



Gender Equality and Development

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ABSTRACT: Gender issue dominates the 21st century discourse both in the developed world and in the developing countries. It is a top priority of United Nation policy and World Bank commitment to invest on any programmes that guarantee full participation of women. Gender inequality or discrimination has been blamed on the steady increase on poverty, unemployment and other related issues. It is by no means a Western concept aimed at liberating women from perceived discrimination. Gender equality is perceived as a meaningful guarantor of development. However, academic query on this important issue left some gap to be filled on the irony of gender equality. What does the concept stand for, where is it coming from, what is the motive of gender equality, does it really guarantee women freedom without subjecting them to forms of exploitation and dehumanization? This piece is critical in answering these questions and in accessing the economic development agenda behind the campaign on gender equality. In order to achieve this, Marxist position is utilized, while upholding Structural functionalist theory to maintain the status quo and with certain modification and improvement on the condition of women. However, the study indicted capitalist economic system as the major causes of gender inequality.

Keywords: Gender, capitalism, equality, inequality, development.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is not a contention that women and gender equality are critical to global efforts to achieve sustainable development and poverty reduction. Educating and empowering women economically has an impact on the health and wealth of households, and increasing their participation in the labour market could help to drive economic growth around the world. In addition to fulfilling women's human rights, there is also an economic case for promoting gender equality. More so, the donor community has adopted a gender mainstreaming approach to development co-operation in which underlying differences in women's and men's resources, power, constraints, needs and interests are explicitly recognised and acted upon in all situations, so as to reduce gender inequality. For this reasons, equality between men and women was officially recognised as a global goal by the world community in the Charter of the United Nations in 1945, and was later confirmed in several treaties, conventions and agreements, most notably the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, which was endorsed by UN Member States at the Fourth World Conference on Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in 1995. This Platform recognises gender equality as both a human right and a core development issue. The accumulated empirical evidence demonstrates the centrality of gender equality for equitable and sustainable development and poverty reduction. World Bank, (2001), maintained that states that fail to promote equality between men and women tend to experience slower economic growth and more persistent poverty in their populations than those that promote equality.

Gender inequalities not only represent social biases of our time, it has actually dominated social discourse and form policy priority of Donor agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to equate men and women folk in all sphere of human activities. One critical area that is left unaddressed is who does gender equality benefit most. Racism, ethnicity and gender inequalities are all an expression geared towards the dominant control of societal resources. It is either the white supremacy over black in terms of mental agility to dominate in a particular socio-economic and political system, in a poly ethnic society one ethnic group claim more fit in both politics and economy. Gender inequality is an expression of struggle to gain dominant control of societal resources. Men in general are perceives to have more dominant control in all sphere of social life. While this assertion may be right, however it is still subject to more scrutiny to examine the true position of the actual claim.

II. THE CONCEPT OF GENDER

At the core of the sociological analysis of gender is the distinction between biological sex and gender: sex is a property of the biological characteristics of an organism; gender is socially constructed, socially created. This is a powerful and totally revolutionary idea: we have the potential capacity to change the social relations in which we live, including the social relations between biologically defined men and women. Nevertheless, gender is socially acquired notions of (masculinity and femininity by which women and men are identified) is a widely used and often misunderstood term. It is sometimes mistakenly conflated with sex or used to refer only to women. gender refers to the socially determined differences between women and men, such as roles, attitudes, behaviour and values. Gender roles are learned and vary across cultures and over time; they are thus amendable to change. Gender is a relational term that includes both women and men. Gender equality focuses on changes for both men and women. It is not plausible to discuss the issue of gender without knowing the basis of it i.e. sex. Sex refer to a set of biological differences between women and men which is genetically determined. Only a very small proportion of the differences in roles assigned to men and women can be attributed to biological or physical differences based on sex. For example, pregnancy, childbirth and differences in physiology can be attributed to sex-related characteristics.

