

Christian Women and The Development of Western Education in South-Western Nigeria: A Historical Review

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Abstract

The practice of discrimination against women in most forms of leadership in Nigeria is just like Jewish cultural tradition. In Yorùbá land of South-Western Nigeria society today, some people do not value the leadership of women, more especially in the area of Christian education. It is a fact that no generation can rise above the level of its leadership. Since education is one of the most important requisites for national development, as well as the bed rock of any developing or developed nation, it is imperative that women should be involved, as they are often strong and reliable Christian leaders with integrity in the Nigerian educational system. The standard of Nigerian educational system is falling gradually in almost all facets of life in which Yorùbá land of South-Western is part of it. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of Women in the development of western education in Yorùbá land, South-Western Nigeria, comparing their roles to women in the Early Christian Church Fathers' Dispensation. The qualitative, historical approach was used to achieve this purpose. The study therefore recommended that interested and virtuous Christian women should be involved in the leadership of Yorùbá land, South-Western Nigeria educational system. Women like Deborah, Ruth, Esther and Priscilla of old should contribute their own quota to the uplifting, growth and development of Nigeria educational system.

Keywords: Christian Women, Development, Education and South-Western Nigeria

1. Introduction

The rise and fall of any nation depend on the effectiveness of its leaders. It is important to note that men and women, young and old, should choose to become strong and reliable leaders of sound moral principles, uprightness, honesty, and sincerity. The “jeering giants of the foe” are taking control of many Nigerian educational institutions by misguiding a confused and troubled nation through humanism, secularism, new age thinking and cults of every description (Damazio: 1988). Some of the enemies of growth and development are drugs, alcohol, pornography, violence and sexual permissiveness which are evidenced in every tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria, as well as on television and movies ((Damazio: 1988). These obstacles need to be attacked by a new

breed of Christian leadership, especially the women, because having carried the human fetus for nine months before delivery and nurture the baby through its formative years (0-4years), their impact on a child's formative years are undeniable. Christian women leadership impact in the development of western education in Yorùbá land, South-Western Nigeria is the focus of this paper. A qualitative, historical approach is used to carry out the study.

2. Operational Definition of Terms

Christian Woman: A Christian woman is the one who believe in God and is a believer of God's son, the Lord Jesus Christ, following him in words and action, (John 3:16-36); she is the one whose habit and desires conforms to God's will (Eph 4:17-32, 5:1-12).

Western Education: According to Oniku (2016) western education is a replacement of African style of learning which emphasizes former method of classroom education for all and sundry and is based on communication in writing, reading and numeric.

The Yorùbá live in the Geo-political Zone which comprises one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, and they are found in the present states of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Lagos, Ekiti and some parts of Kwara and Kogi. Like many other people the Yorùbá have different views about women, as well as their function in the society. The opinion that women are "second class citizens" in the society remains is prevalent (Najmudeen: 2007). The best of everything is for men and the crumbs for women. It is a stark truth that women contribute more than men in domestic care and even in national economy, despite the meager resources given to them (Najmudeen: 2007). There are those who are of the opinion that women are only to be seen, used, admired but not heard; while others liken women to sex slaves that are meant for procreation and pleasure, and to be considered as visible evidence of man's acquired wealth in some traditional societies. This suggests the reason why women in some societies are treated as secondary citizens (Najmudeen: 2007). This attitude of the society towards women has also done much to affect women education in Yorùbá land. Moreover, for more than a century ago, the Yorùbá were the dominant group among Nigeria's educated elite, and they provided school teachers, clerks and other white-collar workers. Yet, few were privileged to obtain western education.

In some parts of Africa generally and Yorùbá land of South-Western Nigeria in particular, some parents prefer a male child to a female. The reason is not far-fetched; it is both cultural and religious. Parents, especially the father, have the belief that male children would help to propagate and perpetuate the family name (Najmudeen: 2007). Culturally, any amount of money spent on the male's education was not regarded as a waste; whereas in the case of girls, it was considered by many parents as a waste of money, time, effort and resources because the girl child would

eventually go over to another man's house in marriage and bear his name, while abandoning her parent's name. She would be useful to her husband and his family alone (Najmudeen: 2007). At times, when married, women are not usually allowed to cater for the needs of their parents, even in old age. Falola (2018) further explains that in Western education women are still left behind as a result of the drop-out rate of women which is higher, partly, because of pre-marital or unwanted pregnancies, early marriages, preference of parents to meet the needs of boys rather than girls, and girls' heavy involvement in household tasks.

