. This is because of the patriarchal and heterogeneity nature of the country. Men are considered the leader of the household or family and they are the decision-makers in the family; women are occupied with domestic responsibilities. Though, trade unions did not disregard the significance of women empowerment and participation in trade union movements as well as their position in the society because of their roles and reasonable number in the country. Therefore, women empowerment and participation are essential for the growth of all organization in the nation either educational, economic, social or political (Ali, Zakuan, & Mohammad, 2018a)

However, (UNDESA, 2018) reported that Nigeria as a whole has a projected population of 196,651,048 in all, out of this the men populace is 99,579,686 which is (50.6%) and the women populace is 97,071,362 which is 49.4% correspondingly. This means women have a meaningful population in the nation that needs to be considered and empowered at all levels.

Women empowerment is a process which has to do with a series of some steps by which individuals or peoples become conscious of their rights and obligation and to know how to defend their civil rights. By knowing and following these steps people increase their health, economic and educational status of Empowerment. Empowerment is a procedure which allows individuals to significantly advance their living standard (Barik et al., 2015).

Nigerian trade Union movements (NTU) is a collection of men and women came together to protect the right and interest of its members, through negotiation and bargaining and to mediate between the employees and the employers. Nigerian trade union movement (NTUM) since its establishment has contributed massively to the political and economic growth of the Nigerian economy. Though women who have donated to its progress and growth and are constantly being deserted and demoted to the domestic responsibilities. This is because of the women subjugation and domination to domestic activities, as a result of this domination most of the are not taking part in the NTU of the Northern region and some of which are from the structure of labour unions, roles conflict, government lawmaking and seemly lack of interest from the women has contributed to women empowerment and participation (Oparanma, 2015).

However, Miranda (2005) noted that every human being has the right to participate in decisions making that define her or his life. This right is the foundation of the ideal of equal participation in decision-making among both genders. This right contends that since women know their condition better, they should equally partake with men counterpart to have their view successfully unified at all stages of policymaking and implementation, in NTU of the Northern region.

1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In every industrial relation, there is a tendency for clash of interest between the employers and employees often leads to the principle of negotiating and bargaining. This is paramount and applicable to public and private sectors. To balance such negotiation, the public workers settled for the formation of the Labour-union which are formed largely to protect the rights and interests of its members. Since the composition of the NTU comprises both men and women, it is expected that equal representation should be considered in the administrative bodies of the NTU. Women in the Northern states like Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa Kano Taraba and Yobe state are not adequately empowered and underrepresented in the leadership positions of the NTU. This is because of the patriarchal and heterogeneity nature of the states because of this the interests of their fellow women and rights are not appropriately represented and projected in the NTU activities. Women are not adequate in the labour force and labour leadership positions in all the Northern states irrespective of the large proportion of membership

they constitute in the labour force, because women in the Northern region are occupied with dual responsibilities which include labour work and domestic responsibility (Kanu, 2012). A study by (Ali, Zakuan, & Mohammad, 2018b) lamented that if women are overloaded with the domestic responsibility of the family and children while they pursue a profession, they cannot give enough time and energy to union activities and to compete with men who can and who are encouraged to bestow their entire time and energy in struggling for their demands.

The central argument in this paper is that NTU comprises both genders, but unfortunately women are not adequately participating in the NTU of the Northern region as observed in the work of (Ali, Mustapha Alhaji & Koki, 2018) that women in the Northern part of the country are not well empowered, this corresponds with the opinion of (Ali et al., 2018b).

It is understood that the population of women in the NTU of the Northern region does not match with the women strength in the labour union, and labour leaders because of the male domination over women in all the labour activities. This has created a wide gap between men and women in term of empowerment and participation in the NTU of the Northern region. In addition, it has created a wide vacuum in NTU membership and leadership positions in the region that need to be filled. It is on this note; the paper aims to examine the challenges of women empowerment and participation in NTU in the Northern part of the country. The justification for Northern Nigeria is that the unions comprise both men and women but all the NTU positions are being occupied by men, so also the union activities are being controlled by men, because of the patriarchal nature of the region that gave much power to men over women.

1.2. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the challenging factors of women liberation and involvement in Nigerian's trade union movements of the Northern region.
2. To explore why women are been subjugated to domestic responsibilities in the Northern region.

1.3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research work is of significance in several ways, it will help the Nigerian's trade union stakeholders in identifying the major challenges to women participation and empowerment, it will as well assist the government to detect and understand that women domination in the NTU is a serious problem to women representation in the union movements of the Northern region. Hereafter, this study will help the unions in making future decisions on matters affecting the Northern women in the trade union movements. It would serve as a reference point to academic's researchers conducting a study in a similar field and to policy and decision makers Nigeria's of the labour union. It will also help in bridging the gap by empowering women and encouraging to participate in the trade union of the Northern region. Convincingly, it will expose the effect of women marginalization in the trade unions of the Northern regions.