More so, biological differences are widely believed to be responsible for the differences in both the behaviour of men and women and the roles that they play in society. Stoller, (1968) has warned against such an assumption, according to him, gender is a term that has psychological and cultural connotations, if the proper term for sex are 'male' and 'female', the corresponding terms for gender are 'masculine' and 'feminine': these latter might be quiet independence of (biological) sex. This assumption shows that it does not necessarily means being a woman means being 'feminine', nor that being a man means behaving in a 'masculine' way. According to this assertion, girls are not necessarily caring and compassionate, and boys do not have to be aggressive and competitive in their role performance. In a similar remark, Oakley, (1972) extend the argument further, she contends that feminine social roles, such as those of housewives and mothers who care for their children, are not inevitable product of female biology at the same time it is not an inevitable that man will be breadwinner. Stoller and Oakley believe that it is the culture of society that determines the behaviour of the sexes within it and not biological. This assertion has been the frontline of gender equality.

III. THE FORMATION OF GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender Inequalities refers to the obvious or hidden disparities among individuals based on the performance of gender. This problem in simple term is known as Gender Bias, which in simple terms means the gender stratification or making difference between a girl and a boy i.e. a male or a female. However, inequality between men and women can take very many different forms. Indeed, gender inequality is not one homogeneous phenomenon, but a collection of disparate and interlinked problems. The issue of gender inequality is one, which has been publicly reverberating through society for decades. The problem of inequality in employment being one of the most pressing issues today. In order to examine this situation one must try to get to the root of the problem and must understand the sociological factors that cause women to have a much more difficult time getting the same benefits, wages, and job opportunities as their male counterparts.

The society in which we live has been shaped historically by materialist quest for survival. In tracing the emergency of perceived inequality Giddens, (2004) is of the view that:

“For the vast majority of the population in pre-industrial societies (and many people in the developing world), productive activities and the activities of the household were not separate. Production was carried out either in the home or nearby, and all members of the family participated in work on the land or in handicrafts. Women often had considerable influence within the household as a result of their importance in economic process, even if they were excluded from the male realms of politics and warfare. Wives of craftsmen and farmers often kept business accounts and widows quiet commonly owned and managed businesses”. (2004, p.390).

The emergency of industrialisation destabilizes the economic arrangement within the family and formed the basis for division of labour that give rise to gender discrimination within the industrial sector. In supporting this assertion, Giddens, (2004), postulates that:

“Much of this changed with the separation of the workplace from the home brought about by the development of modern industry. The movement of production into mechanised factories was probably the largest single factor. Work was done at machine's pace by individual hired specifically for the task in question, so employers gradually began to contract workers as individual rather than families. With time and progress of industrialization, an increasing division was established between home and workplace. The idea of 'separate sphere' – public and private – became entrenched in popular attitudes. Men, by merit of their employment outside the home, spent more time in the public realm and became more involved in local affairs, politics and

the market. Women came to be associated with ‘domestic’ values and were responsible for tasks such as childcare, maintaining the home and preparing food for the family”. (2004, p.390).

In a similar remark Oakley, (1974), opines that housework in its current form came into existence with the separation of the home and workplace. According to her, with industrialization, home became a place for consumption rather than production of goods. Domestic work became ‘invisible’ as ‘real work’ was identified more and more as that which receives a direct wage. Housework has traditionally been seen as the domain of women, which the realm of ‘real work’ outside the home was reserved for men. In this conventional model, according to her, the domestic division of labour – the way in which responsibilities at home are shared by household members – was quiet straightforward. Women shouldered most if not all, of the domestic tasks, while men ‘provided’ for the family by earning a wage. From the above one can see the gradual development of gender discrimination as a by-product of modern industrial system that confers the wealth of society into the hands of few.

IV. THEORETICAL EXPLANATION OF THE CAUSES OF GENDER INEQUALITY

Theories are sets of inter-related concepts and ideas that have been scientifically tested and combined to magnify, enlarge, clarify, and expand our understanding of people, their behaviours, and their societies. Without theories, science would be a futile exercise in statistics. To explain gender inequality, sociologists turn to the surrounding systems that affect all human behaviour. Most theories highlight the institutional structures that assign women and men different positions, different roles, and consequently different behaviours.

