

# Women's Empowerment for Sustainability in Africa



# Women's Empowerment for Sustainability in Africa

Edited by

Robert Dibie

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*This book is dedicated to my daughter Kome Ajiroghene Dibie,  
wife Dr. Josephine Okeowo Dibie and my late Mother Sarah Eloh Dibie*



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## PREFACE

This book attempts to take the conceptualization of the relationship between gender policies, capacity-building and sustainable development in African countries to a new level. It provides a number of case studies of the relationships between gender and economic development around the African continent, highlighting different processes and practices. Thereby the authors seek to understand the impact of weak gender policies, and the ability to adequately develop female capacity building that could lead to wide-spread economic growth in Africa. Chapters take an open, explorative approach to the relationship between gender and sustainable development with the aid of case studies focusing on weak policies, culture and religion.

Sub-Saharan Africa is struggling with severe and recurring economic, political and social crises, including discrimination and violence against women, food insecurity and civil war. These predicaments have galvanized most parts of the African continent into humanitarian disasters. Making such a statement is not indicative of a state of Afro-pessimism. This book deals with different aspects of gender discrimination and gender empowerment policies, as well as their impact on economic development and capacity-building in several African countries.

The findings presented in this book will be very useful to policy makers, public administrators, public policy analysis, readers, researchers, graduate and undergraduate studies in gender studies, sociology, social work, nonprofit, history economic development and public policy disciplines. This book is about gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainability in Africa. It argues that women empowerment should not be seen only as a human rights entitlement, but also as a pathway to achieving sustainable development goals in the African continent.

With the wide variety of cases this book is able to provide conceptual insights to better understand how African countries have not been able to effectively integrate gender equality and women's empowerment policies in order to stimulate poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and sustainable development. It reviews the extensive literature on capacity building strategies and gender policies, as well as examines the implication of sustainable development of countries in the African continent. This book uses primary and secondary data to

present the argument that without the full input of women, sustainable development will not be achieved. It analyzes social institutions in Africa as mirrored by societal practices and legal norms, as well as instruments that produce inequalities between women and men in the continent. It also give specific attention to the roles of various actors directly and indirectly involved in gender policy making and implementation. The chapters present a wide range of new dimensions and variables that are not considered by other books on gender.

Robert Dibie, Ph.D.

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continuing efforts make me optimistic about continued progress in the study and practice of equality among women and men.

Each author is responsible for the contents of his/her contribution. As the editor, I have taken care not to distort the content or meaning of each contribution. I however regret any errors or mistakes herein, as they are unintended. The views expressed in this publication remain those of the contributors and they do not necessarily represent the viewpoint or endorsement of the editor.

Finally, I am especially thankful for the efforts of my wife and best friend Dr. Josephine Dibie for her time, energy, commitment, and contribution to the quality and success of this book. Josephine and I have worked together in one capacity or another for twenty-two years, always around African gender issues and this volume represent the most recent culmination of that collaboration.

## ABOUT THE EDITOR

**Robert Dibie, Ph.D.** is a Professor of Public Policy, Public Management and Environmental Studies at Indiana University Kokomo's Department of Public Administration and Health Management. He has been dean and senior higher education administrator for many years. Previously, Professor Dibie served as the director of graduate programs in public administration at Western Kentucky University. He is a recipient of the prestigious Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship award. A prolific and insightful researcher and writer, Professor Dibie has published ten books and more than 120 peer-reviewed journal articles in the area of environmental policy, civil society, public management, sustainable development, public policy, NGOs, women empowerment and ethics. latest books includes: *Business and Government Relations in Africa* by Routledge Press; *Comparative Perspectives on Environmental Policy and Issues* by Routledge Press; *Public Administration: Analysis, Theories and Application* by Babcock University Press; *Comparative Perspectives on Civil Society* by Lexington Press; *Public Management and Sustainable Development in Nigeria* by Ashgate; *Nongovernmental Organizations and Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* by Lexington Press, His recent research articles have appeared in the *International Journal of Public Administration*; *Journal of African Policy Studies*, *Journal of Developing Societies*, *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*; *Journal of Social Justice*, *Journal of African and Asian Studies*; *Politics Administration and Change Journal*, *Journal of International Politics and Development*, *Journal of African Business* and so on. He has presented more than 124 academic papers in national and international conferences, focusing on issues of sustainable development, public management, public policy, women empowerment, environmental policies, development administration, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a nationally recognized leader in higher education, Professor Dibie has presented many seminars, workshops and lectures in the areas of Higher Education Leadership, Public Policy, Environmental Policy, Gender Empowerment and Sustainable Development in a number of universities around the world. Professor Dibie has also developed continuing education materials and taught professional development courses (Executive Leadership, Program Evaluation, and Ethics) for various professional organizations, including Banks, City and County Governments, Nonprofit



institutions, NGOs, and some National Governments' Departments in the United States and abroad. He has also consulted for several NGOs and universities in the United States, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean Islands.

