

A Perceptual Analysis of the Effects of Housework and Patriarchy on Women's Participation in Trade Unionism in Tertiary Institutions in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract: In Nigeria, as is the case with other parts of the globe, women, as much as men, constitute members of various trade unions of different work organisations. This became possible owing to women's influx into the domain of paid employment, especially since the later part of the twentieth century. Be that as it may, in the running of many of these trade unions, men are obviously in dominance, with women merely trailing behind in their level of involvement. The need to ascertain the reason(s) for this observed trend gave rise to this study, which aims specifically at examining the effects of patriarchy and housework on women's level of participation in trade unions. Using the *ex post facto* research design, the study analyzes the perceptions of female trade unions members in two tertiary institutions in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions, while two null hypotheses were also formulated to facilitate the drawing of appropriate conclusions. A sample size of 555 respondents was selected using the Taro Yamane sample determination technique. Subjects were selected using purposive sampling, while responses were elicited with the help of a structured questionnaire. Data generated were subjected to the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis, and the results revealed that patriarchy and housework both have significant negative effects on women's level of participation in trade unions in the two institutions studied (University of Calabar and Cross River University of Science and Technology). The study recommends women friendly workplace and trade union policies, as well as gender mainstreaming in organisations, to better women's participation in trade unions.

Keywords: Women, Trade Union, Participation, Patriarchy, Housework, Tertiary Institutions

Background to the Study

Trade unionism in Nigeria according to Fashoyin, (1992) dates as far back as 1883, when the first officially recognized trade union, known as Mechanics' Mutual Aid Provident and Mutual Improvement Association was formed. From that period till date, Nigeria's trade unions have experienced expansion in various dimensions, to the extent that practically all work organizations in the country today give room for their employees to both join and participate freely in trade union activities.

As the 21st century dawned, there was a mass exodus of women from the domestic domain into the sphere of paid employment. This gave them room to become integral part of different work organizations, although their representation in both private and public sectors in secure wage employment remains inadequate compared to men. For instance, in 2013, the male employment ratio to their population stood at 72.2%, while that of females was 47.1% (International Labour

Organisation, 2014). Be that as it may, the reality remains that a significant proportion of women have gained and are still gaining entry into the world of paid work, and this provides them the platform like their male counterparts, to both join and freely participate in trade unions.

According to Sinclair (1995), the representation of women in unions has grown significantly since the 1960s. However, as Sinclair (1995) still notes, there is a comparison in women's lack of advancement in the work sphere with their position within trade union movements. Sinclair stressed further that whereas female workers are not less likely to belong to a union than men, yet female union members exhibit lower participation rates in union activities. This implies that when it comes to union membership, funding and recruitment of new intakes, gender generally and women's involvement in particular are not really issues of concern. This is owing to the fact that being employed into any work

organization somewhat automatically makes an individual a member of a trade union; a rule which applies to women as much as it does to men who gain employment. For women therefore, being part of the work force in different organizations also ushers them into various trade unions. As such, union membership by women per se is not a problem. The bone of contention which gave impetus for this study is women's level of participation in union activities.

In Nigeria, the fact that men are the dominant players in the administration and control of nearly all trade unions is glaring. Within Cross River State, a number of work organizations have notably active trade unions. Two of such work organizations are the universities in the state capital, Calabar, namely: University of Calabar (UNICAL) and Cross River University of Science and Technology (CRUTECH). The trade unions in these two tertiary institutions are: the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) and the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT). In these unions, membership and union activities are open not only to men, but also to women, who constitute a numerically significant proportion of the total work force of the two institutions where these unions are domiciled.

Over the years, the activities and affairs of these unions have remained in the control of the male members alongside only few female representatives. According to Yinusa, (1990) and Milkman, (1990), evidence in Nigeria today suggests that the organisation and management of trade unions seem to be a male affair. Yinusa (1990) in particular highlighted the fact that the record of women's level of attendance at trade union meetings is generally low, especially when it is outside working hours. This means that despite women's advancement academically and professionally in these two tertiary institutions in Calabar, Cross River State, their level of participation in the activities of the previously listed trade unions remains generally low. Like their counterparts in other unions across the country, women in these unions have largely taken passive roles, and in most cases remained ordinary members, whose union dues are deducted periodically from their monthly pay, but whose rights and needs are repeatedly ignored; while men typically occupy the positions of power in these unions.