4.1 Marxist Theory and the Logic of Market Economy

One of the major theories adopted in this work to explain and analyse the issue of gender inequality is Marxist theory of materialist conception of history or otherwise known as conflict theory. At the heart of Marxist theory is the belief that all social evil in human society are primarily caused by social differences while society is polarised into two antagonist group each competing for scarce resources. Nevertheless, conflict theory asserts that social problems occur when dominant groups mistreat subordinate ones, and thus advocates for a balance of power between genders. The logic of capitalist economy using conflict theory follows that one of the major aim behind capitalism is profit maximization whether at the expense of the masses or not the aim must be realized at all cost under market economy model.

According to Eitzen, (2000), the most compelling explanations of gender inequality are materialist theories that use cross-cultural data on the status of women and men. Materialist theories explain gender inequality as an outcome of how women and men are tied to the economic structure of society. Such theories stress control and distribution of valued resources as crucial facts in producing stratification. They point out that women's roles of mother and wife, although vital to the well-being of society, are devalued and also deny women access to highly value public resources. They point out that gender stratification is greater where women's work is directed inward to the family and men's work is directed outward to trade and the marketplace. When women do enter the labour markets, they often are concentrated in lower-paying jobs. Women also enter the labour market later than men and often have to leave periodically because of childcare responsibilities. Historically, women have had lower levels of education than men, but recently this trend seems to have begun to reverse.

More so, Eitzen, (2000) further explained that, the division between domestic and public spheres of activity is particularly constraining to women and advantageous to men. According to him, the domestic and public spheres of activity are associated with different amounts of property, power, and prestige, women's reproductive roles and their responsibilities for domestic labour limit their association with the resources that are highly valued and men are freed from domestic responsibilities. Their economic obligations in the public sphere assure them of control of highly valued resources and give rise to male privilege. In other to buttress this argument further by indicting capitalism as the major causes of gender discrimination, (Momsen, 2008), maintained that, in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, Russia and China, where most jobs were open to men and women under communism, the transition to capitalism has led to increased unemployment, especially for women. While United Nations (1995b), maintained that, most parts of the world the gender gap in political representation has become smaller but in the former USSR and its satellite countries in Eastern and Central Europe there has been a rapid decline in average female representation in parliament from 27 per cent in 1987 under communism, to 7 per cent in 1994.

4.2 Gender Inequality and the Logic of Capitalism

Gender inequality can be explained through the process of social formation of capitalism, for (Heilbroner, 1985) there have been four major types of “social formations” (Marx’s term) in human history, viz., primitive, imperial, feudal, and capitalist. Each of these social formations can be approached through an analysis of its peculiar “nature” and the resulting “logic.” The “nature” of a social formation “refers to the ensemble of elements that influence the behaviour of its members” These include: (1) geography and climate, (2) drives and capacities of the human animal as a species being, and (3) institutions, organizations, and belief systems. The “logic” of a social formation can be understood as its historical path, i.e., the movements and changes that occur in the societies various processes and configurations over time, as the outward expressions of the “potential energy created by its nature” (p. 25).

Therefore, the nature of a social formation necessarily gives rise to particular tendencies or tensions that, in turn, produce “large-scale and long-lasting” changes both institutional and cultural in the course of history. The pattern of such changes constitutes the “logic” of the social formation by which gender inequality can be explained. We cannot understand such “patterned changes in history” without referring to the underlying “nature” of the social formation in question. To understand the social formation called capitalism, we must start by looking at its “single most important element,” i.e., its nature, which is also “the primary aspect” of its “behavioural orientation.” The nature of capitalism is the driving need to extract wealth from the productive activities of society in the form of capital. With the exception of primitive societies that function at a subsistence level, the productive activities of any social formation will necessarily give rise to something called “surplus,” usually defined as anything produced by a society that is “over and above that required for the maintenance” of that society.

However, according to Heilbroner, (1985) we must understand that wealth, in the form of material things or in the form of money, is not identical with capital. Wealth becomes capital only when it is part of a process that transforms money into commodities and commodities into more money. Under capitalism, the “search for wealth” does not come to an end with the acquisition of money or the acquisition of material things. Commodities must be sold in exchange for money, and money must be reinvested to produce more commodities. In order to maintain this process and to encourage consumption the large labour force concentrated within the domain of family i.e. women must be released and introduced into the new system. By this, it encourages large consumption of produce, more capital and cheaper labour supply in the labour market all these are both advantages for capitalist growth.