Dibie is committed to the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, discovery and creativity. He is a proven student-centered educator and has fostered personal and intellectual growth to prepare students for productive careers, meaningful lives and responsible citizenship in a global society. Professor Dibie has also supervised more than 60 doctoral and masters' degree dissertation on Public Management, Public Policy, Environmental Policy, Nongovernmental Organizations, Economic Development Policy, Sustainable Development, Women Empowerment, Business Administration, Environmental Health and Safety, and Political Science.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Absolute Advantage
ADB	African Development Bank
ADF	African Development Fund
ADTA	Advisory Technical Assistance
AGM	Acquired Group Memberships
AKST	Agricultural knowledge, science and technology
APEC	Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation
AMPRONAC	Association of Women Confronting the National Problem
ANC	African National Congress
AWU	Abeokuta Women's Union
AQL	Acceptable Quality Level
BA	Bureaucratic Authoritarian
BAU	Business-as-usual
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCI	Better Cotton Initiative
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic
BSI	Better Sugar Initiative
CAP	Country Assistance Plan
CASCR	Country Assistance Strategy Completion Report
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
CBP	Country Briefing Paper
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COSS	Country Operational Strategy Study
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DMC	Developing member country
DPO	Development Policy Operation
EC	European Community
EOI	Export Orientated Industrialization
FMC	Federation of Cuban Women
FORD	Federation for the Restoration of Democracy
GAD	Gender and Development
GAM	Mutual Support Group
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBS	General Budgetary Support

GE	Gender Equality
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICR	Implementation Completion Report
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KANU	Kenyan African National Union
LDC	Less Developed Countries
LLDC	Least Developed Countries
LMWA	Lagos Market Women's Association
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIBR	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research
NAID	Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OESD	Office of Environment and Social Development
OPEV	Operations Evaluation Department
OMA	Organization of Angolan Women
OMM	Organization of Mozambican Women
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PBL	Policy-based Lending
PRBS	Poverty Reduction Budget Support
PREM	Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network (World Bank)
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBM	Results-based Management
RGC	Regional Gender Coordinator (World Bank)
SDA	Social Development Advisor (DFID)
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SDO	Strategic Development Objective
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SNM	National Secretariat for Women
SOCD	Social Development Division
SOW	Subordination of Women
SSWA	Secretary of State for Women's Affairs

SWA	Sector-Wide Approach
SWAP	South West Africa People's Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNHABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
WIN	Women in Nigeria
WIZER	Women in Zambia for Equality and Representation
WSDL	Women Self Defense League

# CHAPTER ONE

## OVERVIEW OF GENDER ISSUES IN AFRICA

### ROBERT DIBIE

#### **Introduction**

Global changes have not affected all women in the same way. According to Kavane (2014) development has, in some cases, helped to widen the economic and social gap between women and men. At the same time, old values are often challenged by new ones and continue to influence relations between women and men (Falola & Amponsah 2012; Payne and Nassar 2006). A review of the history of developed and developing countries reveals that women were in many ways not treated equally to men. It was reported that women perform 66 per cent of the world's work, and produce 50 per cent of the food, yet they earn only 10 per cent of the income and own one per cent of the property (OECD, 2010). In addition, women are not allowed to own property in some African countries. They also do not have a share in the property of their parents, nor do they have voting rights. Further, women do not have the freedom to choose their work or job, and so on (Bose and Kim 2009; McGovern & Wallimann, 2012; Sadiqi and Moha 2010; Ngunjiri 2011; Burn 2005). Some parts of the world tend to have come out of those dark days of oppression of women. However, there is a need for a strong movement to fight for the rights of women and to ensure that they get all the rights which men have, or in other words, a movement for the empowerment of women.