Within the unions in University of Calabar (UNICAL) and Cross River University of Science and Technology (CRUTECH), an examination of official positions held by members shows that compared to the women, men are in the majority. Also, it is not in dispute that over the years, women have not been proportionately represented in the higher ranks of the

unions, both at the local and national branches. They are not usually more than three at the executive levels and in most cases, it is usually only one woman acting as women's leader, or as the welfare secretary, a position stereotypically considered as fit only for women. It is only in very rare instances that a woman comes up as chairperson in the recognized unions of these institutions, (Ojong, 2014).

Momoh (2008) stressed that the low level of participation in trade unionism by women is not a problem limited to Nigeria only, emphasizing that it is a global problem in industrial settings. Momoh (2008) also added that tackling the specific problems that concern women as the subordinate gender in conventional forms of trade unions has not been easy.

Without doubt, women's contribution to the trade unions in UNICAL and CRUTECH will be vital to the progress of these unions just as their contribution have been vital to the progress of the host institutions of the unions where they function as employees. Moreover, their salaries alongside those of men are constantly deducted to raise funds to run the unions. For these reasons, not taking active part in the running of the unions is not to the best interest of both the unions and the women themselves. Bearing in mind the foregoing, a question becomes unavoidable: what factors are responsible for the observed low level of participation by women in trade unionism in Nigeria generally, and in the tertiary institution in Calabar, Cross River State in particular?

In a yet largely traditional society as Nigeria, the social system has a patriarchal structure which makes it that men are often somewhat more advantaged in social life than women. Besides, women themselves are often preoccupied with housework, their traditional and primary role. Therefore, against the backdrop of the social dilemma women face in the Nigerian society as a result of patriarchy and housework, this study is articulated to examine the extent to which these two factors function as obstacles to women's active participation in trade unions in UNICAL and CRUTECH. Two crucial questions will be answered at the end of the study. First, does patriarchy have a significant negative effect on women level participation in trade unions in UNICAL and CRUTECH? Secondly, does housework have a significant negative effect women's level of participation in trade unions in UNICAL and CRUTECH? Answers to these critical questions will facilitate the drawing of appropriate conclusions regarding to the roles patriarchy and housework play, if any, toward women's level of participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

A trade union is basically a group of workers who share either the same skill or the same employers, and are systematically organized to relate with employers for the purpose of addressing issues affecting their conditions of employment. Trade unionism for Nigerian women can be traced to the collective and concerted actions taken between 1929 and 1938 by women in Southern Nigeria, who in an attempt to protect their means of self-employment, organised demonstrations to influence the then colonial government to review its taxation policy. However, when it comes to unionism within the context of paid employment, compared to men, women became involved much later. This is owing to the fact that men were the first set of employees when paid employment was introduced in Nigeria. At the time, available positions desired by the colonial masters were physical. Moreover, the opportunity to acquire formal education, the major prerequisite for obtaining a paid employment was at this time reserved mainly for boys. These gave men the edge to later be the ones who would occupy available mechanical, clerical and other such posts. Thus, when the first trade unions were formed in Nigeria in 1883, and later in 1912 (the Nigerian Civil Service Union), and then in 1919 (the Nigerian Union of Teachers) etc., they were literarily men's affair because the sphere of paid employment then was still very much dominated by men. With time, it became obvious that women also have the capabilities needed to boost the new economic order that was emerging, and by so doing enhance social and political development, and subsequently transform society for the better (Eyinade, 2010). As such, women began entering into areas of both public and private sectors of the economy, which were earlier on forbidden for them, out of the necessity to better not only society, but also their economic status, as well as achieve their desire to put to use their educational attainment, have independent income and pursue a career (Sivakami, 1997).

The influx of women into the paid employment space in Nigeria functioned as a platform for them, like their male counterparts, to become members of the different trade unions that began to spring up from the colonial era. However, this did not make women a formidable force in these unions. Even in a profession like nursing which is regarded typically as a female profession, which indeed in practice is female-dominated, when its first union known as the Nigerian Union of Nurses was formed in 1938, and registered in 1943, it was led by a male honorary Secretary-General, Mr. Kutu. Later, yet another man, Mr Nathaniel Cole became the leader (General Secretary) of the union. It was only in 1978, that two female nurses: Comrade Hannatu Omole and Mrs Julie Omigbo emerged as President and Deputy President respectively of this union, which later became the

National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives. This brief illustration draws attention to the unparalleled influence men wield in trade unions, which makes it that even in a predominantly female profession, their activeness in unionism remains unflinching. The question that becomes unavoidable is: why the passiveness of women in union activities even in a profession where they are in overwhelming majority?