Religiously, Christianity regards man as head of household who deserve the obedience of his wife. Consequently, this has directly or indirectly affected the participation of women in religious leadership, as well as in the educational system.

3. Historical Antecedents of Changing Women's Roles

In history, it is clear that, women's roles have changed over time. Recently, women in Nigeria specifically, and Africa in general, are becoming as educated as men. In Biblical history there are many instances where women have proved to help in engineering change in their society. Examples include Deborah as a prophetess and a judge of the nation of Israel, Rahab who saved her entire family by helping the two spies, and later became the great grandmother of Jesus Christ and Ruth who despite the death of her husband went back to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi because of her firm believe in the God of Israel (Akintunde: 2003). These women worked against all challenges to rediscover their place in destiny and the destiny of their respective nations and societies.

In Nigeria, women have been pivotal to national development, right from before the period of amalgamation of Nigeria in 1897 up till today. For instance, Nigeria was named by a British journalist, Miss Flora Shaw, who later got married to Lord Fredrick Lugard a British administrator (Tswana-Inah: 2018). Moreover, in the nationalist movement of the '40s and '50s, women like Beatrice Bassey, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Margaret Ekpo were very active. Also, Gambo Sawaba, Franca Afegbua and a handful of women held the torch for Nigerian women in their time (Shaw). In the area of economy, women were not being left behind, Anyanwu, 2019:32) corroborates this by submitting that:

Women are the ones who process cassava into garri, grill and process the fish, market the vegetables and so on. In the larger economy, women like Folorunsho Alakija and Uju Ifejika are blazing the trail in oil and gas and maritime services. In banking, we have Iroche and many others. Even in governance, women like Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala have made a mark in advancing the Nigerian economy.

The impact of Christian Women in the educational system in Yorùbá land, therefore, refers to all those women who exercise influence, guidance and direction to those in school towards fulfilling their educational goals.

4. The Place of Women in the Dispensation of the Early Christian Fathers

The place of women in the history of the Church and their theology cannot be divorced from the writings of Early Christian Fathers. After the third century, through the Middle Ages, women theology had great influence on the Church's attitude towards women's place in the ministry of the church and women generally (Bettenson: 1991). Oshitelu (2002) in one of his writings says the Early Christian Fathers is by custom applied to certain writers of the age generally known as "sub-apostolic" who were thought of as the immediate successors and disciples of the Apostles. According to Oshitelu (2002) examples of these Early Christian Fathers more especially from Africa, include Tertullian of Carthage, Cyprian of Carthage, Augustine of Hippo, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius of Alexandria, and Origen of Alexandria.

The Early Christian Fathers read selective scriptural passages to portray their views concerning Eve's part in the fall and her being created out of Adam specially, and about women in general. The various writings of the Fathers, scholars of the succeeding centuries echoed the same theology about women which has influenced the church until now (Nicolaidis, 2016:7) For instance; Tertullian writes in his treatise that Women are the Devil's gateway. "They are the unsealed of that tree; they are the first foresaker of the divine law. They are the ones who persuaded him whom the Devil was not brave enough to approach, you so lightly crushed the image, the man Adam" (Kelly-Gadol: 1987).

Referring to women as "the devil's gateway" by Tertullian shows that, he seems to have forgotten although, he should fully understand that women are God's creatures in his image. In supporting Tertullian, Kelly-Gadol (1987) says "women as a group, especially among the classes that dominated Italian urban life, experienced a contraction of social and personal options that men of their classes either did not as was the case with the bourgeoisie, experience as markedly, as was the case with the nobility". Corroborating Kelly-Gadol, Burrus (1991:232) also holds that "woman allows herself to be penetrated sexually by strange men, so too she listens indiscriminately and babbles forth new theological formulations carelessly and without restraint: all the gateways of her body are unguarded".

This idea is equally shared by Alexander, (1994) Bishop of Alexandria, and an Alexandrian Presbyter by the name of Arius over the Trinitarian doctrine controversy. Alexander complains that

women have been deceived, and they disparage Christianity when the younger women among them run around dishonorably in every public place.