By indicting capitalism as the main architect of gender inequality one can see through the mirror of Heilbroner, (1985) according to him, in a subsistence society, everyone has equal access to the means of survival, i.e., food, water, shelter, and safety. In such a society, there is prestige but no wealth. Thus, a skilled hunter or a shaman is likely to enjoy considerable prestige because of his or her personal qualities, but no one is able to own any wealth simply because the “right to exclusion” does not exist. The spear or the fishing net does not belong to any one person, who could then exclude others from using them. In sharp contrast, wealth comes into existence when the right of access of all members of society to an independent livelihood no longer prevails, so that control over this access becomes of life-giving importance. This also means that “wealth cannot exist unless there also exists a condition of scarcity.” Here scarcity does not refer to an “insufficiency of resources” but to an “insufficiency of means of access to resources”. Without the “right to exclusion,” there can be no wealth; without poverty, there can be no affluence (p. 46).

Therefore, in a capitalist society, a great deal of what is called “economic growth” actually results from the commodification of traditionally non-commercial goods and services. Capitalism expands internally, so to speak, as more and more elements of family or community life activities such as cooking, cleaning, recreation, and childcare are increasingly brought under the reign of capital. How is profit generated through the domination of capital over labour? In this arrangement, it is obvious that profit can only come into being if the employer pays the labourer less than the value of the labourer’s product. This can happen once the working population is large especially where women enters labour market, it means large labour supply and less wages are paid since there is large labourers outside in need of job it will be difficult for labourers who consider themselves lucky to be employed to leave. Therefore, gender equality needs to be promoted to give women more opportunities to offer their labour for exploitation and to be encouraged to consume and own property. A never ending process which leads to maximization of profits, since it is perfectly clear that capitalism is based on a system of property rights, which is why profits whether they are obtained through trading gains, exploited labour, or technological rent are always deemed to belong to the owners of capital, not to the owners of labour power.

4.3 Maintaining the Status Quo within the Realm of Functionalism

The functionalist perspective sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole, and looks at both social structure and social

functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements, namely: norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. A common analogy, popularized by Herbert Spencer, presents these parts of society as "organs" that work toward the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole. This theory suggests that gender inequalities exist as an efficient way to create a division of labour, or as a social system in which particular segments are clearly responsible for certain, respective acts of labour. The division of labour works to maximize resources and efficiency. A structural functionalist view of gender inequality applies the division of labour to view predefined gender roles as complementary: women take care of the home while men provide for the family. Thus gender, like other social institutions, contributes to the stability of society as a whole.

Gender relations are generally experienced as "natural" rather than as something created by cultural and social processes. Throughout most of history, for most people the roles performed by men and women seem to be derived from inherent biological properties. After all, it is a biological fact that women get pregnant and give birth to babies and have the capacities to breastfeed them. Men cannot do this. It is biological fact that all women know that they are the mothers of the babies they bear, whereas men know that they are the fathers of particular children only when they have confidence that they know the sexual behaviour of the mother. It is a small step from these biological facts to the view that it is also a fact of nature that women are best suited to have primary responsibility for rearing children as well, and because of this, they should be responsible for other domestic chores.

The central thesis of sociological accounts of gender relations is that these biological facts by themselves do not determine the specific form that social relations between men and women take. This does not imply, however, an even stronger view, that gender relations have nothing to do with biology. Gender relations are the result of the way social processes act on a specific biological categories and form social relations between them. One way of thinking about this is with a metaphor of production: biological differences rooted in sex constitute the raw materials, which, through a specific process of social production, get transformed into the social relations we, call "gender".

V. GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Throughout human history, women have always had lower status than men, but the extent of the gap between the sexes varies across cultures and time (some arguing that it is inversely related to social evolution). However, the development of modern capitalist economic system forms the basis of gender discrimination and makes it more pronounce than before in human history. Gender discrimination is the systematic, unfavourable treatment of individuals because of their gender, which denies them their rights, opportunities or resources. Across the world, women are treated unequally and less value are placed on their lives because of their gender. Women's differential access to power and control of resources is central to this discrimination in all institutional spheres, i.e. the household, community, market, and state. Within the household, women and girls can face discrimination in the sharing out of household resources including food, sometimes leading to higher malnutrition and mortality indicators for women. Reeves and Baden (2000), posits that at its most extreme, gender discrimination can lead to son preference, expressed in sex selective abortion or female feticide. In the labour market, unequal pay, occupational exclusion or segregation into low skill and low paid work limit women's earnings in comparison to those of men of similar education levels. Women's lack of representation and voice in decision-making bodies in the community and the state perpetuates discrimination, in terms of access to public services, such as schooling and health care or discriminatory laws.

For Janet, (2010), gender is a common term where as gender discrimination is meant only for women, because females are the only victims of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is not biologically determined but it is determined by socially and the discrimination can be changed by the proper and perpetuate efforts. Denial of equality, rights and opportunity and suppression in any form on the basis of gender is gender discrimination. She further maintained that, half of the world's population is females. They are doing two-third of work of the total work in the world but received only one-tenth of the world's total income. Nearly two-third of the women is illiterates and they have possessed only one percent of the total world's assets. In the world only one-fourth of the families are headed by female. India is a male dominant society and gender discrimination is customised habitually.

While explaining gender inequality and its causes, Eitzen, (2000), emphasis on social structural approach, according to him, the gender structure approach emphasizes factors that are external to individuals, such as the organization of social institutions, including the concentration of power, the legal system, and organizational barriers that promote sexual inequality. These approaches tend to differ in how they view the sexes, in how they explain the causes and effects of sexism, and in the solutions, they suggest for elimination of inequality. Both individual and structural approaches are necessary to a complete understanding of sexism. Eitzen, further explained that the earnings gap between women and men has been widely documented. Although there was a slight narrowing of the earnings difference during the past ten years, women workers do not approach earnings

parity with men even when they work in similar occupations. This income differential has remained at about the same level throughout the past two decades. The earnings gap persists for several reasons, according to him:

- ❖ Women are concentrated in lower-paying occupations.
- ❖ Women enter the labour force at different and lower-paying levels than men.
- ❖ Women as a group have less education and experience than men; therefore, they are paid less than men are.
- ❖ Women tend to work less overtime than men do.

These conditions explain only part of the earning gap between women and men. They do not explain why women workers earn substantially less than men workers with the same number of years of education and with the same work histories, skills, and work experience (Eitzen, 2000). Eitzen, further explained that work inequality operates because of split-labour market. In analysing this assertion, he contends that there has been a widespread view that women's status in the labour force was as a result of, their socialization, their low aspirations, and their greater commitments to family than to work. New sociological research has found that the economic system, not individual characteristics, structures the position of women. The differential placement of women and men stems from forces in American capitalism. The capitalist labour market is divided into two separate segments with different characteristics, different roles, and different rewards.

a. Primary Sector

The primary segment is characterized by stability, high wages, promotion ladders, opportunities for advancement, good working conditions, and provisions for job security.

b. Secondary Sector

Low wages, fewer or no promotion ladders, poor working conditions, and little provision for job security characterize the secondary market. Women's work tends to fall in the secondary segment. Clerical work, the largest single occupation for women, has many of the characteristics associated with the secondary segment. The office provides a good example of segmentation by gender. The two separate groups of office jobs, divided by sex. Some jobs are clearly "female" (typists, secretaries, key punchers); others are clearly "male" (vice president, product manager, sales manager). Furthermore, groups of jobs are organized into a hierarchy and the "clerical" staffs are largely female hierarchy. Each hierarchy is made up of jobs graded by level representing steps in a career. When a person takes a job, she/he occupies not only that particular job, but also a step on a particular career ladder. A person who starts on the clerical career ladder may move up the ranks as she/he gains experience, but she/he rarely is allowed to cross over into a different ladder (Eitzen, 2000:275). From the above summation, it is plausible to say that male dominance is both a socializing and structural force. It exists at all levels of society, from the interpersonal interactions of women and men, to the patterning of gender that is found in all cultural forms and social institutions. Therefore, gender discrimination or inequality is more pronounced within the economic structure of society.