Women's rights on the African continent are important indicators to understanding global well-being. Although a major global women's rights treaty was ratified by the majority of the countries in Africa, as well as across the world, a few decades ago, numerous gender issues continue to exist in all areas of African women's lives. These issues range from inadequate female capacity building and empowerment to lack of access to cultural, political and economic leadership positions. The African continent cannot boast of more than a dozen success stories in

empowering women (Dibie and Dibie, 2012). For example, women often work more than men, yet are paid less (UN Human Development Index, 2013). Gender discrimination affects girls and women throughout their lifetime; and they are often the ones who suffer the most poverty in sub-Saharan Africa (Falola & Amponsah 2012; Schirch, 2012; Muja 2007; Smee and Woodroffe 2013). Despite this predicament, several people outside the African continent often think that women's rights are only an issue in some countries in sub-Saharan Africa where religion is law, such as where Sharia law is practiced (Falola & Amponsah 2012; Osirim et al. 2009; Adomako-Ampofo et al. 2009; Ako-Nai, 2013). As a result, the interaction of law with culture and religion is another key factor shaping women's empowerment in the African continent. The United Nations Women Treaty (2013) report reveals that an increasing number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa are contemplating whether they should enact or effectively implement the treaty within their nation. Women's empowerment and equality also furthers the cause of child survival and sustainable development for every person in society. As a result, the importance of women's rights and gender equality should not be underestimated, as is currently the case in Africa.

In Africa, women's roles and relationships vary across time and societies, but throughout recorded history the female has commonly occupied subordinate status. At the same time also, in many African societies, ethnic groups have been stratified on the basis of gender, with men claiming more property, prestige, and power than their women counterparts (Green 1999; Sam- Okere, 2013). As a physical and biological trait, gender is like race: it is highly visible and can be a convenient and obvious way of judging and sorting people (Bose and Kim 2009; Kourany et al. 1999). It is common for African societies to separate adult work roles by gender, and to socialize boys and girls differently in preparation for their adult roles. In rural communities, for example, boys are trained to be hunters, builders and blacksmiths, while girls learn the skills necessary to successfully enhance the harvest of vegetables, fruit, and other foodstuffs. Girls are also taught how to take care of the home (Ako-Nia 2013; Dibie and Offiong 2009; Healy 1998).

According to Falola & Amponsah (2012), Osirim et al. (2009), and Green (1999) the history of women in sub-Saharan Africa shows that agriculture, trading in the informal sector or microenterprise constitute the major areas of income earning for women in the continent. It could be argued that, despite the fact that women's participation in the formal sector of African economics has generally increased during the past few decades, structural adjustment policies as part of globalization have galvanized

multiple and harsh challenges for women's economic and educational achievement (Osirin et al., 2009). The structural adjustment policies prescribed by the International Monetary Fund in the 1980s and 1990s caused formal sector jobs, especially in the civil service, to gradually disappear. Consequently, more women had no other choice but to turn to the informal sector to support their families and themselves (UN Human Development Report (2013).

In addition, Darkwah (2009) and Sam-Okere (2013) contend that political and economic factors have created more crucial problems in the African economy. Countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, and Zimbabwe have all experienced the worst political crises on the continent (UN Human Development Report (2013). While economic, globalization, and political crises have created internal problems within the continent, these factors have also lead to increases in various forms of human trafficking and sex works, as well as brain drain (UN Human Development Report 2013). In a number of African countries there has been growth in women's poverty due to displacement and refugee status. In the past few years, women in Sudan, South Sudan, Libya, the Horn of Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique have been victims of violent struggle.

Falola & Amponsah (2012) and Khakpoya (2006) pointed out that the male age-group is almost a universal social feature of traditional African societies. There are some societies, especially among the Tiriki ethnic group in Kenya and the Afikpo people of Nigeria, who currently practice this form of social organization (Sangree 1965; Ottenberg 1965). According to Khakpoya (2006) an age-group is a collection of males living in a village who are nearly of the same age, having been either born within a few years of each other or initiated into the same act during ceremonies. Ottenberg (1965) reported four age grades and their basic functions such as: (a) the young grade, composed of young men who enforced the social rules of society and acted like police; (b) the junior grade, which consisted of married men whose tasks were mostly administrative; (c) the middle grade, made up of yet older men who performed both legislative and adjudicative functions; and (d) the senior grade, consisting of very old men whose function was largely advisory (Khakpoya, 2006). The age-grade system is very important in helping readers to understand how men and boys are socialized into the African traditional system. In modern times, people in the rural areas and villages may talk about age-groups but this age-set no longer work together as they used to about six or more decades ago.