From these writings, it is evident that women were disdained as the cause of the fall and as less spiritual and weak. They were also described as the representative of evil and were blamed for their responsibility for the fall of angels. This is because women may be included in the statement about all have sinned in Adam; all are bound by the penalties for that sin - spiritual death, guilt and the diseased disordering of human nature (Wright:1994).

In the same vein, from Tertullian's negative perspective about women, majority of them were generally sensual, vain and conceited. According to him, most of the women were also viewed as being frivolous and amazingly unintelligent; to say the least (Snyder: 1989). This thought is being supported by Burrus (1991, 234) who argues that all the really interesting women in the early church were heretics.

The writings of the thirteenth century scholars, especially Thomas Aquinas, were influenced by the works of the earliest writers. Thus he says about women and creation, as quoted by Dorcas Akintunde (2003:171) that "a woman is a mis-begotten male and nothing mis-begotten or defective should have been in the first production of things. Therefore, woman should not have been made at first production of things."

There were some positive comments on women, however. McIntosh Snyder (1989) for instance, citing mainly Scripture considered non-canonical by Protestants, celebrates Judith from the Bible, who was like Moses in "despising all danger for her country's sake", and commends Esther for her faith, "the sister of Moses" for her wisdom, and Susanna, whom he calls a "martyr for chastity" (Kovacs). From the Greek tradition, Clement turns to the list of women who distinguished themselves from philosophical, poetic and dexographical writings. According to him, these include Telesilla, an Argolid poetess who put Spartan opponents to flight by persuading women to act with courage, the self-sacrificing Alcestis from Euripides' play and Theano, a Pythagorean praised for her "progress in philosophy". He also praised Themisto of Lampsacus, who studied Epicurean Philosophy, Myria, another Pythagorean, Hipparchia the wife of the Cynic Crates, and two female pupils of Plato, Lastheneia of Arcadia and Axiothea of Phlius (Snyder).

It is unequivocal that a woman as "second-class citizens" has had a long history. This had a negative effect on their participation in theological education as well as in the Church ministry. Therefore, it is expedient that women are viewed from these humiliating lookouts by the Church in Africa generally, and the Nigerian Churches in particular (Akintunde: 2003, 174). The rigid belief that resulted made priesthood an exclusive preserve of the males. Nonetheless, in African

Traditional Religion, priesthood was shared by both male and female. For instance, in the worship of Òjèké among the Yorùbá of Òkè-Ògùn in Ìgbétì, Olorunsogo Local Government, Oyo State of South-Western Nigeria, women are the principal characters. This agrees with the view of Toyin Falola (2018), which states that:

In Nigerian Traditional Religion, women were members of much powerful priesthood, as in those of a number of Yorùbá gods such as Sàngó, Òsun and Òbàtálá where women were not just cult members but major leaders. Witches with “positive” power were also respected for their contributions to society.

However, it is good to note that there were noticeable changes in the 19th and 20th centuries, even up to the present era, when women left their supportive and listening roles to be agile in the propagation of the gospel, as well as in the spread of Christianity. In the Missionary Church of North America, and Canada, women became vocal in great numbers, made their valuable experience available to the church as they ministered to the various needs of African Churches in general and Nigerian churches in particular. Examples include Misses C.W. Panabecker of Ontario, and Florence Overholt of Michigan, Miss E. Hostetler of Ontario, Miss E.M. Evans and Allen J. Shultz – who came to Nigeria in 1905, 1913 and 1916 respectively (Huffman: 1920). They were sent by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Missionary Society, which later consolidated into United Missionary Society and later metamorphosed into United Missionary Church of Africa. In the same way, at the beginning of the 20th century the majority of the missionaries from the United States of America and Europe were women who worked as missionaries, teachers, nurses and volunteer workers in prisons and orphanages.

5. A Brief History of Western Education in General

Historically, a brief history of western education in general can be traced to the period of renaissance. According to Borrowman (1975: 70), renaissance was a period in European history when many people showed a renewed interest in the world and a growing spirit of individuality and independence. It started around 1300's in Italy and spread across Europe in 1400's and 1500's. Like the ancient Athenians, the humanist believed that the main purpose of education was to train well-rounded, cultural citizens. The ancient Greek gymnasium was considered the ideal type of school. During the 1300's and 1400's, schools patterned after the Greek gymnasiums arose in many parts of Europe. The sons of upper-class families, who came to learn Greek, Latin and the works of the ancient writers were mostly admitted. There were few textbooks, students had to memorize texts read to them in class (Borrowman: 1975).