VI. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

The concept of development has both cultural and historical dimension in defining what development is all about. Even though no single definition can offer a satisfactory explanation of development without criticism as far as social science concepts are concerned. To sum up all the views on development is to make the work cumbersome. In its simplest form, development means improvement or to become more advanced, more mature, more complete, more organized, more transformed etc. Todaro, (1982) sees development as a "multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social system". This involves in addition to improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and belief. Todaro, belief that development is a process of improving the quality of all human lives with three equally important aspects.

These are:

- ❖ Raising peoples' living levels, i.e. incomes and consumption, levels of food, medical services, education through relevant growth processes
- ❖ Creating conditions conducive to the growth of peoples' self-esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity and respect
- ❖ Increasing peoples' freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables, e.g. varieties of goods and services.

Development at this level of conceptualisation is often understood in terms of economic development but the new focus is now beyond income or innate factors such as GNP or GDP to human focus in terms of quality of life. Ibezim, (1999) explains that, economic development does not only involve physical and financial progress but also improvements in the political and social aspects of society.

Women were invisible in the liberal economic development paradigm predominant in the 1950s. This invisibility of women's economic roles reflected the prevailing worldview in Europe and the United States that

considered women's work ancillary to the family and economically irrelevant. This assumption allowed to the conceptual modelling of the household as a unit, which was benevolently ruled by the patriarch who made decisions that were in the best interests of all family member. Further, this construct effectively ignored women's caring functions globally and obscured women's economic activities in subsistence economies. That such assumptions were seen as culturally biased only proved the need for modernization of economies around the world. Women in both developed and developing countries increasingly challenged the social construction of gender reflected in development theory. Scholars documented the work that women did and concluded that many development programs were having an adverse impact on women. Activists agitated in Europe and the United States for their governmental agencies to integrate women into their development plan. The industrialized countries, recovering from World War II craved normalcy as they envisioned it had been before the war: men working and women in the home. This vision ignores how easily appropriate roles for women and men can be manipulated. Traditionally, the social construction of gender was influenced by religion and culture. Governments can utilize media and tax policy to encourage change. For (Nerad, 1999), posit that in the 1930s, women in the US were implored to leave their jobs so that men could work and support their families. So successful was this reordering of women's roles that the regents of the University of California, Berkeley, decided undergraduate women should concentrate on home science and arbitrarily reassigned women professors from across the disciplines to Home Economics. But as the US entered the war, the government proclaimed women's patriotic duty was to work in the defense industry: the posters of Rosie the Riveter were as ubiquitous as those recruiting soldiers.

According to Jaquette, (1982) development theorists took as given this transitory view of gender and utilized it for designing the stages of growth that would lead to modernization. Liberal economists wished to counter Marxism with an alternative inevitable path, but they tended to dismiss in importance of women in both the economic and caring economies. Marxist theory does recognize women's importance in reproducing the labour force as well as their work yet provisions for assisting women in their caring functions were seldom adequate in communist countries. Both these economic constructs lacked an understanding of women's reality, especially in developing countries. While Folbre, (1988) claimed that women's activities in the family were, according to the economic construct, part of the household unit whose male head was the benevolent decision-maker. Placing women in the black box of the household obliterates their work in the care economy globally. In subsistence economies which still retained the traditional sexual division of labour as development assistance programs geared up, focus on the patriarch undercut customary responsibilities and tended only to reward the males with rights. Focus on the household obscured the facts of women's economic contributions.

For Tinker, (2004b) the rhetoric of democracy and equality espoused during the war resonated in both former colonies and in industrial countries. Independence movements brought women to the forefront of struggle, especially when the male leaders were jailed. Many women were given high-level positions at home and in the United Nations in the newly independent countries. International women's organizations participated in the Economic and Social Council and lobbied the UN to include social issues in the UN First Development Decade 1960-1970 that focused on infrastructure and industrial projects. In 1964, Sweden became the first western country to alter its development policies explicitly to include women: USSR had initiated a few such projects earlier in the decade. Activists spurred the US Congress to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 and require the US Agency for International Development to administer its programs with a view to integrate women in national economies of foreign countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort.