One social issue that has been identified by Sociologists as infringing significantly on women's time, life style and social life, thereby causing inequality between them and men is the daunting task of combining housework with paid employment housework (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008 cited in Etuk, Inyang & Etuk, 2011). In the views of Oakley (2002), the rise of the modern role of housewife (housework), as the dominant mature feminine role is the most significant and lasting effect of industrialization on women. Social norms and expectations have placed the burden of unpaid housework primarily on female members of households and this according to Etuk, Inyang & Etuk, (2011) citing Humphrey (1987) was facilitated by the familial ideology that a woman is primarily supposed to be a wife and a mother. . As a result, even if the male members of a household are available to perform housework or domestic labour after they return home from their paid jobs, it is more often seen that the women take on bulk of the domestic responsibility after they too return home from paid work, (Hirway, 2015). This has remained the norm because the role (housework) is allocated exclusively to women and takes precedence over other roles as the primary role of women, (Haralaombos and Heald, 1980); and with the instrument of gender-role socialization, values associated with this role are continually inculcated into girls so that as women, they find themselves according the role priority over other roles, Etuk, Inyang & Etuk (2011). In traditional African societies, this is very much the case, in that a woman's place is seen to be in the home space, where she is confined to domestic chores, and to bearing and rearing of children; whereas the man roams the wild looking for adventure in work and war (Azodo, 2007). This is even more typical of a very much African society like Nigeria where until recently, women were largely restricted to domestic activities, such as taking care of children, the aged, the sick and other domestic activities (Onaeko, 1995). They also served and are still serving as caregivers, attending to the needs of their spouses and other members of their household.

Colonialism aided the situation under discourse. During the colonial period, education curricular emphasized religious instruction and clerical skills for boys and domestic science for girls (Odi,

2010). This facilitated the understanding that women's education was needed only to make them become good homemakers. It further provided a basis for the orientation of boys and girls on the roles they would take up as men and women. The resultant effect was a strengthening of the existing traditional African status quo of women being viewed as suitable mainly for home keeping, as expressed in the saying 'a woman's education ends in the kitchen', which until recently was very popular.

Characteristically, housework is tedious and time consuming. Yet many women are managing to combine it with paid employment. However, in that same sphere of paid employment, studies showed that many of the women involved (in paid employment) are associated with a number of negative employment trends such as frequent work interruptions and geographical immobility (Crompton, Jones and Reid, 1982); restriction in number of hours spent at work and when such hours can be (Freeman, 1982, Boserup, 1970); as well as absenteeism, lack of sense of career and lack of continuity in their jobs (Myrdal and Klein, 1968). Unfortunately, Etuk, Iyam and Etuk (2011) in their survey of employed women found that some of these trends are associated with women because of the burden and demands placed on them by house work, which in trying to keep up with, results in some of the outlined negative employment trends being inevitable. Thus, in this particular study, a question arises: is house work also a factor to women's lethargic disposition towards participation in unionism?

Patriarchy's link with women's low level of participation in trade unionism is the other social issue under investigation in this study. Patriarchy describes the institutionalized system of male dominance. The term is used more generally to refer to male domination; to the power relationships by which men dominate women; and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways (Bhasin, 2006). It is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Walby, 1990).

As a system, patriarchy helps to reject the idea of biological determinism (which describes the natural differences in men and women as arising from their biology or bodies, thereby causing them to be assigned different roles), while promoting the belief that every man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one (Walby, 1990). Furthermore, as an ideology, patriarchy promotes the view that men are superior to women, and that women are part of men's property, and as such, men should control women, thereby producing women's subordination.