He further explains that, with regards to education around the world, more especially shortly after 3000 B.C., both the Sumerians and the Egyptians established schools to teach boys the newly invented arts of reading and writing, while girls were not allowed to attend schools but some girls learned reading and writing in their homes.

6. General Roles of Women in Western Education

The status of women is not the same in all countries, and even within each country changes are not uniform. For instance, a woman may receive a university degree; traditionally she may be expected to do all the house chores. As a civil servant, she may have power, but is not able to influence the allocation of resources like male counterpart (Falola: 2018).

Generally, women's roles in education are in many surfaces, aspects or sides. Women must serve fully as an educator, serve as an example by their participation, in all phases of education, challenge and encourage other women to work for self-learning and self-growth. Women's roles in education are also about ensuring that girls learn and feel safe while in school, have the opportunity to complete all levels of education, acquire the knowledge and skills to compete in the labour market, gain socio-emotional and life skills necessary to navigate and adapt to a changing world, make decisions about their own lives, and contribute to their communities and the world at large (www.big).

Around 1800s American and British missionaries came to Nigeria and introduced western education into the nation. They were the first to introduce education in Nigeria because the British colonial rulers then did not introduce western education. It was not only the aim of missionaries in Nigeria to get native helpers, but also, to produce morally behaved people in the fear of God as revealed in Jesus Christ as well as to be able to produce nationals who would be able to take over from them later on (Adetunji:2001). It can be said that introduction of western education in Nigerian society had a marked religious foundation. At this juncture, it is necessary to state that women's changing roles were not only noticed in Europe, North America and Canada, but were also evident in Nigeria.

7. Impact of Christian Women's Leadership on the Development of Western Education in

Yorùbá Land, Nigeria

It can be said that, right from the time of the British berthed at the shores of Nigeria; they started making efforts to educate Nigerians about the foreign or British ways of life, since many parents would not release their daughters to go to School. The local, traditional or customary kinds of

education were already in place before the western Colonial masters came and many parents insisted on their children learning both ways of life (Nigeria finder.com).

As a Country colonized by British administration, western or formal education was introduced into Nigeria on 19th December, 1842 to Badagry by Mr. and Mrs. William De Graft and Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. They all brought missionary education to convert the traditionalist to the Christian faith (Birabil and Mathew). Accordingly, the various missions did not shy away from achieving their primary aim. Every subject of instruction was given religious interpretations. In many cases, the Bible was the primary text used (Birabil and Mathew). The first school built to teach in Nigeria at Badagry was established in 1843 by the Methodist Church and was the Nursery of Infant Church. The name of the school was later changed to St. Thomas' Anglican Nursery and Primary School, founded by Rev. Golmer (Nigeria finder.com).

A host of other schools came up later and the very first secondary school in Nigeria is Church Missionary Society (CMS) Grammar School, located in Lagos; it was established in 1859, while Methodist Girls High School followed about 21 years later (Nigeria finder.com). The first University in Nigeria is Premier, also known as University of Ibadan, situated in Ibadan Oyo State, South-Western Nigeria.

Akintunde (2003:181) noticed that, since the creation of the earth, leadership has played important roles in the fields of administration, organizational behavior, industrial organizational psychology and the educational system. Christian Women have also given impactful Leadership in the development of all such spheres, including the Western educational system. "Educate women and you educate a nation" is the guiding principle for all Christian women leadership in Nigerian educational system (Akintunde: 2003). The position of women in Nigeria varies across different ethnic groups in different parts of the nation. Among the Yorùbá in the South-Western Nigeria, the position of women changed over time. Even, before the Colonial times, women played a very prominent role in the development of Yorùbá Society generally. The impact of Christian Women Leadership in the development of western education in Yorùbá land includes in the following areas:

Establishment of Institutions of Learning: Christian women in South-Western Nigeria are aware that the high crime rate among the youths is traceable to the non-chalant attitudes of some government school teachers. This has led to the establishment of institutions of learning which serves as means of molding life's of people. Mention must be made of the involvement of both the Good Women Association and the Women Missionary Union in the educational sector, which includes the founding of the Babalolá Girls Grammar School, Ilésà, Osun State in 1959, for the education of girls, particularly those in the Christ Apostolic Church (Akintunde: 2003). Mbiti

