

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND THE IDEOLOGY OF NSHIKISM

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Abstract

This article makes an analysis and examination of how the ideology of nshikism affect the growth, development and wellbeing of women in the society. The ideology of nshikism simply portrays the crab mentality, as the crab is called nshiko in Igbo language. This crab mentality expresses a selfish behaviour and narrow-minded way of thinking, where a member of a group attempts to reduce the self-confidence of its member, who achieves success beyond others. It could be out of envy, conspiracy, rumour, competitive feeling, so as to halt her progress. This ideology simply says "if I can't have it, neither can you." Women occupy a higher percentage of the human population and they are also seen as the most disadvantaged. This is evident in the mission and vision of some contemporary groups/sects. Based on that, this paper revolves on the issue of crab mentality. It burdens itself with these and the related questions: Are women actually ready to develop themselves? Do they believe in themselves? It therefore concludes that the crab mentality is one of the major factors affecting the development and wellbeing of women in the society. The society will only record growth and sustainable development until women let go of this mentality.

Keywords: Women, development, *nshikism*, crab mentality, human society

Introduction

Women development has been the major concern of many sects and institutions in Nigeria and across the globe. This is because women are seen as the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, despite that they occupy a larger percentage of the human population, so many sects are hammering on their wellbeing, growth and development. As women are greater in number and when women are developed, the society is developed. In other words, women determine the level and rate of development of any given society. This paper therefore points out or makes an analysis, how the crab mentality affects the development and growth of women. In other words, this article uses the behavior of the crabs to analyze the condition of the women. Based on that, the issue and questions become, do women have a role to place in their development? what then is the cause of women under development? what are the factors or challenges affecting the development of women? These questions and many of its kinds are the concern of this paper.

The Notion of Development

The word development is both complex and ambiguous, hence it is used by different people in different context. This paper is however looking the concept of development from the perspective of human development. However, development is defined a process that creates growth, progress, positive change in economic, environmental, social and demographic component without damaging the resources of the environment. S. Maya (2020:4) explains:

Development means making a better life for everyone. A better life for most people means, essentially, meeting basic needs. Sufficient food to maintain good health. A safe healthy place to live. Affordable services available to everyone. Treated with dignity and respect

According to Nishan Sakalasoorya (2020:3) Development is 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.

This therefore entails that development is seen as a tool enabling people to reach the highest level of their ability, through granting freedom of action, i.e., freedom of economic, social and family actions, etc. S. Maya (2020:5), further explains that there are three possible meanings related to development; development from within: This view says that the possibilities and the direction of change emerge within that society. Development as interaction: This view denotes changes due to the combination of the qualities and potentials within the object and the opportunities and resources available in the environment.

Development as interpretation: This view says that we cannot really draw a sharp distinction between an object and its environment, this view raises the question of where are the boundaries of any society. Development as a broad concept revolves round social, economic, political and human development. Human development constitutes the foundation on which the first three concepts are based. Development in this context is synonymous with human development. From the above explanations, it is evident that development is anthropocentric; centered on human and human development. There are four major elements in the concept of human development and they include; productivity, equity, sustainability, and empowerment. This however takes us to women development.

Similarly, women development is centered on improving the lots of women as humans.

The idea of women development is further explained via different approaches;

Women in Development (WID)
Women and Development (WAD)
Gender and Development (GAD)

Women in Development (WID) is an issue not concerned with the protection of a vulnerable group, but with the use and expansion of women and men's experiences, skill and creativity. In other words, women in development are centered not only on improving the lots of women, but people and their gender. Men and women are to be actors, participants and benefactors in the society. In the words of Lucy Muyoyeta (2000:5)

The WID approach saw the problem as the exclusion of women from development programmes and approaches. ... women were being left out of development. They were not benefiting significantly from it and in some instances their existing status and position in society was actually being made worse by development. As a result, the solution was seen as integrating women into such programmes. WID saw women as a group being treated as lacking opportunity to participate in development. The main task, therefore, was to improve women's access to resources and their participation in development. The WID approach argued for the integration of women into development programmes and planning... Welfare oriented projects dealing with small income-generating projects and activities mostly aimed at women's reproductive role, where nutrition education and family planning were a main feature.

Its focus was the integration of women in development and to ensure that ministries and other implementing bodies worked towards the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of women as the way to ensure their total integration in development.