In Nigeria, the prominence of patriarchy is generally expressed in the popular culture of male-child preference. When a child is born, the first question usually asked by almost every Nigerian is "Is it a boy or a girl?" (Omeregic & Ikensekhein, 2009). The birth of a male child is usually greeted with much more joy than the birth of a female child, which is indeed sometimes greeted with sadness. This popular culture of male-child preference promoted by patriarchy is further manifested in the fact that all through childhood and adolescence, boys and girls are treated differently; they are assigned different household tasks, and given different privileges. The male child is allowed to wander, and get involved in rough and tumble play, as well as accompany his father to the farm or whatever profession his father is engaged in. He is taught to 'be a man' and is rather sent on errands outside the home. On the other hand, the same patriarchal system makes for the female child to be highly restricted, closely monitored and expected to stay around the home to assist her mother in taking care of household chores and the younger siblings; and by so doing acquire skills on how to keep a home (Akintan, 2013). Admittedly, patriarchy helps to further tie women down to housework, while house work on the other hand strengthens patriarchy. With such a dilemma facing women, this study is confronted with the task of examining the extent to which these duo (housework and patriarchy) affect the level of trade union participation by women who take up paid employment.

Women's level of participation in trade unionism as a possible consequence of patriarchy and their involvement in housework can be theoretically situated within the sociocultural theory of women's subordination. The sociocultural theory of women's subordination is premised upon the assumption that societal norms, values as well as roles are culturally determined. Scholars of this theoretical leaning believe that social life is a reflection of whatever cultural forces that are in operation; implying that women's level of participation in trade unionism as an aspect of social life is also a reflection of prevailing cultural forces. In their sociocultural arguments, Oakley (1974), and Ortner (1974), theorized that women's place in society is a consequence of both cultural prescriptions and social definition of femininity and womanhood. They stressed that the roles women play, like those of men are assigned by society, and as Coon (1986) emphasized, these roles are transmitted and further strengthened via the instrumentality of gender role socialization. In the case of women in Nigeria, as is the case with other traditional societies, they are culturally socialized from cradle to operate mainly 'behind the scene'; and in some instances, especially in rural settings, they 'may not talk while the men are talking', but rather take more active roles in the domestic arena (Etuk, Igbolo & Bassey, 2013).

As it relates to this study, the sociocultural theory of women's subordination draws attention to the fact that the cultures of many societies like Nigeria are patterned to permit male dominance (patriarchy), while saddling women with the burden of house work. The outcome of this male dominated culture or patriarchy is adequate social space for the men to freely and as much as possible participate in, and dominate various social landscapes which might include the domain of trade unionism. On the other hand the women are choked with the primary demand placed on them by yet a cultural prescription of being responsible for housework, which in an attempt to adequately accomplish might leave them with only limited space to actively participate in other aspects of social life outside the home environment, like trade unionism. In summary, the sociocultural theory points in the direction of society and culture as possible impediments to women's active participation in aspects of social life like unionism because through various normative and value systems, society and culture determine and specify who does what, when and how.

Methodology

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Does patriarchy have any significant negative effect on women's level of participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar?
2. Does Housework have any significant negative effect on women's level of participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar?

To arrive at answers to these crucial questions, two null hypotheses were formulated for the study as follows:

1. Patriarchy does not have any significant negative effect on women's of level participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar.
2. Housework does not have any significant negative effect on women's level of participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar.

Study Design

This study is a survey research considering that data needed for the study were drawn from only a representative proportion of the study population. Consequently, the research design adopted was the *ex post facto* design, to determine the effects of patriarchy and housework on women's level participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar.

Study Area

This study was situated in the two universities in Calabar, the capital city of Cross River State, one of the states in the south-south geopolitical zone in Nigeria. The universities are: University of Calabar,

established by the Federal Government of Nigeria; and Cross River University of Technology, established by the Cross River State Government.

In April 1975, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria's announced that as part of its national development plan, seven new universities would be established at various locations in the country. The University of Calabar (UNICAL) was one of the seven universities set up under this programme (Ojong, 2014). The University however emerged out of the Calabar campus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), which began functioning during the 1973 academic session with 154 students; and a small cadre of academic, administrative and professional staff. The new autonomous institution (University of Calabar) started academic work with the faculties of Arts, Science and Social Science in October 1976, with an initial enrolment of 896 students. Of this number, 406 students were carried over from the University of Nigeria. The teaching, administrative and technical staff either transferred from UNN or newly recruited, numbered were about 156. The staff strength has since grown to a much larger number, with each grouped under any of the following unions: the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), the Senior Staff Association of Universities (SSANU), and the National Association Academic Technologists (NAAT) (Ojong, 2014.).

