



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE
SOCIOLOGY, ECONOMICS & POLITICAL SCIENCE
Volume 12 Issue 9 Version 1.0 June 2012
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Role Conflict Among Women in Intercontinental Bank Plc, Lagos State

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Abstract - In modern industrial societies, women have taken up jobs that take them away from home for better part of the day and this has aroused interest of several scholars in the social sciences. It is in line with this that this paper examined the reasons for women engagement in formal employment and its eventual consequence on the family. The Role and Liberal feminist theories were used to explain the conflicting role of career women. Data were collected from 108 respondents from Intercontinental Bank Plc selected through multi stage sampling techniques using a self designed questionnaire. The study found that women engage in formal employment in order to increase their family's economic status and that their engagement in formal employment gives them limited time to spend with their families. Women dual roles as wives, mothers and formal sector employees are stressful. It demands that women work twice as hard as their male counterparts in order to excel in both. Men should drop the notion that taking care of the children and over-seeing activities in home to be the sole responsibility of the women and embrace an equal share of these activities.

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GJHSS-C Classification: JEL Code: O19



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I. INTRODUCTION

Post colonial realities have revealed the changing roles and positions of women in different countries of the world. The emergence of modern society has brought change in many ramifications of human life. The experience of women generally is not an exception. One may not be fair to assert that the place and dignity of women is now placed on the same pedestal with their male counterpart, but women improvement strategy is gaining grounds worldwide (Adebayo 2001).

Studies reveal changes in the number, roles and status of women in the formal sector. In the traditional Nigeria society, as well as in other parts of the world, women engaged in many economic activities which include; weaving, dying, small-scale farming, food processing, handicrafts and trading (Oderinde, 2002). They were activities that could be accommodated to the domestic roles of women, since their primary role were perceived to lie in the home (Adebayo, 2001).

Until recently, sex division of labour has been an integral aspect of life in Nigerian family. Men were the main bread winners, while women were saddled with domestic responsibilities; an important component of the domestic responsibilities of women is caring for

family members (Adepoju and Mbugwa, 1997). They maintained that men as bread winners could work away from home, if women would work at all; they were engaged in activities that could be carried out within or around the home. Women were encouraged to concentrate on household chores and the socialization and monitoring of young children. Basically women are traditionally saddled with the duty of inculcating values and norms into children.

This division of labour in the family in terms of gender roles has virtually disappeared in the country. Women educational attainment in Nigeria has soared over the years; consequently gender inequality in formal employment has drastically declined in the country (Wusu and Abanihe, 2007). The economic hardship prevailing in the country is gradually making it a norm for women to make substantial contribution to household budget in order to cater adequately for family needs. Thus women are increasingly taking up roles that were traditionally the domain of men. Nevertheless, female dominated responsibilities in the family such as household chores, socialization of children and childbearing are rarely shared by men. In other words, while women are taking up formally male roles, it is likely that men find it derogatory to share roles that were traditionally recognized as female domain (Munguti et al, (2002).

By extension, it is expected of women to play multiple roles in the society. Obviously, since women are the significant agent of household chores, socialization and childbearing and have to still carry out their economic roles as formal employees, it becomes difficult and over bearing in most cases. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the economic status of the family, reasons for women engagement in formal employment and the effects on the family.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) *Traditional Role of Women in Nigeria*

In most part of the world today, women are struggling to assert a spirit of independence and a feeling of self worth. The struggle is occasioned by the wrong projection of women in patriarchal societies. In most cases, they have been projected as apes that lack initiative and need to be put through, guided, and monitored in whatever they may set out to do (Oderinde, 2002). Animashaun, 2002, revealed that intimidation of

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women has forced them into believing that she is passive. In Islam and Christianity, a woman is kept in check and she accepts it. Marriage is a "Sanctioned prostitution". Her new master can have her at any time. She must be "met at home" and she must dance to the tune of her husband. Though women's labour has been efficiently exploited in that they have contributed immensely to the nation's economy women have had a much more limited access to position of authority and could not invest their resources in the same way as men.

The Nigerian society has some set role assumptions for its members, male and female. As summarized by Adebayo (2001), the woman is expected to raise children, to provide emotional support for her husband, nurturing, emotional, sentimental, idealistic and intuitive. She is expected to hold the supportive and subservient positions. She is not expected to perform any energy requiring job or to do subjects that require verbal aptitude like secretarial jobs because she is assumed to be weak, small and timid. She has been likened by a poet to the town – clock to keep and regulate time, to a snail, to reside within the house and to an echo, to speak only when spoken to (Animashaun, 2002)

According to Adebayo (1998), women are expected to contribute positively to the economy of the family. "Even if a woman does not go out to work she is home processing food for sale or she is on the farm harvesting farm products" Food crop production is the traditional role of women in Nigeria. In eastern part of Nigeria while men plant yams, women plant cassava, maize, pepper vegetable (spinach onion), fruit vegetables (okro, garden egg, melon).