Women and Development (WAD). According to Lucy Mayoyota (2000:6) As a result of criticisms of the WID approach, the Women and Development (WAD) approach arose in the latter part of the 1970s. Adopting a Marxist feminist approach, the main argument of WAD was that women had always been part of the development processes. WAD asserts that women have always been important economic actors. The work they do both inside and outside the household is critical to the maintenance of society. However, this integration has only served to sustain global inequalities.

Therefore, the WID approach places emphasis on integrating women into development was not correct. The main focus of WAD is on the interaction between women and development processes rather than purely on strategies to integrate women into

development. WAD saw both women and men as not benefiting from the global economic structures because of disadvantages due to class and the way wealth is distributed. WAD therefore argued that the integration of women into development was to their disadvantage and only made their inequality worse. WAD saw global inequalities as the main problem facing poor countries and, therefore, the citizens of those countries.

Gender and Development (GAD). In the 1980s further reflections on the development experiences of women gave rise to Gender and Development (GAD). GAD represented a coming together of many feminist ideas. It sought to bring together both the lessons learned from, and the limitations of, the WID and WAD approaches. GAD looks at the impact of development on both women and men. It seeks to ensure that both women and men participate in and benefit equally from development and so emphasizes equality of benefit and control. (2000:7)

It recognizes that women may be involved in development, but not necessarily benefit from it. GAD is not concerned with women exclusively, but with the way in which gender relations allot specific roles, responsibilities and expectations between men and women, often to the detriment of women. Development, therefore, is about deep and important changes to relations dealing with gender inequality within society. This approach also pays particular attention to the oppression of women in the family or the 'private sphere' of women's lives. As a result, we have seen projects develop addressing issues such as violence against women. GAD focuses on the social or gender relations (i.e. the division of labour) between men and women in society (2000:8)

Nshikism: An Analysis

The ideology of *nshikism* simply portrays the crab mentality, as the crab is called *nshiko* in the Igbo African language. This article uses the behaviour of the crabs to analyze the condition of the women. This crab mentality or the behaviour of the crabs expresses a selfish behaviour and narrow-minded way of thinking, where a member of a group attempts to reduce the self-confidence of its member, who achieves success beyond others. In other words, crab mentality is a behavioral pattern where a person tries to undermine other persons who demonstrate a better performance than himself/herself. This coinage comes from the observation of crabs in a fisher's bucket, hence Baris and Ruhi explain the behavior and allegory of the crabs;

A fisherman sees the crabs in the bucket. The top of the bucket is open and it has no lid. This situation surprises him because he thinks that the crabs might escape. When he asks the fisherman, he replies “Yes, if there was only one crab, it would definitely run away. However, when there are many crabs and when one tries to crawl out, the others grab it, pull it down and make sure it does not run

away. The rest also experience the same fate". While one single crab can easily get out of the bucket without a lid, the escape becomes impossible as the number increases, because instead of pushing each other up, the crabs pull each other down and in the end, no one wins.

Tushar Soubhari , Yathish Kumar make more analysis:

If the basket is left with no heavy cover, the crabs inside it will all have gotten out fast in less than an hour. If the basket is weak, they go to one side and cause it to fall toward it, thus freeing them all. If the basket is designed against their escape, they cannot all go out. They all try to get out of where they are, and in that process pull each other down, whether they succeed in getting out or not. For them, pulling down or stepping on others is a fact of their existence. It is natural for them in the quest for success or when confronting failure. Crab mentality is also part of humanity. It simply is envy.

These crabs are in captivity and despite that the bucket is not covered, yet none of the crabs could escape as others will drag it down. As time passes, the crabs slow down or go into a depressive state. This therefore implies that the crab mentality is competitive and contentious in its context.

Crab mentality is what happens when one person fails and does not want others to succeed, while also deterring those who are trying to be successful. Since the feeling of envy underlies this kind of behavior, it would not be wrong to regard the crab mentality as a part of being human. In other words, crab mentality is a kind of envy or hatred portrayed by human beings in general and women in particular. When someone envies another person, one of the natural reactions to such a situation is to drag down this person. It can be said that individuals who always wish for good things upon themselves but think negatively about others, taunt their colleagues with their failures rather than helping them, see their colleagues as an opponent and enemy. Victorino Abrugar explains:

People who approach situations with the crab mentality are those who are profusely proud of themselves and treat others as if they are lesser creatures than them, and who generally feel panic when their colleagues or team-mates develop themselves. The motto of such persons is "if I cannot have it, neither shall you" (Abrugar, 2014).