2. METHODOLOGY

In writing this article the researcher used the primary and secondary sources of data collection. For the purpose of the study, data were obtained using semi-structured questionnaires. In the case of the secondary sources data were obtained through relevant and related literature that were systematically reviewed. Qualitative research can simply be defined or referred to the techniques of data collection or data analysis and to a wider framework for conducting research. Qualitative research is very important in conducting research. This is because it allows the researcher to retain a focus on people's own framing issues and their term of reference. It also allows for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Sapiro, 2016; Creswell J.W, 2009).

2.1. PROFILE OF THE INFORMANTS

Both in-depth interview and observation were used to collect the data. In-depth interviews were conducted with the seven 7 informants from the unions of the Northern region. The reason for interviewing seven informants is because the researcher has reached a saturation where the informant has stated repeating their view nothing new is coming from them. The informants interviewed are the executives of the NTU from the Northern region. The justification for interviewing the executives of the NTU is because of the knowledge and experience they have in NTU.

2.2. THE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE INFORMANTS

This section explores the demographic profiles of the informants to raise their background information in this regard, the below Table 1: depict the summary of the informants.

Table 1. Demographic Data of the Informants

Demographic	Features	Number
Age	20-30	2
	31-40	1
	41-50	3
	51-60	1
Qualification	Secondary School Certificate	1
	Diploma	2
	Nigeria Certification in Education (NCE)	2
	Degree	2
Gender	Male	6
	Female	1
Occupation	Civil Servants	7
Total		7

Source: Fieldwork (2018)

From the Table 3.1: above, the ages of the key informant range from 20 to 30 years (2), while 31 to 40 years (1), 41 to 50 years (3), 51 to 60 years (1). Furthermore, the highest qualification among the informants is Degree (2), Nigeria Certification in Education (2) Diploma (2) and Secondary School Certificate (1). The Table also shows that the key

informants are males and female respectively. The occupation of the informants shows all the responds are civil servant from different sectors.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

All the data obtained from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically guided by the research questions, using MAXQDA 2018 and NVIVO 12 Softwares. This exercise provides some guidance and effective type of qualitative analysis that pursues to classify designs (differences, commonalities) in the contents of data. It continues through a sequence of well-defined stages such as category, categorizing that are useful not only for those who engage in this type of analysis but also for the overall understanding of the nature of qualitative analysis (Sgier, 2012; Creswell JW, Clark P, 2011). In the course of analysis the researcher used triangulation method: here it means multiple methods are used in data analysis (Sekara & Bougie, 2010).

The data generated were coded using MAXQDA 2018 software and NVIVO 12 because they are suitable for qualitative data analysis, MAXQDA and NVIVO are very significant in dealing with huge volume of data, and they also assist in managing and organizing the data. All data were coded under several nodes. However, coding is defined as the procedures for identifying those part of the data that is related to the research questions under study. The codes or categories (or nodes) will not be predetermined but guided by the research questions as well as the theoretical framework. This exercise helps the researcher in identifying anything of interest or importance in answering the research questions (Plano Clark, V. L. & Creswell, 2008). In addition to the MAXQDA, the researcher used NVIVO 12 to generate the diagram that illustrates the various view of the informants.

3.1. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM AND LIBERAL FEMINIST THEORY

To explain the topic under study the researcher uses theory triangulation this means multiple theories were used in explaining the study or the data (Sekaran, 2003). Social Constructionism theory and the liberal theory can clearly explain the assumptions that, all the gender modifications that exist in the society are socially constructed. In view of this, the theories aim to remove women from the bondage of discrimination, marginalization, and under-domination domination, and acts as a saving influence, and to be empowered and participate actively in the trade union activities of the Northern region of the nation. It works to make the society which contents the needs and powers of the people. This is because the theories tried to explain and change the situations that dominate individuals in any given society, and disclose that gender inequality is informally created not geologically made (Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, 1976; Bohan, 1993 & Unger, 1983).

3.2. CHALLENGES WOMEN FACES IN NIGERIAN'S TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS OF NORTHERN REGION

In discussing the challenges of women domination in Nigerian's trade union movements of Northern Nigeria. The study pointed out some major challenge's women are encountering in the trade union of the Northern region, these factors include but not

limited to environmental factors, unequal access to education, religious barriers and the challenges the union itself faces in running its activities. Under the environmental factors, the informant noted that Hausa culture and tradition, the society itself, women themselves and time creation for union meetings are some of the challenging factors.

Under unequal access to education, there are challenges like lack of orientation and inadequate finance by the women. Additionally, the informants exposed some challenging factors to women empowerment and participation Nigerian's trade union movements activities, such as; heterogeneity nature of the nation, patriarchy nature of the regions, number of women in the Nigerian's trade union movements.

