

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AGAINST SEXIST OPPRESSION IN EDO SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

Caroline O. Olomukoro¹, Rabiatu Aimankhu²

Department of Adult and Non-formal Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, NIGERIA.

carolomukoro@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the empowerment of women against sexist oppression in Edo South senatorial district, Edo State, Nigeria. It was guided by three research questions and two statistical hypotheses. A sample of two hundred and twenty-six (226) women undergoing various empowerment programmes constituted the study's sample whereby one hundred and six (106) women were selected from skill acquisition centres and another one hundred and twenty (120) were selected respectively from adult literacy centres. They were culled through a stratified and simple random technique. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire structured on a modified four-point Likert scale with a reliability index of 0.79. The descriptive and inferential statistics were the data analysis method adopted for the study. The findings revealed that women who were meted with various degrees of sexist oppression were motivated to participate in empowerment training programmes. It was also found that a significant relationship existed between skill acquisition and empowerment of women and their ability to challenge sexist oppression against them and that the level of education women attain will go a long way to determining whether or not they will suffer from any repugnant cultural practices. The study concluded that there was a strong correlation between women's empowerment through education or skills acquisition programmes and their level of assertiveness especially in the area of oppression against them. The study recommended among others that efforts should be made to have a firmer legal framework and criminalise all forms of oppression and discriminatory attitudes that stand in the way and advancement of women in the society.

Keywords: Sexist oppression, Women empowerment, Skill acquisition, Discrimination

INTRODUCTION

Sexist oppression connotes prejudice or discrimination on the basis of sex. Oppression is seen as a situation whereby one party or group exercises cruel and unjust attitude over the other. This may manifest in several ways such as denial, exploitation, disfranchisement, marginalization, violence among others. Women oppression is one of many forms of sexist oppression which arose with the emergence of the early accumulation of wealth and development of class societies- a condition where the men exert control over the means of production, allocation and distribution while the women are confined to the homes, reduced to mere articles of their husbands, and became valued only for the children they could bear, not for their intrinsic value as human beings and contribution to society as a whole (Edewor, 2001). The primary roots of every type of oppression as pointed out by Edewor (2001) are deeply planted in the soils of male dominance and greed. It has numerous lateral roots that are most frequently manifested in racism, ageism, classism and sexism. Furthermore, sexism in this context does not imply genetic traits but rather it is a social creation where women are relegated, undermined and cornered into generally undesired and restrictive roles while the

males adopt the roles of dominant leader, decision maker, and overseer in all sphere. Although there are cases where women are at the helm in the oppression of other women; however, the roots of women's oppression are largely subsumed in the institution of classism.

At the global level, Mikkola and Miles (2007) argued that relative to men, women's lives are more centred in the home, especially in the less developed nations and this excludes women and girls from playing their roles in the larger society. There appear to be a lesser value attached to the female child at birth vis-a-vis the male or son preference. Hence, there is an urgent need to empower women to be able to address this discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation that have stood against their right and development. Towing the same line of thought, Masequesnnay (2008) and Doob (2013) note that sexism is a prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to the other. Sexism can simply be said to be the subordination of one sex (female), based on the assumed superiority of the other sex (male). Sexism is particularly documented as affecting women and girls, though it may affect any gender. One of the major implications of sexism is patriarchy which is a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political and economic structures are controlled by the men. Sexism according to Njoma (2004) has resulted in imbalance in the educational system worldwide especially in the developing countries.

Women constitute a very large percentage of the national population in most nations of the world. In Nigeria for instance, women represent about 49.96%, out of an estimated population of 150 million (National Population Census 2006). Apart from their numerical strength, women have natural potentials necessary to evolve a new economic order, accelerate social and political development and consequently transform the society into a better one. Agbola and Musa (2008) described Nigerian women as largely responsible for the processing, preservation of crops and distribution of farm yields from the rural areas to urban centres. Even in other spheres, Nigerian women have been contributing their quota in the development of Nigerian in general and Edo State in particular. However, their potentials have not been fully tapped due to some constraints such as gender imbalance in some key sectors. For instance, gender based violence has become a major issue in recent time on women and the girl-child, depriving them of basic education and skills. The abduction of over 200 females in a Government Girls' Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State on the 14th of April 2014 is a very sad and disturbing example. This act no doubt, has discouraged many parents from sending their girl-children to school in the core north-eastern Nigeria. It reflects the extent to which women's human right is threatened, and thus, leading to the voicelessness of women in many issues affecting their lives.

