

Violence in Nigerian Politics:
A Feminist Perspective of Esiaba Irobi's *Nwokedi*

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Abstract

Violence has taken an upper hand in Nigerian politics. Sincerity has become a misnomer and politics has turned to a do-or-die affair. Gender disparity is imminent in politics, too, as gender inequality becomes very conspicuous in the distribution of political positions in Nigeria. Politics in Africa generally is characterised by corruption and inefficient leadership. Its basic characteristics are embezzlement, domineering attitude, unemployment and selfishness. The nature of politics and the leadership style hinders development as it generates conflict between the young and old. Irobi proffers social rehabilitation as a solution in *Nwokedi*, a play. The only way out of the perennial political canker that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Africa, Nigeria precisely, is the possession of honest, selfless, patriotic leadership that can identify with the youths in particular and the masses at large. The theoretical framework of this paper is the feminist literary theory, Womanism precisely. This paper therefore verifies violence in Nigerian politics in three different ways namely: violence in politics; culture, politics, existing knowledge therefore is as a sanitizing tool to the political decadence in Nigeria. The main thrust of this paper is the exposition of the misnomer in politics, the fate of women and youth, and the need for sanity to be restored in politics/society.

Introduction

Violence is a common phenomenon in Nigerian politics. A. A. Jekayinfa explains that gender-based violence affects productivity in the homes, communities and places of work, and that “there are different types of genderbased violence, which occur at different levels like within the family, community and state. Domestic violence, which typically occurs when a man beats his female partner, is the most prevalent form of gender-based violence and this occurs within the families and inside the homes” (13). Politics is a two-edged sword that can scatter or reform. Its adverse effect is not quantifiable. O.R. Dathorne comments on heroes of Africa and politics as aspiring towards “the

assertion of self; the politics of the old generation seek to submerge the individual, to impose anonymity on him which he does not want” (324).

Leadership is a central problem in Nigerian polity as it affects development. Most of the old politicians believe that the young generation is inexperienced. Corruption becomes a problem as embezzlement becomes the order of the day. Unemployment is a hindrance to the growth of the youths who form the cream of the society. This paper discusses Irobi’s *Nwokedi* from feminist perspective especially from the Womanist point of view. Discussing the concept of gender, James A. Doyle says that “gender should be thought of as independent of a person’s biological sex” (52). Some see it as a cultural thing but in the context of this paper, gender refers to both sexes.

The perception of life differs with individuals. Conflict occurs when there is collision, clash or incompatibility among people of different generations. Steven Spiegel in *Conflict in World Politics* observes that political conflict has produced “a clash of cultures, a disharmony of interests, and a disparity in perception” (4). He further states that the immediate context of any conflict is the interaction of the group concerned. Kenneth Waltz sees political conflict as struggles of wider effect, struggles involving other organization, sections and even different classes of people. In the field of politics, there is disparity in political principles, convictions, opinions, administration, and even private affairs of individuals. At this level, conflict stems from the diametrically opposed perception of political reality by the older and younger generations. Feminist theory which is the theoretical framework of this paper postulates, according to Rosemarie Tong, that “to eliminate male control, men and women have to eliminate gender – specifically sexual status, role, and temperament – as it has been constructed under patriarchy” (52). By implication therefore both male and female should enjoy equal opportunities in the society.

Violence in Politics

Violence seems to dominate African polity. One evil begets another as politics turns several states in Nigeria upside down. Politics as played by most Nigerian politicians is characterized with violence and it is a dirty game as the layman says. Esiaba Irobi presents politicians as people very desperate to be in political positions. Saviour Agoro in *Topics in Modern African Drama* describes the nature of politics in Nigeria as “politics for personal aggrandisement; politics of empty

promises, politics of tribalism, politics of corruption” (51). Irobi presents Politicians as ritualists and insensitive to human feelings in his play *Nwokedi*. Violence in politics in some cases could be regarded as a kind of vendetta. One evil deed begets another. Nothing is hidden under the sun therefore every evil deed perpetrated against humanity is exposed to the society just as the secret dealings of Senator Arikpo are exposed in the play.