In line with the religious factor, the informants observed that religion believes, and the purdah system are a factor to women empowerment and participation in NTUM activities of the Northern region. The informants disclosed that, there are some challenging factors that, women in Nigerian's trade union movements are encountered, these include: women unwillingness, women domestic responsibilities, family factor, cultural barriers, male domination and intimidations in the Nigerian's trade union movements of the Northern region.

Based on the above the study discovered that these are factors that affect women empowerment and participation in Nigerian's trade union movements of the Northern region. The study further found that there are some challenging factors which affect women empowerment and participation in the NTU of the region under examination, these include but not limited to; the unions, sociopolitical factor, heterogeneity nature of the nation, women themselves, the society itself, the environmental factor, pregnancy, the family, un-equal-access to education, poverty, culture, time creation and patriarchal nature of the Northern region.

According to (Bari, 2005) the interrelated problem in women's in politics has to do with the structure of politics as a whole and the liberal democracy in particular. From history, democracy helped males well than females. Considering the political system from early Greece to the contemporary times of the 21st century, it has constructed on the public-private opposition and exempted women from social responsibility.

In a similarly opinion, (Ali, & Koki, 2018) opined that women have been set aside from the area of policymaking as greatest of the political philosophers and thinkers which comprises Aristotle, Hegel and Thomas Hobbes, John Lock, Plato and Rousseau, measured that women are suitable only for household's responsibilities in the secluded domain and sustained that there was no room for women in politics because of their appropriateness in helpful roles as wives and mothers. This opinion contradict the postulations of Social Constructivism theory which believes that all gender differences that are existing in the society are not natural but rather they are artificially built by the society. This theory kick against all sort of gender inequality in the society.

Female workers in Nigeria face many challenges with respect to their participation in various economic sectors. However, the domination of women by the male was underpinning the active participation of women in all the structure at all level in the

Northern region. In addition to this their domestic affairs and the demands of formal employment is also affected. This places the women at the disadvantaged position to take up this kind of labour task. Similarly, the over-concentration of power in the Nigerian's trade union movements implies that those in a leadership position do often use their authority to allocate resources. In this case, men who are in leadership position use their power to perpetuate not only their positions but their prejudices, values, and stereotypes (NLC Conference, 2007). In view of this, Liberal Feminist theory postulated that both genders are born equal and needs equal treatment in all social activities.

Figure 1. Is the chart depicting various colour each color is representing themes and sub-themes under objective two of the study? This topic has six themes each theme and sub-themes are colored with a different color. They are explaining the challenges of women empowerment and participation in the trade union of the Northern region. However, the first theme under the challenges is the family which is coloured in yellow color, together with its sub-themes. The second theme is the environmental factor colored in a blue color with its sub-themes. The third is unequal access to education colored in a pink color with its sub-themes. The fourth one is the factors that affect women empowerment colored in a brown color with all its sub-themes. Then, religion barriers coloured in a green color with the sub-themes and the challenges Nigerian's trade union movements encountered in gender equality colored in orange color together with the sub-themes.

Looking at the chart it is understood that some colours relate to one another, this describes the degree of the challenges in the in the region. The chart depicts that women in the Northern region are not well empowered because of many challenging factors that are explained under the various themes and sub-themes

Key for the Below Chart

Challenges of Women Domination	Yellow
Environmental Factors	Blue
Unequal Access to Education	Pink
Factors to Women Domination	Brown
Religion Barriers	Green
Challenges to Gender Equality	Orange

