

*Review*

# The genesis of women in decision making: Some Hints and tips

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This paper is a review in nature and presents a discussion on the genesis of women in decision making. It traces the decision making of women from biological and historical point of view. The biological approach attempts to show the strength of women in deciding to conceive, taking care of pregnancy, and bearing the child or children. The historical approach attempts to reveal some decisions that were made by women through tracing religious books, and evidence of some ancient women leaders. The thrust of the paper is to indicate the unrevealed strength of women. The paper concludes that women are both biologically and historically decision makers. And that women should not be pushed to get into activities which are not of their choice such as political representation, rather politics of representation should be left to individuals who want to practice it, and that national policies should indulge into supporting women and men on productive activities such as farming, entrepreneurial and professional careers.

**Key words:** Decision making, historical, genesis, and biological.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to present a discussion on the abilities of women in decision making from biological and historical point of view, and it traces the biological decision making strength of women from deciding to conceive and child bearing, and decisions that were made by women in other historical books such as the Bible. The paper appreciates the fact that today, most literatures which stand to claim the importance of women in decision making have not been able to substantiate through scientific facts revealed through researches. Calls on the importance of women seem to cement on wishes. We are yet to find scientific findings on ability or inability of women in decision making. Most of the calls are result of forums of women which seem to try to alert the world on their being backward. Therefore this paper attempts to substantiate the strength of women in decision making through what we consider to be known facts but which are not emphasized. The paper is divided into three parts. 1) The introduction which asserts the background to the study. 2) The genesis of women in decision making, which covers the biological and historical perspectives as revealed in historical literatures and 3) is the conclusion.

## An Overview On Women In Decision Making

The genesis of women in decision making has a long and prolonged history which most people present today do not seem to realize. Before we indulge into a discussion let us define the key word-genesis. Genesis refers to the beginning or origin. Hence the genesis of women in decision making refers to the beginning of women in making decisions. We try to trace when did or do women start making decisions. In this regard we have chosen two approaches, the biological and the historical. The biological traces the woman ability on deciding to conceive, taking care of the pregnancy and bearing a child or children. In most case we have been arguing and writing and at times presenting papers on the importance of including women in decision making as a way of helping the helpless in decision making. There has been little to tell on why women are prudent in decision making. Most of the arguments seem to be of sympathy in nature rather than of need or objective. It is easy to note some speeches and even in normal talks “we should build capacity of women in decision making” as if all men are natured with capacity of making decisions.

Even some women slogans have gone far as actually narrowing and disregarding the great potentials that women have. For example a slogan of civil societies and political parties in East African countries such as Tanzania "*Wanawake wanaweza wakiwezesha*" which literally mean 'women are capable if supported'. The phrase, in other words, seems to suggest that "men are able even without support". Mankind need support altogether. To some of us, women are potential in decision making through tracing the biological contribution in child bearing and the role that woman have kept playing from creation to date. We put forward our arguments through observing men and women through critical thinking.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The paper is a review in nature and has utilized documentation as the leading method of data collection. Literatures have been surveyed to generate ideas that would contribute to the paper. We have participated in many forums the world over, and have been invited to officiate occasions of women at national and international level in other capacities other than lecturers. Hence the exposure we have attained has contributed to the realization of practical point of view regarding the perception or deception on women decision making.

### **Literature Review**

Various literatures indicate the importance of women in our societies. But the pertinence of women is being shown in a much diluted venture. Agbalajobi (2010) reveal that Nigerian women constitute about half of the population of the country and are known to play vital roles as mother, producer, time manager, community organizer and social and political activist. But despite the major roles they play and their population, the society has not given recognition to these and to the fact that they are discriminated against. This is due to some cultural stereotype, abuse of religion, traditional practices and patriarchal societal structures. A number of literatures have covered on the potentials of women includes (Nidheesh, 2009; Nelton, 1998; Riebe, 2003; Starr and Yudkin, 1996).

Studies indicate clearly that women are the key in decisions regarding the fate of the families in Africa. They are the ones dedicated to search for firewood, cook, cultivate, take care of the kids, and in taking care of the men. The economies of most developing countries, particularly Africa depend much on women activities. Most societies acknowledge this reality. However efforts on the ground seem to contradict the facts existing particularly on men and their men counterparts. One would expect that sensitization effort be made to

enlighten men to participate in economic activities such as farming and the general care of the families because they are not active in such areas (Tanzania Gender Networking Program, 2007). But efforts have been dedicated to change the women prudent role of being pillars in economic activities to venture in contesting for various seats of representation.