Apart from teaching values and morality to all their male and female children, there comes a stage where work becomes gender-typed (Darkwah 2009; Osirim et al. 2009). Many African countries have a tradition whereby women are primarily responsible for domestic work. African tradition requires women to be moral guardians of their family. On the one hand, the women teach their daughters how to work on the farm and participate in doing all the home chores such as taking care of children, cooking, cleaning, and fetching firewood and water, while on the other, the men perform certain tasks such as weaving, hunting, working the land, building the home, carving wood objects, blacksmithing, weaving fishing nets, protecting the homestead, and making political decisions for their respective families and communities (Khakpoya, 2006). Men are also required to adjudicate conflicts in the community. Just as the girls learnt household chores from their mothers, the boys equally learnt hunting, house building, and tool-making from their fathers and older male relatives. The crucial role of parents and older members of the African community is to teach young boys and girls skills that are perceived as essential for their survival, as well as sustaining the community as a distinctive society or ethnic group.

It is also very important to note that the role of men and women in Africa varies from one geographical region to another. For example, women in pastoral groups like the Fulani in West Africa, or Somali of East Africa, often take care of domestic animals, a role reserved only for men in other parts of Africa. Further, among the Maasai of East Africa, women build their huts and learn how to defend their homes when the men go on hunting expeditions (Khakpoya, 2006). Similarly, among the Hausa people in West Africa, men do most of the farming. Men are involved in clearing, burning, planting, and weeding. However, during the harvest season, the women help out (Khakpoya, 2006). The African family has always been, and is still is, an important socialization agent. At the same time, globalization and new forms of modernization are systematically eroding cultural boundaries and weakening the control of some men. However, the various governments in Africa, male leaders, and some women exercise in efforts to maintain the African traditional values.

The United Nations Human Development report (2013) reveals that women have a longer life expectancy than men; more girls and women are in school in one third of the developing nations; and women make up more than 40 per cent of the global labor force. However, the same report also states that there has been limited progress towards gender equality, even in some of the most developed nations of the world (UNDP, 2014). Indeed, women make up two thirds of the 1.4 billion people who live in extreme



poverty (on less than one U.S. dollar a day), and 60 per cent of the world's 572 million working poor in the world. Smee and Woodroffe (2013) indicate that women in the 22 out of 25 countries in sub-Saharan Africa for which data are available (see relevant data in Chapter Three) are more likely than men to live in poverty. One reason for the continued lower status and power of women, as well as the feminization of poverty in Africa, is their under-representation in politics (Falola & Amponsah 2012; Payne & Nassar 2006; Smee and Woodroffe 2013).

In most African countries, existing governance indicators are neither gender-sensitive nor pro-poor (Corner 2009). They are based on data definition, collection and processing procedures that, with few exceptions, fail to take into account the potential impact on the differences in the situation and experiences of women and men (Dibie, 2014). The significance of these data in general, or of poor women and men in particular, is not adequately reflected in public policies intended to solve national problems. Most policies are based on data that are not disaggregated by sex to reveal gender differences, and not disaggregated by socio-economic status to identify the disadvantaged situation of the poor. In many cases, the construction of the indicators is based on experiences and situations not relevant to the majority of women or to the poor (Corner, 2009).

Payne & Nassar (2006) contend that globalization has not affected all women in the same way. Development in the African continent has in some cases helped widen the economic and social gap among women, and between male and female. For example, in several African countries, urban and rural women do not necessarily encounter the same challenges or opportunities. In addition, each African country has its own traditions and policies relating to women. These differences sometimes make it difficult to generalize the conditions of women in the continent. This is one of the reasons why an entire chapter is devoted to women's issues in specific countries in this book.

According to estimates from United Nations Human Development Index reports (2012 and 2013), the living conditions of girls and women have dramatically changed for the better in the past twenty-five years. In many African countries, women continue to support their families through wage labor, preserving traditional knowledge, maintaining biodiversity, and ensuring household food security and nutrition. Despite these critical roles, women and young girls continue to suffer the effects of poor healthcare, education, and discriminatory policies (McGovern & Walliman 2009; Eisenstein 2009).