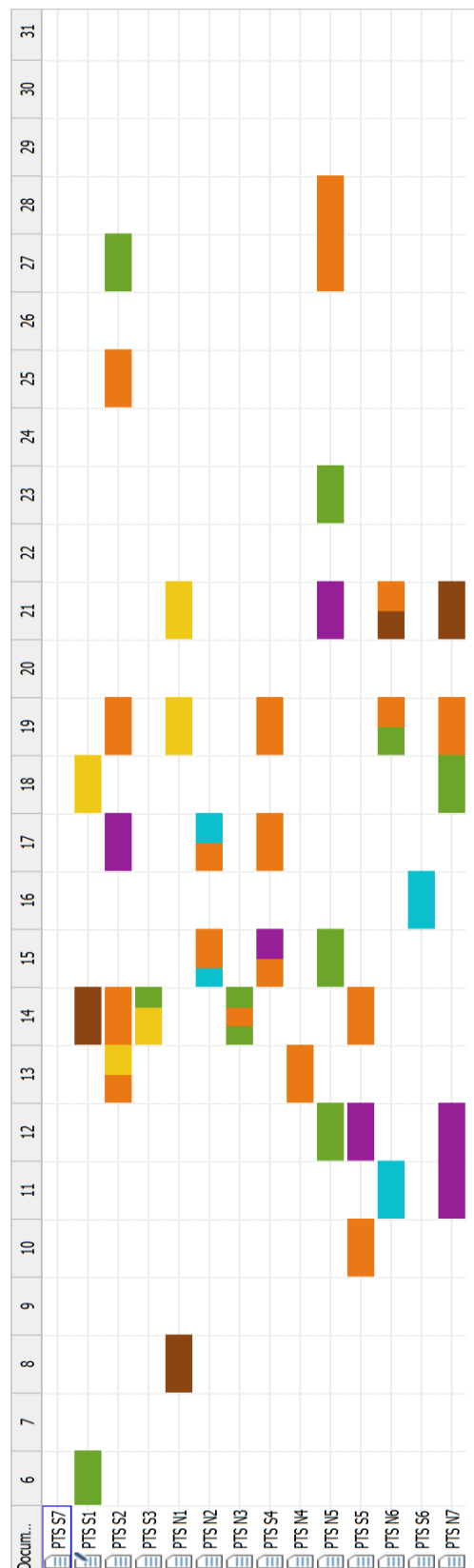


Fig. 1. Chart Displaying the Challenges of Women Participation and Empowerment in Nigerian Trade Union Movement of the Northern Region.

Source: MAXQDA 2018 software

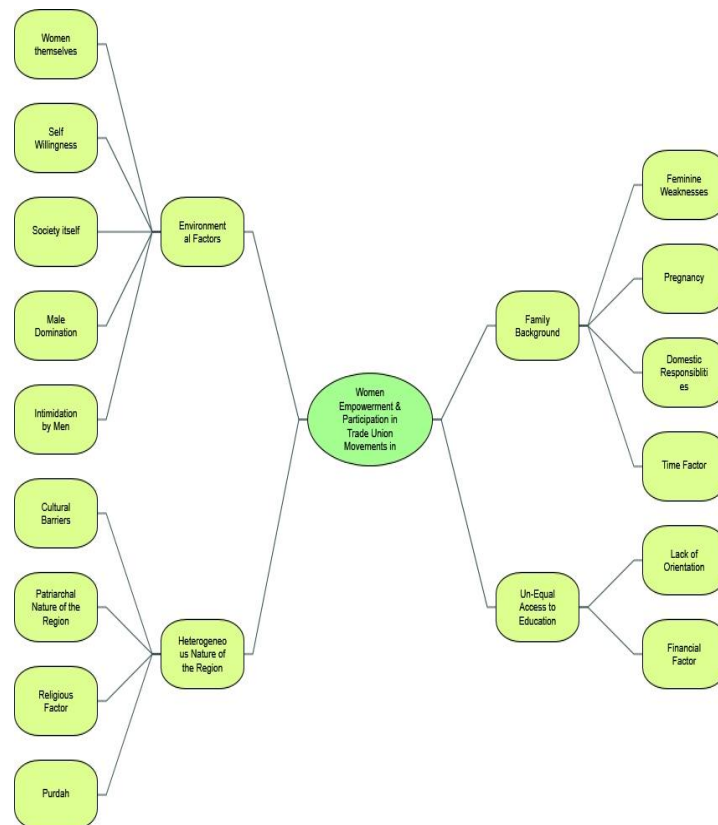


Fig. 2. Diagram Displaying the Views of the Informants on the Challenges to Women Empowerment and Participation in the Nigerian Trade Union Movement in the Northern Region.

Source: Nvivo 12

The above diagram figure 2 illustrates the views of the informant that responded to the challenges of women empowerment and participation in trade union movements in Northern Nigeria. The study found that there are several challenges women in the Northern part of the country are encountering in the trade union movements. However, these challenges are categories into themes and sub-themes based on the response of the informants. The themes include; environmental factor under this there are women themselves, self-willingness, society itself, male domination, and intimidation by men. The second of them is family background this also has sub-themes which comprise; female weaknesses, pregnancy, domestic responsibilities, and time factor. The third theme is heterogeneity nature of the region this also has sub-themes under it which comprise; cultural barriers, patriarchal nature of the region, religion factor, purdah or (lack of women freedom). Then the last theme is unequal access to education, this include; lack of orientation, and financial factor. Figure 1 and 2 explained the challenges of women empowerment and participation in trade union movements in the Northern part of the country.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found that women in the Nigerian's trade union movements of the Northern region are not actively empowered and participating in the union activities, this because

of several factors that marginalized women from empowerment and participation in the union activities of the Northern region. These include an environmental factor, family factor, time creation, unequal access to education, re-orientation, heterogeneity, patriarchy nature of the region, religion factor, purdah system, self-willingness, pregnancy, women themselves, society its self, domestic responsibilities, female weaknesses, cultural factors, male domination and intimidation by men.