To most people in Nigeria, womanhood fundamentally means motherhood and the female child is appreciated only for her bride price and ability to bear children. According to Adebayo (2001), mothering is the God – given role for women and they are primarily expected to provide emotional and therapeutic support for their children. Ajayi (1994), maintained that as mothers, women are traditional guidance of family health and teachers of sanitation, hygiene roles and disease prevention. They also have the role of training the children, giving them the moral instruction and guidance that will make them useful members of the society. A bad child is a shame to its mother. If her child is wayward, she carries all the blame. Hence it is her duty to ensure that her children conform to the norms and values of the society.

Ogala (2000) says that being the repositories of the society's history and culture, women are expected to build and inculcate the societal value system into their children, thus preparing them to perpetuate the system as adults. Women are expected to enhance the aesthetic beauty of their homes by keeping them clean and orderly.

Nina Mba (1993) says that the position of these women in society were made possible by their cultures "which inculcated the concepts that women can lead, lead to do battle if necessary fight for her society and kill for her people". The woman in African was not seen as rib or appendage or an afterthought to man but as his divine equal. Although in every generation, some women have distinguished themselves from the crowd, the majority has not been privileged to appear in public (Oderinde 2002).

b) *The Quest for Women Emancipation in Nigeria.*

The global attention being given to women is a product of many years of agitation by women activists who in spite of all odds protested the discrimination as well as the violence being faced by women. This group of women brought to the fore the second fiddle position of women in America as a form of discrimination and indeed deprivations. The convention of 1848 was aimed at addressing this and it recorded a little achievement of sensitizing government about the plight of women. This led to the establishment of the women International Organization of the League of Nations in 1919 (Omode, 2004).

At the inception of the United Nations Organization (UNO) in 1945, the organization was taken over with more attention given to it. The UNO economic survey revealed women as being terribly affected by the world poverty level. This led to the declaration in 1948 of the universal right of women (Warren, 1992). Following this was the 1975 women conference in Mexico which brought about among others, the institutionalization of an action plan for women (Pogason, 2004), with a major aim of reviewing the multiple roles of the female gender in the society. A major landmark of the conference is the declaration of the period between 1976 – 1985 as the decade for women (Olufayo, 2008).

The above was also improved upon at the 1985 Nairobi conference. Hence emphasize was on how to improve women status by financing education to eradicate poverty of women and combating poverty to ensure equitable balance between both sexes (Hakim, 2004). The Beijing conference of 1985 was no doubt the most remarkable of all the world conferences on women. Most countries including the third world countries attended and certain critical areas such as health and harmful practices against women, education, conflict, and the issues of the girl-child, poverty and decision making were majorly addressed (Olufayo, 2008). According to CEDPA (1997) and USAID (2002), accessibility of women to power would make them have a fair share of state's resources and would also conscientize them of their rights.

c) *Factors Promoting Women Engagement in Formal Employment.*

The post colonial period which witnessed the mass entrance of women into the formal sector became

possible through mass literacy campaigns, free education and explosion to urbanization and industrialization Aluko, 2009). Recent United Nations conferences have advocated for women empowerment which is central for development. To change a country in its vision and its sense of Direction, the orientation of women will also have to be reached foremost (Targema, 2009).

Generally, women's engagement in the formal sector in Nigeria was given a boost by the demise of colonialism and the subsequent accelerated efforts at national development. Anugwon (2009) stated that until the late 1960's women were virtually not seen in the formal sector of the Nigerian economy. As a result, it was the atmosphere of general industrial development and urban growth that led to change in orientation towards women as people who could also be meaningfully used in the economic process of the society.

Anugwon (2009) went further to say that the involvement of women in formal employment was made possible through possession of skills and education by the women. Thus, until women in Nigeria, became serious human resources with all manner of qualifications just like their male counterparts, they were not considered to be contributors to the economics system.

Prior to this, women were mainly seen as reserve mental and physical resources called upon only in an emergency to help in national development (Afigbo, 1991). Interestingly, Pearson (Rubbery, 2004) related the increasing female labour participation to the impact of the structural adjustment programmed (SAP) which has meant declining real wages, declining government social provisioning and withdrawal or cut back of subsidies. These conditions have meant equally increased challenges of survive amongst families and may have forced many women to seek employment in order to ensure family survival.