To some people contesting for seats of representation is more important than producing crops, rearing cattle, producing milk through women groups, taking care of the families; both disciplining children and guiding them for the purpose of creating an independent and worthy nation. The argument we put forward is that women are very capable irrespective of some challenges that face women which indeed, in most case, do also face men. Women remain to be the key of economic development of most developing countries specifically Africa. Drifting women from economic activities to politics of representation is actually barring the future generations of Africa. We acknowledge the realities on the ground on the role of women in boosting the economic situations of Africa, yet we seem to defuse the women contribution economically by applauding participation of the same in the politics of representation. The argument we pose is that women, depending on the country, are potential in decision making. And that the choices of what is best for them remain to be with them. Minority men and or women to wish that women should be in various representative posts should not be seen as the voice of majority women. The choice to participate in politics should be at personal level and not agenda of countries. Men who wish to participate in politics should do so, for so women. We put forward this argument since traditionally, men and women in African societies have performed different roles and functions which were accepted as part of the social fabric (Njoh, 2006).

### **The Genesis of Women in Decision Making**

We are aware that tracing the genesis of women decision making through the facts revealed in the religious books such as the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an to some, might bring another discussion. Some consider the referred books not scientific since the facts revealed were not obtained through what is now considered scientific researches. However, the world population on beliefs is projected at about 86% being Christians and Muslim. This gives justification of using facts revealed in the named books since they are applauded by almost the entire world population including some who consider guru

of scientific researches. The genesis of women in decision making can be traced from creation. At best we all know that there is a beginning of mankind. One can decide to trace from what is believed as scientific approach – tracing mankind from revolution that is a development of mankind. Some can decide to trace on

both the historical point of view which observes a religious perspective and historical point of view which acknowledges the development stages of man. We all know that the development of man - both increase in numbers and prosperity of mankind started with a woman deciding to conceive. Men's duty in sexual relation is essentially a proposal in nature. Men propose to have children and it is the women who decide when to make the proposal valuable. It is important to note that men do not decide they just show an intention of having kids.

Further, when a woman has decided to conceive, it is her again that determines the fate of the child/fetus through deciding what to eat, drink and what to hate. The decisions of women are at this juncture regarded as accurate since it is because of such decisions a child in a womb keeps on growing till the attainment of nine months. The biological nature of a woman has automated them to be the key in decisions.

Women seem to be more experienced than men in decision making when looking at practical point of view, specifically the biological approach as exemplified in this paper. We know from biological observation that decisions made by women are accurate, to date we are yet to know the extent of accuracy of decisions made by men rather it is easy to link the decisions of men with masculine feelings (they feel able even when they are unable).

At this stage we should ask some pertinent questions to justify the importance of women in decision-making. One, if women can decide on the present and future generation as we have seen above why do we hesitate granting them with decisions on the future of our nations?

## **A Historical Perspective Of Women in Decision Making**

We trace the ability of men in decision making from religious point of view. The Bible and the Qur'an assets that the male Adam was created first, and was given ability to dwell in the Garden of Eden and was instructed to eat some of the fruits and some were prohibited (Genesis 1: 26; 3: 1-11). Adam observed the instructions and could not dare to decide otherwise. When Eve was created from the rib of male Adam, she eventually made decisions regarding eating what was prohibited. She at least made a decision. Philosophical approaches realize that Satan subjected Adam into eating the fruits with no success (Norman, 1995).

Genesis (3:1-11) reveals that Eve made a decision to test the fruits of which she contended that was prohibited by God. The act of testing the fruits was made when such action was denied by the male Adam who seem to have hesitated from what he opted as adhering to the rules and principals of God. While male Adam was indecisive to eat the fruit as persuaded by Satan, he could easily eat the fruit when the persuasion was made by Satan

through the female Eve. This further gives evidence on the ability of women not only to decide but also to persuade. Genesis (19:30-35) reveals further that when Sodom and Gomorrah were set into fire because of sins, Lot the father remained with two daughters.