4.1. FAMILY BACKGROUND

Family background is one of the challenging factor women are encountering in the trade union movement of the Northern region, especially when it comes to women empowerment and involvement in the NTU of the Northern region. The study found that family is a challenge to women empowerment in the Northern region, this is because some women might be ready to take part but because of the tight nature of the family or family upbringing they cannot be able to get involved in labour unions of their choice. The study further added that without the support of the immediate family it is difficult for women to come out and do the needful she further expressed that: some of the challenge women encountered start from their family the family brothers they are the people organizing the family most of the time when they want to come out they start by taking permission from the husbands. This is because of the family background and culture that controlled women movements in the region.

4.2. FEMALE PHYSICAL WEAKNESSES

Female Weaknesses is one of the challenging and dominating factors to women empowerment and participation in the Nigerian's trade union movements in Northern Nigeria, this was realized in the interview session. The participants disclosed that women are naturally weak especially the pregnant ones. The noted that the pregnant ones cannot take part actively in the trade union movements because of the body weakness. The study found that women are naturally weak because they are weaker sex, because of this they need to be strong and encourage by the men to partake actively in the trade union movements of the Northern region. The research found that some women have this weakness. Based on the above response it is observed that some of the women are pregnant so, because of this pregnancy, they cannot perform actions or deliver well in the trade unionism. To justify the argument (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010), disclosed that women are viewed as weaker sexes. This is related to African social value, norms, and beliefs, which have uncontrolled their important aids and have placed them in an inferior position to men in the country's political system. This is measured from Liberal Feminist theory that men and women are equal and deserved equal treatment in term of leadership and membership.

4.3. PREGNANCY

In this vein, it is clearly understood that women subjugation to domestic responsibility is because of marital status which is not naturally made in the society they are man-made. In fact, there are many challenges women faces in the Northern region in line with

headship in the trade unionism of the Northern region, however, the study noted that “assuming a Women is having a new born baby or pregnancy she cannot deliver well in the trade unionism, this also part of the challenges” women are facing a lot of challenges in the labour movements of the Northern region. Similarly, women with a newly borne baby cannot participate actively because of the child and other domestic responsibilities attached to it.

4.4. TIME FACTOR

The study found that time is one of the challenge women faces in participation and empowerment in the trade union movement of the Northern region this was exposed at the interview session the study found that women don't have time to undertake union activities because of the domestic responsibilities, the study further understood that women have limited time as men. It is believing that time is a constraint to women participation in the trade unionism.

Similarly, the timing of the meeting is also a challenge to women participation and empowerment in trade union movements of the Northern region, the timing of union meetings is very important because many women before you bring them out of their home it take time. It is belief that, coming back late in the night from those social activities is another challenges to women participation in the NTU of the region under study, and is not allowed in the Northern region because is against the religion as well as the culture, because of this most of the spouses does not allow their wives to come out in the night hour for any union meetings.

In line with the above opinion (Momoh, 2009) that women generally, record low level of attendance at various meeting more especially when it is not in the working hours. However, a study by (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010) revealed that fear of broken home and the needs to perform their domestics activities were identified as one of the main reasons preventing women from struggling for a leadership position. Social Constructivism theory kick against this gender vices that subjugated women to domestic chores. This is because of the belief that this gender inequality is not natural, but artificial made to favour their personal interest.

4.5. DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITY

This is one of the major challenge women encountered in participating in trade union movements of the Northern region. To explain this a study by (Allanana, 2013) noted that domestic responsibility is to assign to women in every society. In line with this opinion, the study added that women have many domestic assignments which have been preventing them from coming out to participate and contribute to the union movements in the Northern region. In view of the assertions see the work of (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010) that taking the above opinion into cognizance, it is transparent that, women themselves are weak as such they are characterized as weaker sexes in any society and they are condoning to domestic responsibility, this is because of the colonial thought and the patriarchal arrangement of the states, African social value, norms, and beliefs. That have

neglected women efforts and placed them in a subordinate position to men in the nation's political system and leave them with domestic affairs to take care of their children at home. These are measured from Social Constructivism theory as man made in the society to favour the interest of men at the expense of the women.

4.6. UNEQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Educational factor has arisen from the interview session that women have unequal access to education in the Northern region which made them benchwarmers in the trade union movements. It added that in Northern part they so much believe assigning domestic responsibilities to women then enrolling them to acquire knowledge, because of this most of the Northern women are communicating in their native language because they have not attained any school. It is noted that women are not adequately educated because of unequal access to education. The study observed that women are not well educated as such they do not participate actively in the trade unionism. In line with the above argument Liberal Feminist theory suggested for equal treatment among both genders in the all the sphere of life.

4.7. LACK OF WOMEN RE-ORIENTATION

Lack of women re-orientation emerged at the interview session that women in the Northern region are not adequately oriented like the men counterpart. This is believed to be one of the major factors to women empowerment and participation in the NTU of the region under examination. This is because most of the women in the Northern region are not exposed to labour activities and the importance attached to it as such they have less interest in the labour unionism. To support the argument (Ejumudo, 2013)(Barik et al., 2015) observed that: There is, need for a re-orientation by individuals, groups, institutions and agencies (both governmental and non-governmental) on gender equality matters that will interpret into attitudinal change and response to women in the Nigerian's trade union movements which is very important to encourage them, so that they can participate in societal activities, which is relevant for the effectiveness of gender parity and women liberation in Nigeria. This is measured from the Liberal Feminist theory which believes that both genders are born equal and deserved equal treatment in all the society. And the postulation of the theory is that no nation is hoped to develop if half of its resources are neglected (women).