The Cross River University of Science and Technology (CRUTECH) on the other hand is a state-owned higher institution, established in August 2002 with its main campus in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. It was established after the merging of three higher institutions namely: the Polytechnic, Calabar, the College of Education, Akamkpa and the Ibrahim Babangida College of Agriculture, Obubra, all in Cross River State.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study consisted of the 2568 and 439 female union members of UNICAL and CRUTECH respectively, the total of which is 3007 women. The unions in question are: the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), the Senior Staff Association of Universities (SSANU), and the National Association Academic Technologists.

Using the Taro Yamane sample determination technique, a sample size of 555 was derived. Two sampling techniques, namely: the stratified and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the needed sample size. The population was first stratified according to the four unions of the two universities listed above. Afterwards, respondents were

purposely selected. Of note is the fact that respondents were selected in each union to reflect the union's percentage representation in the total population of each of the unions in each of the universities.

Instrument and Data Analysis Technique

A structured questionnaire was utilized to elicit responses from subjects. The questionnaire had both open and close ended questions. Data obtained were analysed using percentages, while the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistical technique was employed to further analyse the data generated, to facilitate the testing of the two hypotheses of the study.

Results

Table 1 presents the result of the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of hypothesis 1 of this study, which in null form states thus: Patriarchy does not have any significant negative effect on women's level of participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar. The result revealed a Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) value of 0.954 which is greater than the critical r value of 0.088 at 0.05 alpha levels of significance with 553 degrees of freedom. This means a rejection of the above null hypothesis, implying that patriarchy has a significant negative effect on women's level of participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar.

Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the effect of patriarchy on women's participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar.

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | r-value | Sig. |
|--------------------------------------|-----|--------|--------|---------|------|
| Patriarchal nature of society | 555 | 1.4703 | .49957 | .954 | .000 |
| Women's Participation in trade union | 555 | 1.5658 | .49610 | | |

Significant at * $P < .05$; Critical r-value = .088 df = 553

Source: Fieldwork 2016

In the case of hypothesis two which states as follows: Housework does not have any significant negative effect on women's level of participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar; it was also subjected to a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis, as shown in Table 2. The result of the analysis reveals Correlation Coefficient (r) value of

967, which turned out to be greater than the critical r-value (0.088) at 0.05 alpha levels of significance at 553 degrees of freedom. Consequently, null hypothesis 2 is rejected, leading to the conclusion that housework has a significant negative effect on women's level of participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar.

Table 2: Pearson's product moment correlation of women's traditional role of housework and participation in trade union in tertiary institutions in Calabar

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | r-value | Sig. |
|---------------------------------------|-----|--------|--------|---------|------|
| Women's traditional role of housework | 555 | 1.4108 | .49242 | .967** | .000 |
| Participation in trade union | 555 | 1.3946 | .48920 | | |

Significant at * $P < .05$; Critical r-value = .088 df = 553

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Discussion of Findings

Following the outcome of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the first hypothesis, it is concluded in this study that patriarchy has a significant negative effect on women's level of participation in trade unions. This finding draws attention to the question of how patriarchy or its structures provides the platform for this type of social order, where women would express passivity even in matters that bother on their wellbeing like trade unionism.

As noted previously, from childhood the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society manifested in

male child preference makes for differential socialisation for boys and girls. Girls are clearly or subtly socialized to be submissive, especially when interacting with men. They are also taught alongside the boys that leadership is more or less a domain of men. For those of the Christian faith, who constitute the overwhelming proportion of subjects for this study, many of them are further taught to take very seriously the Biblical teaching that "the woman should learn in 'silence' and must not usurp authority".