The character, Arikpo in Irobi’s *Nwokedi* is a typical example of the old generation of politicians in Nigeria. His fake story to mask his violent nature is: “How my wife, Ezinna and three children were burnt...Burnt because a soldier was found lying dead along the road. The other soldiers thought he was murdered by civilians and went on a rampage, burning every house” (5). This is a typical portrayal of the insensitive and insensible nature of most politicians and even among the military leaders. Irobi, however, presents a simple message through the turnout of events from Arikpo’s actions and intentions. It is an indication that one’s sins must surely find one out and that blood is thicker than water.

Violence is a recurrent issue in Nigerian politics. As long as it is not nipped in the bud, it continues to exist. Irobi presents politicians as cyclic ritualists, people without conscience or fear of God and murderers who go to any length to achieve their goals. He made shedding of blood a case of repeated history as can be seen in the utterances of Arikpo, “...now history repeats itself, and in-law you know that whenever history repeats itself, the price doubles” (6). The desperation in politics leads people like Arikpo to kill their parents. One significant truth presented by Irobi concerning violence and the perpetration of evil acts is that one pays dearly for any evil committed directly or indirectly. Nigeria is characterized by several cases of violence, which are marked as historical events. Such records of violence instil fear in youth corpsers thus hindering them from backing Nwokedi Junior up in his revolutionary actions at the corps’ camp. One corps member asks him, “Did you see how the peasants were massacred?” (28). Another reference to violence that claimed millions of lives of men, women and children was that of the Biafra / Nigeria civil war.

Violence as presented by Irobi in *Nwokedi* is of various categories. It ranges from ritual killing to achieve a selfish end as in the acquisition of power by the politicians, killing to terminate cultists, culturally permitted killing, to that which places a woman in unexpected widowhood as can be seen in the case of Habiba’s late husband; “it was 1976. July 1976. Nine months after our wedding.

They came by night and picked him up in a land rover. His name had been mentioned by some informants; and you know in those days there were not proper trials. They took him away. The next day, they were executed” (46-47). Patricide is also committed in the play. Again, Senator Arikpo referred to his killing of his wife and three children thus, “they are the price a man paid for power” (88). Women suffer a lot in marriage. They are marginalized by their husbands, brutalized and some even lose their lives in it.

Irobi explores several aspects of violence in his work, *Nwokedi*. Looking at the life of the major female character, Mrs Nwokedi, one can see that in a patriarchal society like Nigeria, women play the second fiddle. They are subordinates to their husbands. Patriarchy discountenances the third millennium developmental goal which is to “promote gender equality and empower women” (1). Hence, men prefer to make their wives full time house wives irrespective of their talents as can be seen in Mrs Nwokedi who lives in her husband’s house in the village.

Though Senator Arikpo’s story is false, the element of truth in it, which reflects gender violence, is “abuse, molestation, rape and robbery” (61). Arikpo is a typical example of a man who sees his wife as a commodity, as someone he can do away with at will. He expects total obedience and compliance to all his whims and caprices from his wife. Her emotional stance and opinions on issues are inconsequential. The unfeeling Arikpo eventually implements the second option of terminating his marriage, which he states is “by death” (62). In order to have his way, he kills his wife, Ezinna, and her children just because she kept advising him to abandon politics and to go back to legal practice which is his profession.

Culture, Politics and Leadership Change

Irobi is of the opinion that the society will be better off if Nigerians can practise professions in which they are trained. The essence is simply to minimize abuse and make the society better. Profession-crossing does not encourage professionalism, especially in politics which is characterized with the selfish interest of the politicians and their ignorance of leadership ethics. Nwokedi Junior captures the correct picture of most politicians in Nigeria in his apt description of man: “A man is a man. Mothers [and] fathers are congenital liars” (63). They tell this to everybody including their children. Again job mobility is not done for

genuine reason, such as serving humanity. Politicians are the guiltiest of this. For instance, Senator Arikpo's aim of abandoning his profession as a lawyer to become a politician is for self-aggrandisement. He explains "I only went there to graft some skin on the scar itching on my psyche; the scar of poverty and its attendant inferiority complex; Nwokedi, I went into the Senate to hang my portrait on the walls of the senate" (73).