Furthermore, women are still under the weight of sexist oppression, traditional norms, practices, beliefs, deprivation and marginalized that make manifest in many ways as domestic violence, verbal and physical abuse, rape, sexual assault, acid bath, human trafficking, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, sexual violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), early and forced marriage, incest and ill-treatment of widows among others. The unwholesome rites and inhuman treatment meted on women especially when they lose their beloved husbands in the name of cultural practices vary from place to place in many parts of Edo State. The widow is oppressed, suppressed, spited, afflicted, suspected, neglected and insulted, to say the least. There is a belief in Africa that when a man dies, the wife is the first suspect, as no man dies a natural death but when a woman dies, it is believed that her evil deeds were responsible. The widow is made to undergo all sorts of dehumanizing rituals. These traditional rituals which mean no good for the widow are loaded with psychological problems, physical health risks and psychosocial implications (Akintunde, 2011).

Besides, female trafficking is a prevailing social-moral phenomenon common in Benin City. It is an illegal trade that stigmatizes womanhood. This 'Business' involves the movement of girls to foreign lands for prostitution. Adeniyi (2004) laments the dilemma being experienced by overzealous girls. This illicit trade is seen by some as a legitimate means of livelihood and survival in the face of harsh economic situations in Nigeria. The trade connotes moral degradation and social decadence according to Olatade (2001). Another dimension is the giving-out of the under aged girl in marriage. The girl dare not refused. She has no choice. There are several cases of adult males with 9-12-year old females (with a not-fully developed pelvic) in sexual relationships that have resulted in pelvic cancer problems, vesicovaginal fistula (VVF), rectovaginal fistula (RVF) and other life threatening conditions.

The menace of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is another thorny issue. FGM is a cultural practice that has been with the Edo people from time immemorial. The cultural belief is that FGM prevents sexual promiscuity and promotes chastity in women. In several parts of the state especially in Benin City, it is seen as a taboo if a female is not circumcised. There are also instances where the practice is carried out when the young lady is pregnant. FGM sometimes lead to serious bleeding, infection, psychological trauma and in some cases death of the victims. This act violates the right to the dignity of the human person. Although it is now unlawful for anyone to carry out FGM in Edo state following its proscription by the state assembly in 1999, there appear to be some pockets of violation especially in the rural areas (Omage, 2013).

In response to women marginalisation and oppression, the United Nations has placed the efforts of raising the status of women at the front burner when it declared the year 1975 as the International Women's Year and 1976-1985 as the decade for women. It has also compelled the United Nations (UN) to hold conferences, pronounced declarations and embarked on programmes to redress these issues. One of such declarations was the declaration of the discrimination against womanhood as part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as adopted on 10th December 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France. This was reinforced in 1980, when the General Assembly proclaimed the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The central theme of all conferences has been the need to raise the status of women and bring them into the development process as equal partners with men (Olomukoro, 2012). Other conferences organised by United Nations in favour of women include: The United Nation's Conference on environment and Development, (UNCED) Rio De Janeiro, (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (WCHR), Vienna; (1993); International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Cairo (1994); The World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) Copenhagen, (1980) and the Beijing Conference (1995) are the two conferences that have come to be regarded as the two most important conferences that addressed women's socio-economic development in the 20th century.