4.8. INADEQUATE CAPITAL

Inadequate capital is found to be one of the major challenge's women faces when they want to pursue their goals and objectives in the trade union movements in the Northern region. This revelation was made at the interview session. It further added that women are not financially buoyant. So, the study noted that without finance there is no way women can actively compete with the men counterparts and to participate in trade union movements. It is understood that participation in trade union activities involved money. This shows that finance is a major obstacle to women involvement in trade union movements.

In line with the above response (Abara, 2014; Agbalajobi, 2010) identified that, most of the women are low-income earners because of the total subjugation to domestic duties, so it affects women participation in leadership positions, however, most of the women succeeded in the politics was because of the influence and efforts of the men that sponsor and struggle for them in politics to actualize their dreams and otherwise.

Besides, women dependence on men financially and otherwise manifest through wife's dependence on their husband's incomes which reveals the financial incapacitation of women in the societies. Because of this, it is assumed that women desire to participate in NTU has been seriously affected by the lack of financial support to encourage them to participate actively in the Nigerian's trade union movements of their choice.

4.9. HETEROGENEITY NATURE OF THE REGION

Nigeria is a country located in the western part of Africa, in the Southern part of Niger. Its official name is the Federal Republic of Nigeria the country is heterogeneous in nature. So also, the region. Heterogeneous in the sense that the region comprises people of different culture, religion, tribes, and background. Heterogeneity nature of the region is another challenge that women face in trade union of the Northern region this was explored at the course of the interview. The challenges and domination women face in trade union movements of the Northern region is the heterogeneous nature of the region which brought a higher level of men domination over women.

However, in line with the assertion (Majeed, 2017) showcased that in a diverse nation like Nigeria is not likely to change the national agreement over sectional interest than the same country. Taking into consideration the fact that harmony of purpose amongst citizens of a country is a condition for political firmness, economic growth, and expansion, the heterogeneous nature of Nigeria rising from the unification of many inherent empires, traditional and ethnic groups into one environmental unit has frequently been liable for its failure to progress.

4.10. PATRIARCHY NATURE OF THE NORTHERN REGION

It is observed that the Northern region is patriarchal in nature, this patriarchy is one of the challenging factor to women involvement and liberation in the trade union activities of the Northern region. More so, the patriarchal nature of the region has led to women domination and subjugation in trade union movement of the Northern region. In discussing how trade unions empower women in the Northern region to participate actively it is understood that patriarchy nature of the Northern region affects women empowerment and participation, this was disclosed at the interview session. Women in the Northern region are not empowered because of the patriarchal nature of the region. They are controlled by the husband, parents, culture, and religion. To support this statement (Allanana, 2013; Ali et al., 2018a) patriarchy means an unjust system that justifies the oppression of women, they all emphasized that, patriarchy is wider system of hierarchical organization that goes across social, political, religious, cultural, financial and economic aspect, in which most of the top posts in all the society are manage and

dominated by the men. This is measured from the Social Constructivism theory that all gender differences that exist in the society are not natural but rather they are artificially constructed by men in the society to favour their personal interest.

4.11. CULTURAL BARRIER

The study found that one of the challenging and dominating factors for women in the trade union movement of the Northern region is a cultural barrier. This issue arose during the interview session. The study exposed that, the Northern women still are lack behind because of the culture. To overcome this cultural factor the study suggested that, we need to do a lot of work in the Northern society talk to our self and try to change some of the cultural bias that is affecting us now especially in the Northern axis of the country, where women are denied from social activities because of the cultural heritage.

For more understanding (Mohammed, and Jamal, 2013) they believed culture is the main disorder to Nigerian woman's involvement in politics as nearly all the Nigeria's cultures have downgraded females to domestic responsibilities and matrimonial households. Added that these cultures have made females be weaker and submissive to males in all consequences of life. Therefore, where the females could even do everything better because they are exposed to complete determination and govern by males in what they might be involved.

4.12. RELIGIOUS BARRIER

The study found that religion if one of the challenging and dominating factors to women empowerment and participation in the Nigerian's trade union movements of the Northern region this was unveiled at the interview session it disclosed that religion has a negative effect on women empowerment and participation in the trade union movement of the Northern region. However, in view of this, it noted that Female faces some religion challenges when they want to pursue their goals and objectives in Nigerian's trade union movements of the Northern region. The study noted that people in the North see it as prohibited or taboo for women to lead, it lamented that some married women are not allowed by their husband or their parents to come down to stay in any private place like a hotel, because it is against religion and culture of the Northern people. In view of the argument (Adeyemi & Akpotu, 2004) observed that women were being discriminated in leadership position in all social and office responsibility because of some prevailing factors that exist in the Nigerian context, and these include: religion, culture, educational factors that placed women on domestic responsibilities, the studies justify that women in Nigerian's trade union movements are just like a drop of water in an ocean if you compare to women population in Nigeria.