(1988:22) points out the Women Missionary Union who established primary, secondary and special institutions. It also started small-scale industries in some areas. It has pre-marital counseling centre, where girls are counseled on how to avoid pre-marital sex and how to choose life partners and careers. Girls also learn handcrafts, like weaving, tie and dye skills household decoration and making of confectionaries, among others. With these efforts the women groups have succeeded in employing education as a means of molding people of all ages according to societal needs. Although, this is occupational education, the purpose has been to make the individuals perform better in whatever professional areas of life they find themselves (Mbiti 1988:22). These institutions of learning were created so as to assist those that are incapacitated to further their western education.

Scholarships for Western Education: Since the year 1942, the Women Missionary Union has been involved in giving scholarships to Baptist girls, particularly those in Baptist College, Idi Aba, with the assistance and cooperation of the sister body in the United States of America. Not only that, they also benefited from the Association's Overseas Scholarship, which has enabled the beneficiaries to study outside Nigeria (Ezeanya: 1992, 105). Without the Women Missionary Union's efforts, this might not have been achievable. Falola (2018:20) argues that mankind must make an effort to eradicate the subjugation of women and society educates the young population to oppose hierarchies based on gender differences. The belief is that after wedding, the women will bear her husband name and glory will be man. Also, men should recognize women that they face serious difficulties in balancing work and family. In giving scholarships to women with western education, it must be done with the awareness that the cultural ideology that defines women solely as bearers must change and that careers and families can be combined (Falola:194).

Women Adult Literacy: Many adult women remain non-literate or semi-literate in Nigeria. Their situation has attracted the attention of Women in South-Western Nigeria. Women teachers at the United Missionary Church of Africa Theological College, (U.M.C.A.T.C.) Ilorin, have embarked on the education of women basic and post literacy level Vocational Development Centre, in collaboration with Kwara State Agency for Mass Education, Ilorin. The targeted groups include illiterates or semi-literate wives of pastors-in-training, widows, indigent women and female school dropouts. The aim of preparing them is to raise responsible women who would be literate, self-reliant and role models in the society. According to Mrs. David Bawa, who is the current programme director says twenty-eight women had graduated from this programme (Interview: 2024). Akintunde (2003) noticed that this has helped to raise the knowledge of women who had hitherto been engaged in untoward businesses or restricted to traditional household duties. Essential

women's sensitivity and status are being uplifted, thus creating in them the aspiration for leadership roles in all fields of human endeavor.

One of the several aspects of African culture and gender that seems frighten to western culture is female denying of education. According to Falola (2018:42), traditional patriarchy is an order of hierarchies that makes men more powerful than women, but does not imply women are docile, or men are evil. As gender roles are based on old belief, culture can rationalize gender inequality. In African culture, women are mothers and wives who lose power and are compelled to be subordinate to her husband after wedding. But in Christian faith, for those called by God to the heavenly calling (Heb.3:1) to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ, there is no distinction between men and women in a spiritual sense. Apostle Paul writes: You are all, in fact sons of God through your faith in Christ...there is neither male nor female; for you are all one person in union with Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:26-28). Women Adult Literacy is assisted due to the educational gender-imbalance.

Also, with the influx of European influence and rule, male power was heightened at the expense of women's. Schools and wage-earning occupations were mainly for men, which left women at a disadvantage. The idea of man as the "breadwinner" permeated the society, while women were confined to lesser occupations, therefore women literacy education is necessary (Falola 2018:43).

Contributions of Women to National Development: There are some women who strived and acquired education for themselves and used their knowledge and wisdom for the growth of the nation. For instance, during the Obasanjo, Yar'Adua, Jonathan and Buhari administrations, women like Dora Akunyili, Oby Ezekwesili, Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Josephine Anenih, Kemi Adeosun were appointed into ministerial offices and as head of parastatals and they served faithfully and diligently.

Women and Moral Education: Moral education can be defined as helping children and young people to acquire a set of beliefs and a value regarding what is right and wrong (Halstead: 2015), so as to guide their behavior, intentions and behavior towards other members in the society. In support Halstead, Chazan (2022:15) defines moral education as one of the most significant arenas of preoccupation of analytic educational philosophy as well as daily educational practice.