The females thought big and realized that they were unable to bear children without performing intercourse with the father since they were only three- the father and two daughters. The daughters made decisions to offer wine to the father so that they could sleep with him and begot children. The mission was successful and both had children. Tracing the conjugal rights, one would realize that certainly some of us would not be present today had it been not the prudent decision made by the two daughters of Lot. It is worthy to note that Lot the father did not have any decision regarding the ultimate of the family and the generation altogether, but the females (his daughters) had. The old daughter had this to say regarding lying with the father:

'Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the Earth. Come and let us our father drink wine and we will lie with him that we may preserve offspring through our father' (Genesis 19: 31).

The concern of the daughters is demonstrated clearly. They had a concern of future generation. They were deciding on the resilience of future generations. They made a decision. In Genesis (16:1-6) we find the common story of Abraham and Sarai, the two were old and could not unveil possibility of children. Abraham made no decision, but Sarai cognized the problem and decided that one of the maids of Abraham should be taken by her husband to bear children. In the contempt of future generation Sarai lamented: 'Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing the children; go in to my maid; it may be that I shall obtain Children by her (Genesis, 16:6).

What we realize in this discourse is that women have always been conscious with the future. Of course this is supported heavily with behavioral series of studies regarding what discomforts of women in most marriages, where they opined that the uncertainty of family future (International Institute Training Research and Consultancy, 2006).

Surveying the Kings in ancient days one would realize that women made decisions. There are series of examples in this vein. Ahab the King of Juda, was in need of the piece of land which belonged to Naborth the descendants of Abraham. He (Ahab) being the King got sick because of the land. He failed to get it. The King did not tell the wife on what disturbed him rather the wife sensed that the husband was not in a good mood, and that some thing was disturbing him. When the wife realized what made her husband look sick she gave a suggestion:

*My Lord the King of Juda, dedicate your Kingship power to me and will make sure the piece of land that is*

*disturbing you is put into your hands, and three days from now the land will be yours. Just delegate power to me and let the entire land of Judah know that I have assumed Kingship for seven days, and it will be done (Kings: ).*

And it came to pass and all that was planned by a woman Jezebel was fulfilled. She killed Nabot and made the husband happy. Few things can be cognized in this situation: 1) the ability of women to sense the problem and or situations including the surroundings. 2) Ability of women to act or decide in response to the problem. In all the cases it can be realized that women proved to be more proactive than the male counterpart. The paramount issue in this discussion is that the ability of women to make decision is biological and historical. Much as history and philosophy depend on each other, we have amplified both the biological and philosophical (philosophical history) to show how women have always been able to make decisions as opposed to men counterpart.

We further realize that the ability of women to make decision went up to the recent history. Herod the King of Israel was feasting together with reckoned people of neighbor countries during his birth day. The daughter blessed the King when she danced nicely before the guests. The King vowed to award anything to the daughter even half of the Kingship. Finally the woman was asked by the daughter what should be given as an award. She advised the King to slay John the baptizer partly to do away with him as was giving trouble to the marriage with the King. The woman was the second wife being taken by Herod after the death of his brother. The man (King) failed to make decision on the ultimate end of the trouble that was caused by John. But a woman realized the weakness and found a way out. Whether a decision was good or bad it is immaterial. The most important thing is the ability to make decision. , We also realize two things to the wife of Herod: 1) She cognized the problem and worked to solve it. 2) She was prompt in decision making and thus when an opportunity came she went for it, she made a decision.

## CONCLUSION

We have reiterated on the genesis of women in decision making. We have shown clearly that women decision making ability is not dependent on men counterparts. They are historically and biologically decision makers. The paramount of the discussion is that Africa should stop undermining the abilities of women in decision making. They are the ones who determine the type of food for the offspring. They detect and make decision on what should be cooked and eaten. They are the majority in agriculture and hence they contribute major package on African Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Women are sensitive to families. If women are pushed to believe that

the politics of representation are the most important jobs, then Africa will eventually lose the resilience of future generation. Policies should verge into supporting women and men on productive activities such as agriculture, farming, entrepreneurial based ventures, and professional careers rather than supporting them on politics of representation. Getting into politics should be at the expense of an individual and not the concern of the nation. It is African continent that put emphasis on special women seats of councilors and parliament. It is important to know that numbers of members in House of Representatives are not important compared to the competence of the same in positively representing the wishes and expectations of both women and men irrespective of sexes. In view of empowering women on economic activities, Nidheesh asserts that women empowerment is the best strategy for poverty eradication. Rural women, who were regarded as voiceless and powerless started identifying their inner strength, opportunities for growth and their role in reshaping their own destiny. The process of empowerment becomes the signal light to their children, their families and the society at large (Nidheesh, 2009).

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