People who are afflicted with this mentality may act like a crab in the bucket, willing to drag down any other crab which takes up an attempt to climb out of it. This behaviour is not an extraordinary one; because it is one of the common bad habits of many people. Since the feeling of envy underlies this kind of behavior, it would not be wrong to regard the crab mentality as a part of being human.

Crab mentality is one of the common universal traits among many people. It is a behavior wherein a person feels envious or jealous of the success, developments, achievements, and accomplishments of others. Some people who could not cope with their enviousness and jealousy may lead to committing actions that may deal negative impacts on the integrity, credibility, and social status of the person they are envious of, just to name a few.

The behaviors of people with the understanding of crab mentality are positioned around such behaviors as discouraging others, being jealous, undermining what they are doing, and exhibiting an impolite and excessively competitive attitude (Abrugar, 2014). This behaviour is negative, as it can be described in layman's terms; “pulling each other down.”

Some of the Causes of mentality include; egocentrism envy, insecurity, injustice, megalothymia or the quest for recognition, feeling of inadequacy, lack of competence, self-confidence/ self-esteem issues, wickedness, laziness, lack of ambition, lack of communication, indifference, personality disorders, inadequate level of education, lust, obsession, ignorance, lack of empathy, inauthenticity, dissatisfaction and hyper-competitiveness

The Situation of Women

In the contemporary society, most sectors are interested in women empowerment, development, equality and equity. These agenda for women's growth and development are quintessential and necessary, but can be achieved and sustained with the full support and involvement of women. The major concern of this work and question is that, how can all these agenda be possible if women do not encourage, support and love one another?

Femininity is understood through the crab mentality in the society. This mentality of women is a form of gender-based violence, where women make women victims are collaborators of injustice in the society. According to Justina Okoye, ...it is an ugly experience given to women by their fellow women. Woman -on woman violence therefore portrays women as a group suffering from self-inflicted wounds... (2010:361)

For this reason, this disposition and mentality both reduce the welfare level of life of

women and violates the norms and rules guiding them, thereby disrupting social norms and creating moral indifference. *Jon E. Royeca*(2000:3) gives examples One housewife got irritated because her neighbor bought a refrigerator after she did. She added that her neighbor always worried if they had anything new. “When she got a fridge, she made a great fuss of showing that she could make ice-bricks too,” she wailed. Another woman said that because their neighbor had recently bought a new car, she and her husband were also thinking of buying a better one. “That’ll be a knock in the eye for them!” she thundered. The said survey found out that cars were the constant barometers of neighborhood rivalry. This feeling therefore promotes unhealthy rivalry among women.

Crab in the bucket mentality promotes hatred and disunity, which are destructive tendencies. *Sinelnikova, Maria* (2022:23) explains: “The starting impulse for the formation of hating resentment is hatred, which can be defined as a persistent feeling of anger / malice towards a person or an object.” According to *L. Donskis* (2003: 24), the slogan of all haters is; “I hate, therefore I am” (“*Odi ergo sum*”) – this attitude of haters, is affected by feelings of resentment. Such hatred is distinguished by its duration, direction, essence and purpose. This feeling is also a long-term feeling, characterized as “chronic hatred” which has a strong biographical component. This therefore confirms the opinion that haters, like resentful individuals, are not born, they acquire this habit. Therefore, hating, like resentment, can be interpreted as a psychological state, the center of which is a feeling of pain, discomfort or disappointment.

In an effort to free themselves from them and from uncomfortable thoughts about themselves as unworthy, haters look for a suitable victim to blame for their own incapability. In contrast, the hate object of hating resentment is often generalized and interchangeable. For example, one always hated his/her blonde friend Anna, who, one believes, constantly ruined one's life. This is the so-called “malicious hate” (*Ferran* 2021: 16), provoked by the realization that one will never be like one's friend, which is why one actually hated her. But over time, one's hatred for Anna can turn into hatred for all blondes, and later – for all women, whom one will consider as potential competitors and malicious enemies. Therefore, one will hate women (and not only blondes) more intensively and aggressively than men on the social networks.