Mc Donald (2000) attributed the increase in women employment in the formal sector to the male bread winner model that has changed in Western societies towards a gender-equity model especially in institutions of education and market employment, opening up considerable opportunities to women outside the role of mother. As a consequence, young women have increasingly pursued a career and child bearing ages have risen.

Anderson and Dimon (1991) said that factors influencing labour supply include both individual and household characteristics. Married women, given the strong cultural tradition of working in the home, do not significantly increase their paid employment participation with higher labour demand or changing characteristics of the household. Personal characteristics have greater impact on labour sector participation with moving in and out of paid labour markets. They also maintained that increase in labour

demand could expand female force participation of single women.

d) Challenges Faced by Women in Formal Employment

Familiar challenges facing women in formal employment include personal and institutional discrimination, lack of access to equal professional development opportunities and difficulties in balancing their personal and professional lives. In addition, women in formal employment experience resentment and hostility from other professional colleagues, an undervaluing of their self esteem.

The particular nature of the Nigerian labour market also poses itself challenge to women in formal sector. In this sense, women may have to contend with the fact that men see themselves as the rightful owners of the formal economic sector and abundant socio-cultural practices support this. Men are usually more likely to see their wives first and foremost as homemakers rather than fellow workers and partners in national development. This has led to a situation where by many women despite their educational qualifications have been kept out of the economy because of the desire of their husbands. Women's attitudinal and psychological disposition at the work place is another great challenge to woman in formal employment. Many Nigeria women approach their jobs with wrong mental behavioral attitudes. One of such is the desire in some of them not to strive to prove the men wrong. Thus, they display attitudes and work orientations that show them as not hardworking, committed and not able to shoulder work related pressure and stress. Anugwon (2009)

Also, one other factor seen as adversely affecting women's employment is their reproductive roles which often entail working part time or interrupting employment to raise children. Women face a good number of other challenges like lower income in relation to men, low quality of employment, sexual harassment and violence and exclusion from retirement and pension (Rubery, 2004).

Aluko (2009) noted that family and work integration has been and continues to be a major challenge to women in formal employment in the present day Nigerian, due to the harsh economic conditions as a result of Structural Adjustment Programmers (SAP) adopted since 1980's, the system of dual earner couples is in full operation. However, while women take on additional responsibilities away from home, their household duties often remain the same. He went further to state that women still carry the primary burden of household chores and child care. The time requirements of household and paid work are complicated and often conflicting. Nigerian men although may be supporting of their wives working because of extra family income, might not accept an equal sharing of household tasks.

It is observed that most career women in the society are either single, unmarried or women who have passed child bearing age. Only few women can combine the traditional roles of mothering, cooking and housekeeping with rigors of excelling in their career. There is no gain saying that these domestic or traditional roles have hindered many women from reaching the peak in their careers. Of particular interest is the limitation of mothering. The gestation period is quite exerting and burden of child-care leaves women too fatigued to work effectively in some cases (Oderinde, 2002). With the development of capitalist economy in Nigeria, women now engage in a multiplicity of roles both within and outside the home, without any substantial decrease in the reproductive tasks traditionally attached to women (Aluko and Edewor, 2002).

Work-family integration clearly remains a major issue within organizations. Most of these women openly confess guilty feeling relating to motherhood. They also expressed a sense of helplessness with their situation as contributor to household income (Aluko, 2009).

III. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

a) *Liberal Feminist Theory*

This is the major expression of gender inequality which argues that women may claim equality with men on the basis of an essential human capacity for reasoned moral agency, that gender inequality is the result of a patriarchal and sexist patterning of the division of labour through the re-patterning of key institutions- law, work, family, education and media (Schaeffer, 2001).

The theory, liberal feminism claims for gender equality. A key document for understanding the basis of claim is the Declaration of Sentiments issued by the first women's right Convention at Seneca Falls in 1848. Rewriting the Declaration in Independence, the signers declared that "we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women ("and women" is added) are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuits of happiness; that to secure these rights government are instituted ("among men" is omitted), deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed"- and they continues in this veil to endorse the right of revolution when "any form of government becomes destructive of these ends". Through this theory, there is a call for change in law and custom to allow women to assume their equal place in society.

Liberal feminism thus rests on the following beliefs:

1. All human beings have certain essential features-capacities for reason moral and self actualization.
2. The exercise of these capacities can be secured through legal recognition of universal rights,

3. The inequalities between men and women assigned by sex and social construction having no basis in "nature" and
4. Social change for equality can be produced by an organized appeal to a reasonable public and the use of the state.