Generally, moral education is a subject that helps the teachers in helping the students in learning the value and virtues that would make them a good human being in a longer run and useful to their society and entire world.(Teachermint). These virtues and values are important for the students as it helps them in being a better person for their entire life.

Christian women are exemplary mother figures in their endeavors. They are humane and democratic in authority (Akintunde: 2003, 181). In the area of moral education; Christian women

take the leadership in the training of their children from the fetus. A typical example is Olaniru Oluwaseyi Roseline, who in partnership with her husband runs what is called “Oasis for Singles” in Lagos, Lagos State (Interview: 2021). This is a ministry geared towards training of singles on how to keep them undefiled until they find themselves in the Altar saying “I do”. Also dear to her heart is the ministry to the teenagers. The teenagers’ group is called “Christ Exalter.” The focus here is on guiding the teenagers’ lives for Christ and to eschew evil vices (Oke: 2012).

Courageous Battles in History: Sexism can be said as the universal from the ageless past, regardless of class, culture, tribal or racial difference (Oyeku, 2020:5). Women have always been discriminated against, often justified by cultural practices and established traditions. Men tend to make choices for them: where they will live, how they can establish themselves, and the cap on the investment they can make regarding education and careers. When Western education was introduced to many parts of Africa in the twentieth century, the question was whether they should go to school, and if they did, what occupations were allowed to them (Falola,191). It is discovered that where men dominate government and economic sectors, women are considered “secondary citizens” and stereotypes present them as weak. Falola (2020) supports the worldviews and legal systems favor men, and widespread opinion limits women to domestic roles such as child rearing. In economy and political sectors, African women are uniting to demand equality through acquisition of skills and participation. Falola (2018) asserts that women are pressing for autonomy over their sexuality and reproductive ability – taking it upon them to make changes in their education and lives.

There are some women who were efficient and persevered enough to face odds, challenges and obstacles in this vicious world. Women like Indira Ghandi, the first female Prime Minister who deeply passion for social justice. Margaret Thatcher who reduced the influence of trade unions and privatized industries as the United Kingdom’s first female minister, Dora Akunyili who fought the scourge of counterfeit drugs to a standstill, Amina of Zazzau, Oby Ezekwezele, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala who was the first woman and African to serve as Director General of World Trade Organization and hosts of others have proved themselves in all manners better than the male (Jegede: 2015, 22). Also, many twin children would have perished, but for the arrival of Mary Slessor in Nigeria, who fought against and succeeded in stamping out the practice of killing twins at birth.

Teaching profession in Nigerian Theological Seminarie: Women have made marks in theological education, including in Yorubá Land. Some Christian women singled themselves out in the teaching profession in some Nigerian Theological Seminaries. Their areas of specializations

include: Biblical Teaching in Christian Education, English Language and Christian Ethics among others. Some of them are committed and passionate about Biblical Christian Nurture through the practice of Christian education, while others are passionate in the biblical nurture of the family through Christian education. E. O. Ayandokun and G.O. Adeoti, from the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho and United Missionary Church of Africa Theological College, Ilorin respectively, are good instances in this regard. E.T. Olamide was the coordinator for Christ Apostolic Church Theological Women Campus for Women for many years (Jegade 2015:22). Olaniru O.R. (Interview: 2021) had a burning desire to equip some pastors' wives who were illiterates in their Bible College. After the three years of staying with their husbands in the campus she initiated the Women Bible School, in 2008 which is still in operation till date. Many students in thousands have passed through these women and are doing well in their ministries both in Nigeria and United States.