The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2014) promises to enhance opportunities as well as advance the economic, legal, and political empowerment of women of the world. MDGs contain the most broadly supported, comprehensive and specific development goals the world has ever agreed upon. These eight time-bound goals provide concrete, numerical benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty in its many dimensions. They include goals and targets on gender inequality, income, poverty, hunger, maternal and child mortality, disease, inadequate shelter, environmental degradation and the Global Partnership for Development (UNDP, 2014). In this context, UNDP works to make real improvements in people's lives, opening up their choices and opportunities.

The UNDP report (2014) indicates that the United Nations will coordinate global and national efforts to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development. Through the UNDP global network, the United Nations has been working to ensure that women have a real voice in all governance institutions, from the judiciary to the civil service, as well as in the private sector and civil society, so they can participate equally with men in public dialogue and decision making, and influence the decisions that will determine the future of their families and countries (UN Human Development Report, 2013).

Thus, all governments in Africa must unite to tackle the greatest obstacles to women and sustainable development in the continent. The private sector, for example, now provides about half of the health care services in Africa and for roughly 80 per cent of families in South Asia (UN Human Development Report, 2013).

## **Gender Inequalities**

Gender equality refers to the goal of equal opportunities, resources and respect for men and women. It does not mean that men and women become the same, but their lives and work hold equal value all over the African continent. Gender equality will take shape in different ways according to local cultures and religions (Schirch, 2012).

The economic and political environments in sub-Saharan Africa constantly affect the predicament that women face. In addition, gender inequality in formal education has a long history on the continent. This inequality could also be linked to the vestiges of colonialism that have persisted, as well as the patriarchy and contemporary economic issues (Ako-Nai 2013; Osirm et al. 2009; Dibia & Offiong 2009). Despite the

patriarchal system, women have to constantly deal with increased violence in periods of political crisis and wars, such as those that occurred in Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Kenya. Although African women have constantly experienced violence and discrimination, it has been reported that women produce 50 per cent of agricultural output in Asia, and represent nearly 78 per cent of the agricultural labor force in parts of Africa (UN Human Development Report (2013). If women had the same access as men to agricultural resources, production would increase by 20–30 per cent, with the potential to reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17 per cent, according to research by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2010). The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are neither gender- nor age-neutral. Women and children are frequently among those most significantly affected by fluctuating commodity prices and natural disasters such as drought and famine (OECD, 2008).

Education and the economic empowerment of women have a significant potential to reduce poverty. The benefits of education pass to the next generation—mothers who have had education are more than twice as likely to send their own children to school when compared to mothers with no education. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2010) study reveals that, on average, women reinvest up to 90 per cent of their incomes back into their own households, compared to 30–40 per cent by men. Currently, women's unpaid labor is estimated to contribute up to 50 per cent of GDP in some countries.

An important issue in development is the evenness of the spread of its impact. The widespread diversity in our society and economy contributes to the benefits of development reaching the privileged. The privileged include the more prosperous sections, some regions and men. Women in communities—urban, rural or tribal—across Africa benefit less from the fruits of development (Dibie and Offiong 2012; Schirch 2012).

Since the United Nations declaration of the women's decade in the 1970s, and especially in the 1990s when nongovernmental organizations began to proliferate in Africa, women and their issues have been at the center stage of national and international policy discussions (Ako-Nai, 2013). Most of the literature has painted a very bleak picture of the social, economic, political and cultural position and status of African and Asian women (McGovern and Walliman 2009; Dibie & Dibie, 2008). The literature often describes sub-Saharan African women as subjugated and subordinated to their menfolk (Ezeilo 2006; Kalu 1996; Pam Sha 2007; Scott 1995). Makinwa and An-Magritt (1995) stated that the majority of women in sub-Saharan Africa are in a subordinate position relative to that

of men. They also argued that gender stratification generally results in gender inequality, inequality in prestige, inequality in decision-making power, and inequality in access to resources. More recently, Dibie and Dibie (2012) have reiterated the point that women in Africa and Asia are consciously, deliberately, and perpetually considered as subordinate to their male counterparts in many traditions and cultures.

Some scholars have compared East and West Africa, and they found higher female agricultural contributions in East Africa and higher polygyny rates in West Africa, especially in the West African savannah, where they found especially high male agricultural contributions. Goody (1973) contends that the reasons behind polygyny are sexual and reproductive rather than economic and productive (1973:189), arguing that men marry polygynously to maximize their fertility and to obtain large households containing many young dependent males (White and Burton, 1988). It is important to note, however, that in the rural agricultural societies in Africa men tend to marry two or more wives so as to produce more children to help with the farm work and cultivation process. This finding contradicts the outcome of Goody (1973) and the White and Burton (1988) research conclusion about polygyny in West and East Africa. In addition, a 2012 study from the University of British Columbia in Canada shows that, in polygamist cultures in Africa, “the intra-sexual competition that occurs causes greater levels of crime, violence, and poverty and gender inequality than in societies that institutionalize and practice monogamous marriage” (*Science Daily* 2012, January 24).