4.13. PURDAH (KULE) MEANS LACK OF WOMEN FREEDOM

Purdah is found to be a challenge to women empowerment and participation in trade union movements of the Northern region. A study by (Ali, 2014)observed that Purdah means women restriction at home because of Islamic principles that controlled the moral

affairs of women in society. Kule is a Hausa term it means lack of freedom of women because of religious teachings. It is observed that Purdah one of the challenging and dominating factors to women empowerment and participation in the Nigerian's trade union movements of the Northern region. However, some women will like to join union of their choice, but the Purdah system has denied them the freedom because they are being restricted may be by their husband because of the religious doctrine. These findings are in line with the assumptions of Social Constructivism theory, which believes that gender inequality is not natural but rather they are manmade.

4.14. ENVIRONMENT FACTORS

The environment is found to be one of the challenging factors to women empowerment and participation in the trade union movements. This emerged from the informants at the interview session. The authorized environment in which women are operating is mostly not very helpful. Some of the established practices such as the timing of conferences were made to be unresponsive to women needs. The timing of meetings had charged some of the females in the unions. The little involvement of females in the various leadership position affects the development in refining the lawful and controlling environment for endorsing gender fairness since very insufficient females are inducing in the lawmaking procedures (Onsongo & Onsongo, 2004).

4.15. WOMEN THEMSELVES

In discussing the challenges women encountered in Nigerian's trade union movements the study found that women themselves are factors. It is observed that women themselves are the contributing factors to all these problems, they are factors because of the way they placed themselves they believe they cannot log on with the men counterpart.

In line with this view the study exposed that, women themselves are seeing themselves as a concurred citizen, if they believe in equality, they should come out publicly to participate actively in the trade union movements in the Northern region. It is believing that what a man can do women can do even better. In lieu of the above, it is understood that some of them are shy enough to come out publicly to participate in union activities. Women in the Northern region for long have believed to be at home all the time to man the domestic affairs.

4.16. THE SOCIETY ITSELF

Society itself is a factor this arose during a series of interview with the various informant, however, the society itself is a challenge to women participation in trade union activities. This point was raised at the interview session that the society itself is a challenging factor this is because the people in the society are looking at the women participating in the union movements as not responsible, maybe because they see them any time they carry their bags and traveling out to attend NTU activities they look at them as irresponsible in the society, but in the actual sense they are not.

Based on the above expressions it is noted that:

“Women also feel discourages easily when they hear people speak negatively on them, and therefore they should disregard all side comments. Don’t mind what people say if you mind what people say you will be shy and discourage when you begin to listen to side comment you will be discouraged and your opponent will want to use a negative word to pull you down so that they will be able to look beyond negativity wards to pull you down”.

Considering the various factors to women empowerment and participation in trade union movements, (Agbalajobi, 2010; Ajayi, 2007 & Momoh, 2008) that, women in the pre-colonial era were not marginalized in Nigerian but with the advent of the colonial masters and the introduction of the colonial system of administration in 1900 placed women into a political discrimination in leadership positions. Their previous political roles became very low, the colonial administration marginalizes women to domestic duties which denied them to hold administrative responsibilities.

4.17. WOMEN UNWILLINGNESS

Women unwillingness is another challenge that women face in the Nigerian’s trade union movements of the Northern part of the country. Most women in the Northern region are unwilling to participate in the NTU of the Northern region because most of them lack the zeal and interest in labour unionism. This means women in the Northern region are not willing to participate actively and contribute to the Northern economy because of lack of interest. The study found that self-willingness must be in leadership you must be willing to participate because if you are not willing to even if you are given or elect you into the position you cannot deliver well. In line with this (NLC Report, 2016) discloses that women need to more flexible, self-confident and less rigid where necessary. They need to build associations across gender lines, hold and promote a democratic approach to headship and circulate information successfully.

4.18. MALE DOMINATION

Male Domination from the available data obtained in the interview it is understood that the male has dominated the Nigerian’s trade union movements. The study disclosed that the male’s members that are already in a leadership position of Nigerian’s trade union movements don’t want the women to lead them, as such women find it very cumbersome to try to convince them to allow them to come in and take some positions in the trade union movements. It then revealed that ‘generally, one of the big challenges women faces when it comes to gender equality is that the men don’t want the women to rule them. “Have you ever seen a woman from the North been a president of NTU? Have you ever had a woman from the North as a branch’s president of the NTU? Even where they are you can count at the tip of your finger.”