Additionally, in the Nigerian society, being a woman means being quiet, passive, less assertive and gentle; while being a man means being aggressive,

active, explorative and assertive. Koch, Schey and Thimm (2003), based on their studies also found that this is the trend in a number of societies. These definitions of being male and (or) female function a great length to promote and strengthen male dominance (patriarchy), while undermining the potentials and social capabilities of women. The long term ripple effect then manifests to the extent that in social issues and activities in which women should take up active roles, have a say, and function as key players, they would prefer to rather remain very passive at the background, leaving the men to run things. This is the dilemma of women in society, a dilemma which extends even to the level at which they participate in trade union activities in tertiary institution; and as this study has shown, this patriarchal system or male dominance turns out to have a negative effect on women's participation in trade unions; the effect being that of low level of participation

The other finding of this study follows the results of the test of hypothesis two of this study. Based on the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis, the study concludes that housework, just like patriarchy has a significant negative effect on women's participation in trade unions in tertiary institutions in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. Housework has remained a major structure that creates, as well as sustains inequality between men and women in many societies including Nigeria and Cross River State in particular. As the traditional and primary role of women in this part of the globe, housework as the British Sociologist Ann Oakley noted, takes precedence over other roles women take up. Unfortunately, because of its time consuming nature, housework leaves women with little room for active involvement in other social engagements including activities like trade unionism. This is in line with the views of Becker (1991) and Noonan (2001) that women's responsibilities for family work may influence employment characteristics by decreasing the amount of time and energy women have available for regular or paid employment.

Oakley (1979) in her studies found that women spend about 77 hours of their time each week on housework alone. This holds significant implications for women in relation to trade unionism. If at least seven hours (less than the recommended eight hours) that should be spent on sleeping per night is subtracted, it means employed women will have only 49 hours in a whole week to engage in every other social activity outside house work, including their jobs and job related activities. With such limited time at their disposal, it means they may not have much time to always spare for 'frivolities' like unionism, and if at all they try to indulge, such an indulgence will be very minimal. Men on the other hand have the advantage of time being that

they do not have this daily time-consuming task like housework. As such, they could devote as much time as possible to other social or employment related activities including trade unionism. Thus, their being the dominant force in trade unionism naturally follows, while in the case of women, housework functions very significantly to limit their the extent of participation in trade unions.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Change

Several studies have indeed pointed to patriarchy and housework as two social factors that function to widen the gender gap in society. In this study, the two have also been found to have significant negative effects on women's level of participation in trade unions. In the case of housework, it occupies much of employed women's time, leaving them with minimal spare time to split among several other social activities. As such, 'a-not-too-essential' activity like trade unionism might just get a very minute proportion or none at all of this spare time, thus, limiting their level of participation in trade unions.

On the other hand, patriarchy, which manifests via male dominated social structures, stifles women's participation in a number of social spaces. Even when they are able to participate, existing patriarchal structures make it difficult for them to gain prominence in these social spaces, hence the backwardness of women in trade union activities, even when many of them are full-fledged members in many unions.

Despite the hindrances posed by housework and patriarchy, it is justifiable for women to step up their level of participation in trade unionism for two crucial reasons. First, as union members, their views on how the unions should be run matter. Secondly, deductions are made from their pay as much as those of men for the running of the unions. As such, it is appropriate for them to lend their voices strongly to the running of the unions.

For women's participation in trade unions to improve, the constraints posed by patriarchy and housework notwithstanding, the following suggestions can be considered for implementation at appropriate levels:

- A policy of quota system or affirmative action should be adopted in unions for women, to give more room for them to have adequate representation in trade union leadership.
- Gender mainstreaming can be of immense help in resolving the challenges women face with regards to participation in unionism. Mainstreaming gender in workplace will create room for the specific needs and challenges women face to be taken into consideration not only in work contexts, but also at the level of trade unions. By so doing,

opportunities can be created for women to gain more prominence in work place activities, including trade unionism.

- Lastly, there is need to reorder the content of socialisation for boys and girls. Socialisation generally, and gender role socialization in particular form the bases for adult roles. In the case of girls, their socialization process needs to be reordered and re-patterned in such a way that builds self-confidence into them, so that they can have inner power to participate adequately in social activities that are viewed as male dominated, like unionism. Also, from the cradle, boys should be socialised to see women as people with capabilities who could also contribute meaningfully to social progress. With such mind set, it will be easy for them as men to create room for women to express their abilities in social contexts like trade unions where both sexes find themselves working together.

Patriarchy and housework are social issues, and with appropriate adjustment in social contexts and systems, like the ones so far suggested, the challenges created by the duo for women, can also be eliminated or at least brought under control.

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