## **Differences between Men and Women**

The question that the author would like to ask at this point is: What are the major differences between women and men? Understanding the differences between women and men is known as gender analysis. Gender analysis will give curious people the lens to better understand the roles women and men play in societies. There are basic differences in what societies expect of men and women. These differences constitute gender roles, and patterns of attitude and behavior that society expects of its members because of their being women or men (Kourney et al. 1999). In addition, both biological and sociological differences are important to the study of gender, particularly as it affects their role in society. What matters about the biological and social differences is that individuals, communities, businesses, religious and government structures often value men and masculinity more than women and femininity (Schirch, 2012). In most countries in Africa, the preferential treatment of men and maleness

finds its expression in sexist behavior and the patriarchal system and structure of power (Sam-Okere 2013; Khopya 2006). The bone of contention is that the hierarchical social structure also ranks the value of different types of people as well as giving those at the top of the social ladder, especially men, a sense of superiority and cultural permission to meet their needs at the expense of others lower in the hierarchy (Schirch, 2012). Most of the cultures in the African continent grant men more permission to meet their needs at the expense of women. These same cultures also grant adults permission to meet their needs at the expense of children (Schirch 2012; Ako-Nai 2013). Table 1-1 shows the beliefs about natural order of relationship between men and women, and adult and children in many African cultures.

**Table 1-1: Hierarchical Beliefs and Structure in Africa**

<b>Examples of Hierarchies in most African Societies and Cultures</b>					
Men Over Women	Adult Over Children	Masculine Over Feminine traits	White People Over People of Color	Wealthy Over Poor	One Ethnic or Religious Identity Group over another

Source: Khakpoya, V. (2006). *The African Experience*. Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Prentice Hall; Source: Schirch, L. (2012) "Understanding Women as Victims and Peace-builder." In Schnabel, A. and A. Tabyshalieva edited, *Defying Victimhood: Women and Post-Conflict Peace-Building*. New York: United Nations University Press.

In most African societies, men are thought to be competitive, independent, physically strong, aggressive and rational. While women are presumed to be cooperative, physically weak, passive, emotional, and nurturing, men are expected to be almost the opposite (Khakpoya 2006). The major feminine and masculine characteristics are distinct from male and female gender characteristics. According to Mogan and Walker (1983), men are traditionally expected to work out in the world, competing with other men to provide for their families. The man's world outside the home was viewed as a harsh and heartless jungle in which men needed strength, aggression and ambition. Ransford and Miller (1983) contend that the woman's world was the home, and her job was to comfort and care for husband and children, maintain harmony, and teach her children

to conform to society's norms. Men are expected to be sexually aggressive, and experienced women are also expected to be sexually passive and inexperienced. Men are supposed to be independent, fit to be leaders while women are believed to be dependent, and in need of male protection. Men are expected to be logical, rational and objective, while women should be inconsistent and intuitive. These are the traits that most Africans have long associated with each gender (Green 1999, Ako-Nai 2013).

According to Sha (2007) and Ahikere (2003), these traditional traits of women and men in Africa represent both stereotypes about how men and women behave, and expectations about how they should behave. Research has shown that women are more likely to be passive, and men aggressive in a number of ways. In interaction between genders, the male is more likely to initiate interaction and the woman to respond. In addition, women are more people oriented, and more likely to help other citizens in their community. They are also more likely to be virtuous, to maintain and to conform to customs (Davis, 1990). It was also very interesting to note that some research found women to be more concerned about their physical appearance than men (Akintunde 2001; Joubert 1989; Osirim et al. 2009). Table 1-2 show the traditional feminine and masculine stereotypes of gender roles in many African countries.

**Table 1-2: Feminine and Masculine Stereotypes of Gender Characteristics**

<b>Feminine Stereotypes</b>	<b>Masculine Stereotypes</b>
Cooperative	Aggressive
Child Raiser	Competitive
Compassionate	Express Power through Violence
Dependent	Family Provider
Express Power through Relationship	Independent
Emotional	Income Earners
Irrational	Leader