In line with the above argument, it is observed that women are occupying with domestic assignments which have been preventing them from coming out to take part in trade union movements. Based on this, the study further explained that having got this idea of

gender equality now the challenge is how you convince the affiliate because it is the affiliate that makes up the NTU, so it is not easy to convince the affiliate. To justify the assertions (Kanu, 2012) believes that women domination by men is the challenging factor women encountered in gender equality. Mill argues that the lawful subservience of females which has become a principle controlling the social relations between men and women is wrong and a disorder to human development. He labels the connection as that of active domination in which women adapt to men. He calls for the creation of the principle of fairness, confessing no power, privilege or incapacity to any side.

4.19. INTIMIDATION BY MEN

Other challenges women encountered in trade union movements is that a lot of them are been intimidated by men because of the few numbers that are in the NTU headship, and because of that a lot of support is not given to them as supposed to be this revelation was revealed in the interview session. To justify the above opinion (Oparanma, 2015) noted that, there is the reality of indirect intimidation of the women followers of the trade unions by their male counterparts. These intimidations attached with the fear of the anger of men, this has been revealed as major components of the parochialism of trade unions. It further added that Additional factor understood as obstructing the women participation in labour unionism is the role conflict between their traditional duties and domestic responsibilities and the needs for formal employment. This factor specifically as it concerns the role arranged by outdated society understands the women within the dominion of home life. Henceforward the women are measured only by their ability in childbearing, rearing and in the domestic front. This being the case, the man is the only one loaded with the economic needs of the family outside the immediate family environment (Yesufu, 1984).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- This paper recommended that there is a need for equal education among the genders, the government should empower women through access to equal education at all levels.
- Nigerians trade unions should engage in women mobilization, to enlighten women on gender-related issues and the importance of empowering women in the society and the labour unions.
- The NTU should educate the women on the importance of women representation in the trade union movements because women representation is of great significance to women, it is through women representation that issues related to women will be presented to the union for an urgent and proper solution.
- There is a need for reverse discrimination among both genders, domination and economic empowerment are important for women to proper involvement and representation in policy and decision making that affect women in the trade unions of the Northern region. Without women liberation, they will be at the mercy of male control.

- It is noted that both genders have equal right as citizens, as such they should similarly involve and participate in policy and decision making and implementation process in all the union activities of the region.
- The timing of the union meeting should be in the day hour, and the venue of the meeting should be in official offices not in private residence or hotels.
- Religious leaders should also encourage women empowerment, participation and representation in the union activities through preaching and proper counseling on the significance of women representation in all economic sectors.
- The study found that most of the women are not willing and ready to take part in the trade union movements, as such, there is a need for the union's stakeholders to empower and mobilize women toward union activities.
- Since the study found that, poverty is a factor to women participation in the trade unionism of the Northern region, there is demand for women economic empowerment to improve their level of participation and representation in the union movements.
- To encourages women to partake in trade union movements the Obasanjo's policy on poverty alleviation programmes should be well implemented at both local, state and national levels and should be organized in such a way that it will have a positive impact on the women.
- To empower women in the trade union movements the men should adopt the culture of equity and fairness in all the union's activities.
- However, to accomplish gender fairness that can improve maintainable human development, precise mechanisms, policies, and strategies are required to be put in place in trade unions precisely in the Northern part.
- There is a need for proper re-orientation for women to know their basic rights to move beyond the traditional and local belief that has been a curse to gender equality. Also, the political terrain needs graciousness that is absent in most developing countries.
- The government should seek to reduce the undesirable prejudice and stereotypes that serve as barriers to women's development in labour activities and seeks to achieve a higher percentage of women in leadership positions.
- If the above recommendations are appropriately used or put in place to empower women in a leadership position of the unions, they should be properly supervised to certify optimistic results for women as well as other members of the unions.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, empowerment means the change of the organizational assemblies of subservience, through essential changes in rules and regulations, property rights, control over women's labour and bodies, and the organizations that stressed and whole male authority (Barik et al., 2015) Women institute 49% of the total population in Nigeria and they need to be empowered in such a way that they can play an important role in the country economy. Though, the patriarchal heterogeneity nature and the Nigerian society placed them in an inferior position than men counterpart. Women are depressed of their

rudimentary rights to education and participation in Nigerian's trade union movements of the Northern region, and most of them are denied and not empowered or provided with colorful employment, health and decision-making positions as the men have. However, it is noted that the position of women in the Nigerian trade union movement is minimal compared to men. This is because of the gender disparity that excluded women in union activities. There are substantial differences in the women position across the Nigerians trade unions of the Northern region. The religion, patriarchy, heterogeneity nature of the region, cultural traditions and unequal access to education in Northern Nigeria have generated situations where men and women have been branded into diverse family responsibilities with the woman occupied with most of the family tasks.

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