Specifically, the focus of this study is Edo south senatorial district, which comprises of seven local government councils-Oredo, Ikpobo-Okha, Orhionmwon, Ovia South-West, Ovia North East, Uhunmwonde and Egor local government councils. Women in this district have not been able to make their contributions in the right proportion in all areas of development because of the various cultural practices and beliefs that favoured discrimination against them. In order to redress this disturbing age long trend, empowerment programmes have been put in place by the government to raise the status of women and bring them into the development process. For example basic and literacy education, skill development centres, enlightenment and sensitization programmes have been established to enable women gain self-esteem and self-confidence to move them into action and self-assertion. Several studies have also been carried out on the empowerment of women but most of the studies are tilted

towards economic dimension of the divide while the pendulum is yet to sufficiently swing towards sexist oppression. It is when women are empowered in all aspect of their lives that they can fully withstand the existing structure against their all-round advancement and progress. Therefore, this study sought to examine how women can be empowered against sexist oppression in the area under investigation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Feminist theories formed the framework for this study. Feminism is an organized movement which promotes equality for men and women in political, economic and social spheres. The premise on which the feminist theories are based is that women are disadvantaged and subjected to injustice because they are women, a particular group targeted by policy or practices due to history of sexism and based on the dominant ideology of patriarchy. The major concept of feminism is indicative of the marginalization of women in our society. Three feminist theories as identified by Coats in Olomukoro (2012) were found relevant to the study.

Social feminists believe that there is a direct link between class structures and the oppression of women. They reject the idea that biology predetermines one's gender. Social roles are not inherent and women's status must change in both public and private spheres. Socialist feminist challenged the ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy. They believe that women are divided by class, race, ethnicity and religion, but they all experience the same oppression simply for being women and they believe that the way to end these oppressions is to put an end to class, race, ethnicity, gender and other differences.

Radical feminism seeks to abolish Patriarchy. They believe that the way to deal with Patriarchy and sexist oppression of all kind is to attack the underlying causes of these problems and address the fundamental components of society that support them. According to Daly (2003) Radical feminists believe that the domination of women is the oldest and worst kind of oppression in the world because it spans across the world oppressing women of different races, ethnicities, class and cultures. Radical feminists want to free both men and women from the rigid gender roles that society has imposed upon them. It is this sex-gender system that created oppression and radical feminist's mission is to overthrow the system by any possible means and liberate everyone from an unjust society.

The final theory is on the Liberal feminists' position. They believe that:

1. Sexist oppression exists because of the way in which men and women are socialized, which support patriarchy and keeps men in power position.
2. Liberal feminists are responsible for many important act of legislation that has greatly increased the status of women including reforms in welfare, education and health.
3. It creates and supports acts of legislation that remove all barriers for women, equal opportunities to jobs and equal pay believing these barriers will directly challenge the ideologies of Patriarchy, as well as liberates women.

The feminist theories as have been explored have addressed the issue of feminism and women education from divergent theoretical perspectives. However, they all agreed on the feminist premise, that women are disadvantaged. This explains the concept of gender inequality and the low status accorded women in our society today. There is no doubt that the male child is perceived to be more important and superior to the girl-child (Olomukoro, 2012). Feminists are advocate of all-round education for women that will enable them achieve independence in every sphere of their lives.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised and answered in the study:

1. What type of sexist oppression do women experience in Edo South senatorial district?
2. What empowerment programmes are in place to eradicate or ameliorate the sexist oppression in Edo South senatorial district?
3. In what ways can educational attainment reduce the level of repugnant cultural practices against women in Edo South senatorial district?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 5% level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between sexist oppression and motivation of women to participate in empowerment training programmes in Edo South senatorial district.
2. There is no significant relationship between skill acquisition and empowerment of women and their ability to challenge sexist oppression against them in Edo South senatorial district.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for the study was the survey research design with a descriptive method. This design helped in the collection of detailed factual information that clearly described the nature of the existing conditions in the various areas of interest as delimited in the investigation. And as such, direct contact was made with the individuals whose characteristics and behaviours were of relevance to the study.