For this reason, gender equality is a crucial factor in any meaningful development agenda. Development is therefore, a process of expanding freedoms equally for all people both male and female. Closing the gap between both male and female is as much a part of development as in reducing income disparity and poverty. Greater gender equality not only enhances economic efficiency but also improves other development outcomes.

According to Sen, (2009) it does so in three main ways:

- ❖ First, with women now representing 40 percent of the global labour force and more than half the world's university students, overall productivity will increase if their skills and talents are used more fully. For example, if women farmers have the same access as men to productive resources such as land and fertilizers, agricultural output in developing countries could increase by as much as 2.5 to 4 percent (FAO, 2011). Elimination of barriers against women working in certain sectors or occupations could increase output by raising women's participation and labour productivity by as much as 25 percent in some countries through better allocation of their skills and talent (Cuberes and Teignier-Baqué, 2011).
- ❖ Second, greater control over household resources by women, either through their own earnings or cash transfers, can enhance countries' growth prospects by changing spending in ways that benefit children. Evidence from countries as varied as Brazil, China, India, South Africa, and the United Kingdom shows

that when women control more household income—either through their own earnings or through cash transfers—children benefit as a result of more spending on food and education (World Bank, 2011).

- ❖ Finally, empowering women as economic, political, and social actors can change policy choices and make institutions more representative of a range of voices. In India, giving power to women at the local level led to greater provision of public goods, such as water and sanitation, which mattered more to women (Beaman et al, 2011).

However, how gender equality evolves as development proceeds can best be understood through the responses of households to the functioning and structure of markets and institutions both formal (such as laws, regulations, and delivery of government services) and informal (such as gender roles, norms, and social networks). Markets and institutions help determine the incentives, preferences, and constraints faced by different individuals in a household, as well as their voice and bargaining power. In this way, household decision making, markets, and formal and informal institutions interact to determine gender-related outcomes. Therefore, increasing women’s participation in economic activities is essential to improving the lives of their families and entire societies as well as their countries. Given women, the opportunity to involve in economic activity is a vital step for any country in the world to accelerate development and to eliminate poverty, as women will invest their incomes in their child’s health, nutrition and education that will in turn improve their families living condition.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study has examined the concept of gender, the various stages and dimension of gender inequality in human history from pre-industrial period to the modern day capitalism. Biological properties cannot be divorced from gender. Allocation of gender roles are tied to sex. No matter how we use semantic it is the basis of gender separation or inequality. Gender inequality became more pronounced under capitalist economic system. The rationales behind gender equality are exposed under the logic of capitalism as it means co-opting the female folk within the arm pit of capitalism. Women involvement in development is crucial in every society. However, where markets remain partial and limited in their outreach, it is family, kinship, and community that underpin the search for livelihood and security and provide the main source of norms and values that govern people’s lives. The social organisation of family, kinship, and community, and the societal norms and values, which these generate, may have as much, and more, influence in explaining variations in gender equality. Therefore, politics and institutions are crucial in understanding the structuring of gender relations in society, but politics and their gendered outcomes are embedded in complex processes. Nations constitute different “historical packages” or unique constellations of factors. Both the formation of policies and the actual outcomes are conditioned by such configuration, which is by the economic, institutional and cultural settings in which they are embedded. If nations are seen to constitute different ‘historical packages’ it is therefore, assumed that the issue of gender inequality must be viewed in that context, transplanting the idea from Western perspectives into the Africa context is likely to mislead us, finding a solution from that view point is an effort in futility. Therefore, the issue of gender whether equality and inequality must be view using Afrocentric dimension rather than from Eurocentric sentiment. As far as the bond of family unity can be maintained women conditions needs improvement it is vital to the home, community and the nation at large given women the opportunity to excel in all sphere of life without jeopardising the family institutions, which is the basic value of Africa society compare to other culture. Accepting the universal culture, as a model of Western value in relation to gender will be disastrous to Africa social system.

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