Educational Administration: At the height of 19th century, women were regarded as too pure for the secular jobs like the men, and they became guardians of men who were now held responsible for the moral tone of the nation (Falola: 2018). Modernity has been kind of elite women who attend tertiary institutions and played prominent roles in government like men or a time more than men. Women are being incorporated into more government positions and are entering job fields in different capacities. There are some women who are competent in their place of endeavors administratively. Examples include Mrs. Ogunkunle Christianah, the Principal of Siloam High School, and Mrs. Oyeku Funmilayo, the principal of UMCA Ogunbode Memorial Grammar School, Igbeti. Both are from Olorunsogo Local Government of Oyo State. During the 2020 West African Senior School Certificate examination, Siloam High School had the best result in the Local Government, while Mrs. Oyeku, F.O. introduced discipline, hard work and righteousness which surpassed that of men, as well as prompt response to problems which needed immediate attention in her school as the principal which the male counterpart could not. (Interview, 2022). Monitoring of student achievement, encouragement of the parent is part of the achievements of Mrs. Ajala Elizabeth at Olanipekun Memorial College, Kisi, Oyo State. Administrative strategic direction of vision, as well as carrying academic and non academic staff along Mrs. Wasilat Oladoyinbo as the Head of Zone, Teaching Service Commission Office, Saki can never be forgotten (Interview: 2021). Mrs. Comfort Kayode, Chief Administrator of Little Saints Montessori School, Ilupeju Lagos, Lagos State, established a system of learning to write and speak English in record tone (Interview: 2022).

8. Inculcation of Discipline

In the area of discipline, Mrs. Nelson Ochonogor Ibidun Oluwayemisi is a typical icon. She was the principal of Methodist Comprehensive College, (senior) Sagamu, Ogun State, between September 2014 and 3rd of December, 2021. She instituted a disciplinary committee that made sure offenders were seriously dealt with. It served as a deterrent to others, and reduced criminality to the barest minimum in the school premises and its environs (Interview: 2022). Before the demise of her husband, she organized summer coaching for the students free of charge, while the husband paid the teachers throughout the period. This was an uncommon example of collaboration with male counterparts (Interview: 2022).

9. Prayer and Spiritual Battles against Evil Powers

In the area of spiritual battles, Mrs. Omokayode A. Omobolanle, the Principal of Christ African Grammar School, opposite National Examination Council Office, Osogbo, Osun State was posted to the school in November, 2020. She met an insane man in the school, who later confessed that he was a kidnapper but disguising as an insane man. This happened after much prayer. Then she took legal action by taking the man to the nearby police station. There was a period when the school was in need of furniture. People made donations but it was not enough to solve the problem. The Spirit of God led her one day to a nearby bushy where miraculously; she met uncountable numbers of iron frames for furniture hiding in an old, dilapidated and abandoned structure. These frames were used to make 250 furniture items for 500 students. The school is now registered for 2023 West African Examination Council as it was upgraded from a Junior Secondary to a Senior Secondary School (Interview:2022).

10. Conclusion

In many African nations and in Yorùbá Land of South-Western Nigeria, women are vulnerable to gender bias, domestic violence, and inferiority complex, among others. This has led to many arguments on the role of women in the society. There are various opinions on whether the role of women is predominantly in the home front or they can also engage or make impact on other fields of professional endeavors, more especially as Christians. During the Early Church Fathers' dispensation, most of them had negative attitudes to women, because of the argument that the serpent deceived Eve, the first woman on earth. However, in the areas of ethics of moral education, Western education, discovery of one's place in destiny and Women's place in terms of prayer, among other areas of life, Christian Women have impacted the development of South-West Yorùbá land Nigeria.

11. Implication for the Global Church

Female discrimination should be discouraged and all things that make women education difficult should be eschewed, such as early marriage, child labor and child abuse. Parents should be sensitized to give equal opportunity to male and female children alike. It is opinion of this paper that girl/child education should be free in all primary and secondary schools in Nigeria in general and Yorùbá land, South-Western in particular. For effectiveness, therefore, women should be leaders of action, steadfastness, servant hood, dependable, tolerance, faithfulness and good character.

The premise of anti-women attitudes by being conscious of them in ourselves and others must be disarmed. We must educate the young to fight hierarchies based on gender difference, which in turn are justified on cultural grounds. Where exploitation and oppression are grounded in institutions, it may very well be that a collective action will generate a revolution that will liberate such institutions from the cancer that will eat them up (Falola: 2018).

Nigeria needs to release the full labor potential and creativity of women, and create gender parity. In public places as well as domestic households, women have to take critical leadership positions (Falola: 2018). Women should be given certain percentages of appointments in high positions, the creation of agencies solely devoted to women issues, and changes in law to ensure that women have better rights to their husbands and parents inheritance. One of the strategies to overcome poverty is to give power to families and empower women who constitute the majority of the population.

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