The population of the study consists of all women from the rural, urban and sub-urban centres who were participants in adult literacy skills and vocational training programmes in Edo south senatorial district. A total of 226 participants constituted the study's sample. One hundred and six (106) women were randomly selected from skill acquisition centres and another one hundred and twenty (120) women were also randomly selected from adult literacy centres respectively. They were culled through a stratified and simple random technique whereby three local government areas were selected out of the seven local government areas in Edo south senatorial district. The local government areas selected were Egor, Oredo and Ovia north-east local government areas.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire titled WESSO (Women Empowerment Scale against Sexist Oppression) was divided into Sections A and B. The Section A dealt with the demographic characteristics of the respondents while the Section B focused on the issues raised to guide research questions and the hypotheses formulated. All the items were designed on a 4-point scale of measurement in a modified Likert Scale format ranging from 4-1 for Strongly Agreed (SA) to Strongly Disagreed (SD) respectively. The validity of the instrument was determined through the use of experts' judgement approach. The initial draft of the instrument was scrutinised by some colleagues in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin who are experts in questionnaire and content construction. Based on their suggestions and comments, the necessary corrections were effected and the final version of the instrument was produced.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, a test retest procedure was adopted. The instrument was initially administered to 30 respondents selected from a different community outside the target communities and re-administered after a time lag of two weeks. Their responses were collated and classified as X and Y respectively. The reliability coefficient was

determined using the Pearson ‘r’ statistics and a reliability index of 0.79 was obtained indicating that the instrument was very reliable and able to extract the required information. The descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized in analysing the data. While the descriptive statistics include frequency count, and percentages, the inferential statistics involved chi-square (X^2) statistics.

RESULTS

The results of the investigation carried out on all sub-themes as stated in the research questions and hypotheses are presented in the following tables.

Research Question 1

What type of sexist oppression do women experience in the Edo south senatorial district?

The analysis is as presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Data on the Type of Sexist Oppression Women Experience in the Edo South Senatorial District

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Women in this locality encounter rape and sexual abuse from their male counterpart	86 (38.1%)	85 (37.6%)	40 (17.7%)	15 (6.6%)
2	Young widows are still sexually harassed by their late husband’s male relations	91 (40.3%)	111 (49.1%)	19 (8.4%)	5 (2.2%)
3	Assault and wife battery leads to hatred instead of love in many families.	131 (58%)	84 (37.2%)	11 (4.8%)	0 (0%)

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The Table 1 reveals the type of sexist oppression women experience in Edo south senatorial district. It was found that 75.7% (171) of the respondents agreed that women in the area of study encounter rape and sexual abuse from their male counterparts. 89.4% (202) agreed that young widows are sexually harassed by their late husbands’ male relations. 95.2% (215) agreed that women are assaulted and battered. It was therefore inferred that rape, sexual abuse/harassment, assault and battery are some of sexist oppression experienced by women in Edo south senatorial district.

Research Question 2

What empowerment programmes are in place to remove or ameliorate the sexist oppression Edo South senatorial district?

The responses elicited from the survey were gathered and analysed and the findings are as presented in Table 2.

The results as presented in Table 2 indicate the empowerment programmes put in place to remove or ameliorate the sexist oppression. The table shows that 53.09% (120) of the women enrolled for literacy programmes and 46.91% (106) were engaged in various vocational skills training programmes and the breakdown revealed that 9.74% (22) enrolled for hair dressing/cosmetologist, 23.89% (54) in fashion design/hat making, 9.29% (21) for catering/home management and 3.98% (9) in soap making/tie and dye. It was deduced that

majority of the women in Edo south senatorial district are quite sensitized and empowered through literacy and vocational training programmes against sexist oppression.

Table 2. Empowerment Programmes Available in Edo South Senatorial District

<i>Literacy Centres</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>Vocational Training Programmes</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Oredo L.G.A	56	24.78	Hair dressing/Cosmetologist	22	9.74
Egor L.G.A	34	15.04	Fashion design/Hat making	54	23.89
Ovia North East L.G.A	30	13.27	Catering/Home management	21	9.29
			Soap making/Tie and dye	9	3.98
Total	120			106	

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Research Question 3

In what ways can educational attainment reduce the level of repugnant cultural practices against women in Edo South senatorial district?