Therefore, with regards to this research work, liberal feminism theory argued that women are equal to men. In all ramifications, women should be treated equally with men. Women in formal employment should be giving encouragement and support as their male counterparts. Men should share in the domestic role with their wives families should encourage and support their members who are engaged in formal employment so that they can exhibit their talents and contribute their quota to the development of the society.

IV. HYPOTHESES

H₀: Women engagement in formal employment may not likely increase economic status of the family.

H₁: Women engagement in formal employment is not likely to cause marital instability.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study population was women in Intercontinental Bank Plc, Lagos State. This study focused only a subject of the total population because of time and financial constraints and the desire to get relevant information from a relatively manageable sample of one hundred and eight (108).

The total sample size of one hundred and eight (108) was drawn from Intercontinental Bank Plc using multi stage technique. Intercontinental bank was clustered into three regions namely; Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland North and Lagos Mainland South based on how the bank is divided in Lagos State. Lagos mainland South was randomly selected through ballot. Lagos Mainland South Region was further clustered into thirty three branches and sixteen branches were randomly chosen through ballot. Six married women were sampled from each of the chosen branches through snowballing, making a total of one hundred and eight samples.

The research instrument used in this study was self administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was constructed to elicit reasons why women engaged in formal employment, the challenge they face and the consequences on their families.

VI. RESULTS/FINDINGS

From this research study, it was discovered that majority of the women in formal employment are in their youthful age between 20-29 years, and highly educated. It can be deduced that women have gained increased access to educational opportunities. This can be corroborated by the works of Mujahid (1985) and Sattar

(1995), that both age and education are critical determinants of women's formal sector employment.

In addition to this, the researcher discovered that majority of the women in formal employment are either Christians or Muslims and that traditional religious practice among them is low. Majority of the women are in the position of senior staff and below.

Furthermore, it was discovered that while women in formal employment have the moral and spiritual support of their husbands, support for domestic chores is very low. This implies that women in formal employment do not get much domestic support from their spouses. In corroborating this, Aluko (2009) stated that Nigerian men although supportive of their wives working because of extra family income, do not accept an equal sharing of household tasks. But it was reported that all those who practice traditional religion have no support from their spouses.

The study discovered that majority of women who are engaged in formal employment have little number of children. However, this is not due to their job as majority of the women said that their job has no influence on the number of children they have. But majority of them anticipated having more children. The variation was reported to be due to the economic cost of raising children rather than rigorous work schedule.

Also women engagement in formal employment is not the cause of marital instability. This can be supported by Aluko (2003), that marital stability or instability is not as a result of women working outside the home or not. Women engagement in formal employment does not have influence on fertility.

Husbands of majority of the respondents are employed but their salaries are higher than that of their wives. Therefore, majority of the respondents engage in formal employment basically for economic reasons in order to support as well as provide for the needs of the family due to stiff economic situation of the country. Hence, the reason for continuance support from their husbands as regards engagement in formal employment.

Women in formal employment though are enjoying their jobs because of the financial gain and increase in family status; they have limited time to spend with their families on daily basis as they spend the larger part of the day on their jobs. Majority of the respondents depart their homes as early as 5.30 am and return as late as 9.00 pm for at least 6 days a week. However, majority of the respondents employ the services of relatives to take care of their children and other domestic chores while at work.

VII. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The economic reality of contemporary world has made women to go beyond home making to make the best use of their talents, gift and skills in improving their living standard and also contributing to national

development. Women dual roles as wives, mothers and formal sector employees place them in an enviable position in society. It demands that women work twice as hard as their male counterparts in order to excel in both roles. Though the demand can be stressful and scaring, women must brace up to face the challenge. Being wives and mothers is God given privilege which should not be a hindrance to success in ones career and the pursuit for success in ones career should not hinder the proper management of the home. Women should ensure they build the character of their children who are the future leaders of the nation and use their skills for the development of the nation.

The following recommendations are made to help improve the way women in formal employment will become successful in both economic and domestic role.

Since women in formal employment are usually accused of abandoning the homes for their jobs, they should work harder towards balancing both their economic and their domestic roles so that none suffers for the other. These different roles both need to be performed, therefore, women should look for competent house helps, nannies and relatives to help them look after the home while they are at work and when back from work should find out what happened in their absence and interact with their husbands and children. By so doing the stability of the family and proper upbringing of the children will be guaranteed.

Men should help their wives with domestic work so that the work load at home will not be much for them to handle. Men should drop the notion that taking care of the children or over seeing activities in the home are the sole responsibility of women and embrace an equal sharing of these activities.

There should be a social policy that will reduce the number of hours women spend at work without a reduction in their pay. This will give women more time to spend with their families.

There should be the introduction of tele-work, that is, work away from work place. With this women can work from home since there is improvement in information technology in the society these days.

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