Based on this, it can be assumed that the focus of hatred of hating resentment is often blurred, because it does not inform the hater about how the property of the object worthy of hatred is related to its goal, i.e. destructive criticism. Such hatred can be defined as irrational, because the hater, under the influence of resentment, hates the other not for a certain feature or property of him/her, but simply for the fact that he/she exists. With this in mind, the hatred of hating resentment can be considered as existential – the haters hate the other because they themselves would like to be in his place, hence the inability “to become the other” motivates the hater to look for the causes of his/her own failures from

the outside, although the real reason is hidden deep inside. Somebody must be to blame: but you yourself are this somebody, you yourself alone are to blame for it, you yourself alone are to blame for yourself” (Nietzsche 2006: 94).

According to Ferran (2021: 7), hatred in the hating resentment is active, feelings and action tendencies are combined there in a unique manner. Whereas Nietzschean resentment forces a person to repress his/her hatred, waiting for the right moment to express it, which may never come. Perhaps that is why hating resentment better reflects the true nature of hatred, realizing its destructive potential

As a result, he/she devalues the object of his/her hatred, evaluating it as immoral, evil and incapable of change (Salice 2020:40). Such an ideology presupposes the presence of a certain self-deception, due to which the resentimental hater hides the true motives of his/her hatred, replacing them with other concepts, such as justice. This leads to fragmentation, fluidity, and even human dissociation. Maria Sinelnikova, throws more light on hating (2022: II0): The basis of hating resentment is a combination of resentment, envy and vengeance. the stimulus for their activation is hatred and a long feeling of helplessness. The first component of hating resentment is resentment – a real / imagined infringement of human dignity.

However, crab mentality has egoism and envy at its foundation. It is the egoistic inability to accept the happiness of the other, the desire to own what the other owns. Maria Sinelnikova, (2022:III) adds:

Over time, envy can turn into a more complex form of dependence on the other, namely, hating resentment. For the most part, the so-called destructive envy is involved in its formation – a negative emotion that motivates a hater to take malicious actions to eliminate / devalue someone else's success and achievements. Through resentment, envy shows all its destructive potential at the level of consciousness, emotional experience and hater activity.

Envy, like hating resentment, can be attributed to reactive emotions that weaken the will and force the hater to focus on external factors such as the opinions and assessments of the others. This therefore leads to psychological poisoning, which can be transmitted both externally and internally.

The notion of vengeance cannot be detached from the crab mentality personality. According Maria Sinelnikova, (2022:II2) Moreover, the hater's desire to avenge the wrongs of the past forces him to imitate the actions of the “enemy” and to reproduce the same shockingly evil deeds that led to his vengeance. Thus, the hating resentment turns into a “vengeful poison” (Schaap 2012:56), which exposes its self-destructive nature. It is like taking poison and hoping the other man will die. Vengeance carries out a kind of

substitution of concepts. For what the haters “are demanding is not called retribution, but “the triumph of justice” (Nietzsche 2006: 28). This substitution is necessary to give the hater's activity the status of fulfilling an objective and universal duty and to make his action impersonal, and his motivation uninterested.

It also leads to lack of support. The crab in the bucket mentality can lead to a lack of support among women, hindering their ability to uplift and empower each other. Instead of collaborating and working together, women with this mentality may focus on pulling others down, thereby limiting women development.

It can stifle progress. When women are constantly fighting and competing with each other rather than supporting one another, it can stifle overall progress in the society. Collective efforts toward common goals may be impeded, and opportunities for advancement may be missed.

Reinforcement of stereotype is not left out. This mentality can reinforce negative stereotypes about women being competitive or unable to work harmoniously. This can perpetuate societal biases and make it more challenging to break free from preconceived notions.

Missed opportunities for mentorship. This myopic mentality of crab in the bucket may discourage mentorship and role modeling. Women who could provide guidance and support to others may be less inclined to do so, fearing that their mentees could surpass them.

Diminished Networking Opportunities. Cooperation and positive relationships are essential in professional and personal growth. The crab in the bucket mentality limits networking opportunities among women, as trust and collaboration become difficult to establish.

Negative impact on mental health. Constant competition and lack of support can contribute to stress, anxiety, and overall negative mental health among women. The toxic environment created by the crab in the bucket mentality can take a toll on individuals' well-being.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Having analyzed the concept of *Nshikism*, it is evident that the major issue affecting women development is the idea of pull her down syndrome. In other words, women are the major enemies of their growth and development. When women are not united in their efforts to overcome challenges and discrimination, the collective strength needed for advocating gender equality and women's rights are weakened.

For there to be women's growth and development, it is imperative that women begin to unlearn certain unhealthy attitudes and dispositions. When this, the society will not only record women development, but an historical sustainable development.

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