The responses obtained and analysed revealed the results as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Educational Attainment and Level of Repugnant Cultural Practices against Women in Edo South Senatorial District

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Education influence women’s sense of self-worth and high rate of unemployment is also responsible for skill acquisition training to empower women.	82 (36.3%)	135 (59.8%)	8 (3.5%)	1 (0.4%)
2	Education paves the way to higher knowledge and enhances quick assimilation of the vocational skills being acquired.	88 (39.0%)	128 (56.6%)	10 (4.4%)	0 (0%)
3	Higher educational attainment is capable of liberating women from negative cultural practices and makes them vocal in both local and state issues.	101 (44.7%)	107 (47.3%)	18 (8.0%)	0 (0%)
4	Basic education empowers women to harness natural resources within their locality and cope with their family life and sources of livelihood.	85 (37.6%)	128 (56.6%)	13 (5.8%)	0 (0%)
5	Education helps mothers to bring up their children better right from the cradle.	148 (65.5%)	68 (30.1%)	9 (4.0%)	1 (0.4%)

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3 shows the ways education or educational attainment has reduced the level of repugnant cultural practices against women in Edo south senatorial district. It was revealed that 96.1% (217) of the respondents agreed that education influence women’s sense of self-worth and high rate of unemployment is also responsible for skill acquisition training to empower women. 95.6% (216) agreed that education paves the way to higher knowledge and enhances quick assimilation of the vocational skills being acquired. Also, 92% (208) agreed that higher educational attainment is capable of liberating women from negative cultural practices and makes them vocal in both local and state issues. 94.2% (213) agreed that basic education empowers women to harness natural resources within their locality and cope with

their family life and sources of livelihood. And finally 95.6% (216) agreed that education helps mothers to bring up their children better right from the cradle. It was concluded that the level of education women attain goes a long way to determining whether or not women suffer from any repugnant cultural practices. The results therefore implies that the more educated women are, the lesser the tendency to subject them to inhuman and unwholesome cultural practices and the higher their capacity to make contribution that would be of benefit to them, their immediate family, community and the society at large.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between sexist oppression and motivation of women to participate in empowerment training programmes in Edo South senatorial district.

In determining the level relationship, the Pearson’s Chi-Square (Crosstab) analysis was used to test the hypothesis at a 0.05% level of significance. The result is as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Chi-Square Test Summary on: Sexist Oppression of Women By Motivation in Training Programmes (SOW*MTP)

	<i>Value</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</i>
Pearson Chi-Square	104.398 ^a	64	.001
Likelihood Ratio	79.501	64	.092
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.581	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 82 cells (96.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

At 5% significant level with a degree of freedom (df) of 64, the calculated value obtained was 104.398. This was found to be greater than the critical values of 83.675. Implying that there exist a significant relationship between sexist oppression and motivation of women to participate in empowerment training programmes in Edo South senatorial district (SOW*MTP). The null hypothesis (H₀) was thereafter rejected and the alternate (H₁) accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between skill acquisition and empowerment of women and their ability to challenge sexist oppression against them in Edo South senatorial district.

Table 5. Chi Square Tests Summary on Skill Acquisition and Empowerment by Sexist Oppression of Women (SAE*SOW).

	<i>Value</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</i>
Pearson Chi-Square	181.861 ^a	64	.000
Likelihood Ratio	110.362	64	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.950	1	.005

This hypothesis was again tested using the Pearson’s Chi-Square (Crosstab) analysis at 5% significance level and with a degree of freedom (df) of 64, the calculated value obtained was 181.861; which is far higher than the critical values of 83.675. And thus, a very sharp contrast to the null hypothesis was revealed implying that a significant relationship exists between skill acquisition and empowerment of women and their ability to challenge sexist oppression against them in Edo South senatorial district. (SAE*SOW). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) was rejected and the alternate (H₁) accepted. The detail of the Chi Square summary is as presented in Table 5.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that rape, sexual harassment or abuse, human trafficking, assault, wife battering, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) were the prevalent sexist oppression modes meted on women in Edo South senatorial district. This finding agrees with Ardayfio-Schandorf (2005) who identified wife beating, rape, defilement, widowhood rites, forced marriages and female circumcision as the type of violence meted against women in Ghana. Also corroborating with this finding was Davran (2005) who found that sexist oppression meted on women are innumerable among rural women owing to an existing patriarchal structure.

A patriarchy system is a hierarchal system of social organization in which cultural, political and economic structures are controlled by men. The African society is male dominated leading to a patriarchal society. A patriarchal society confers on women a subordinate position relative to men. Based on these cultural norms in Nigeria, it has been considered unfeminine for women to compete with men. Women were confined to the home, reduced to property of their husbands and became valued for the children they could bear while men assert control over the means of production (Edewor, 2001). This situation accounts for why women had been relegated to the background in Africa including Nigeria and treated as second class citizens. Mikkola and Miles (2007) supported this viewpoint when they argued that relative to men, women's lives are more centred in the home, especially in the less developed nations and this includes women and girls from the society at large. Also, there is lesser valuation of females even at birth and the manifestation of son preference. Olomukoro (2012) avers that the male child is perceived to be more important and superior to the girl-child in Nigeria.

It was also revealed that majority of the women in Edo south senatorial district are currently being sensitized and empowered through adult literacy and vocational training programmes in order to get armed against sexist oppression. This result agrees with Edewor (2001) who found that adult education designed in the form of literacy and vocational training programmes helps to broaden the horizon of the learner, and in its widest form it is the tool that removes women from the shackles of ignorance, backwardness, suppression, sexist oppression, discrimination and dehumanization.

Similarly, Oyovmi and Urhobocha in Aimankhu (2015) found that literacy skills given to empower women are geared towards developing their knowledge abilities, attitudes, skills and other forms of behavioural values to the society in which they lived. Literacy skills thus acquired by women enabled them to develop their abilities and mental powers to make them live and participate meaningfully in every sphere of life. Additionally, the study indicates that educational attainment helps women to have a better sense of self-worth, seek gainful employment, liberate them from negative cultural practices, makes them vocal in public gatherings both at the local and national levels. That is why Oyitso and Olomukoro (2014) maintain that literacy empowers and it is the most important means through which women can be developed socially, politically, economically and culturally to challenge sexist oppression against them in the society. Furthermore, it was discovered from the study that women became empowered through vocational and skill acquisition in order to become self-reliant and financially independent in order to fight against sexist oppression in the society. The acquisition of skills and knowledge is central to the development of autonomous and productive individual woman. In line with this finding, Bhasin (1992), Now (2006) both note that women become economically independent and self-reliant when engaged in vocational training and skill acquisition. Vocational training therefore equips women with useable skills that can be utilized to supplement the income of their husbands thereby making them to be

self-reliant and self-employed. Participation in educational programmes including skill acquisition will go a long way to providing women with productive skills that would enable them engage in meaningful income generating activities thereby increasing their family income. The two crucial strands of the multiplier effects of the foregoing are improved living conditions for the women on the one hand and the development of self-confidence and self-esteem on the other.

It was also observed that a significant relationship existed between sexist oppression and motivation of women to participate in empowerment training programmes in the area investigated. This implies that as women experience diverse forms and levels of oppression, they tend to participate in programmes that may help them cushion its effects and soothed them up to forge ahead in life instead of resigning to fate.

CONCLUSION

The paper contends that a significant relationship between sexist oppression and empowerment of women existed in Edo south senatorial district of Edo state, Nigeria. Education broadens ones horizon, it is the tool that removes women from the shackles of ignorance, backwardness, suppression, sexist oppression, discrimination and dehumanization. And as leveller and agent of social mobility, education enhances women assertiveness on issues around them. It is also noteworthy to infer that women's level of education in any nation correlates with level of development of that nation. Consequently, efforts should be made to have a firmer legal framework and criminalise all forms of oppression and discriminatory attitudes that stand in their way and advancement of women in the society.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The government non-governmental organisations and all other stakeholders should intensify their efforts by improving all existing empowerment programmes and establish new ones that will equip women in the fight against all forms of sexist oppression in the society. In addition, women should stop discriminating against themselves, and come together to recognise and address the gender issues which stand in their way.
2. All discriminatory practices (cultural or traditional) against women that prevented them from participating in programmes that may elevate their status should be abolished and immediate action should be taken to amend some aspect of the customary laws especially those relating to women and girl-child in order to give them equal opportunity and rights with their male counterparts.
3. Women should be given access to basic literacy and skill acquisition programmes to enable them improve on their natural potentials and cognate abilities to challenge sexist oppression against them in the society.

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