Most wives are treated with ignominy by their husbands who are involved in extra-marital affairs. Men generally believe they are polygamous by nature and therefore fail to see their unfaithfulness to their wives as suicidal. Many women have lost their lives, and some have developed hypertension because of the unfaithfulness of their husbands. Senator Arikpo is not satisfied with "keeping a West Indian woman in [his] house at No. 13 Lancaster Lane, Hampstead Heath, London" (62), that is, indulging in extra-marital affair. But he disposes of his wife through death. Mrs. Nwokedi, his mother-in-law, is incapacitated because she is not empowered; she is a mere housewife. To be self-actualized is a problem being dependent on her husband. She is not assertive. She plays the role of a peacemaker, a stereotype character and not a radical. She says to Nwokedi Junior, "Nwokedi, listen to me. If you kill him now, what will you gain? You'll only increase the funeral toll in this family; Son, leave vengeance to God" (64). Irobi creates a sharp contrast between his two major female characters, Mrs. Nwokedi and Habiba who is educated, hardworking and supports violence if it will usher in significant changes in the living conditions of her people.

Whenever a child goes beyond the father's will or expectation, the blame goes to the mother. Such is the case in Nigerian society where women shoulder a lot of blame from their husbands. Any form of failure in the family is attributed to the woman. Nwokedi Senior, for instance, blames his wife for his downfall: "That woman is a schemer. That saboteur! Do you know she has been Nwokedi's political adviser? Weaving out plans on how to destabilize my political career; with that renegade! That anarchist! That Absalom! Absalom! Where is he?" (66). Nwokedi Senior's outburst is pre-empted by his anger and frustration that the intervening youth will surely frustrate their plans of political corruption. He believes that his wife is indirectly in support of their son, Nwokedi Junior, that they are working together to frustrate his political career. Such misconception about one's wife is commonly found in patriarchal society like Nigeria.

Irobi presents politicians as inefficient. The problem is not politics in itself but it is the politicians and their mode of politicking. This explains the opinion of Nwokedi Junior about them: “The African politician, someone has rightly said, is a man who moves only in one direction” (80). Due to the unhealthy nature of politics in Nigeria, negligence, joblessness and untold hardship have become the order of the day. The youths adopt violent confrontation as a means of saving their future. Nwokedi Junior summarizes the situation thus:

My generation gave you the future to hold in trust for us. You turned it into a handkerchief, used it to wipe the mucus of greed dripping from your wretched nostrils. After that you rumpled it, crumpled our future and squeezed it into your pocket. But your pocket was full of holes. So our future fell out to the ground and with your leprous feet, you quarried it into dust; Arikpo that is why this matchet must spill your blood today (73).

The expectation of the youths is that politics would bring about development that should be beneficial to all and sundry. J. Isawa Elaigwu defines community development as “a process in rural transformation whereby the government in partnership with the people particularly in rural communities, aim at bringing about socio-economic and cultural changes in the way of life of the people through their own initiative” (407).

Irobi presents various types and stages of violence perpetrated by both old and young generations, for example killings and revolutionary actions by the youth, to name but two, as means to an end. The final stroke that breaks the camel’s back is the instantaneous coup, which terminates the efforts of the politicians as announced by Major General Dogon Burra: “We can no longer sit back and watch a conspiracy of civilians misuse power to the detriment of our national aspirations. We have therefore shot our way into power, in order to restore patriotism, discipline, peace and stability to the nation. Everything is under control” (89). A confirmation of social rehabilitation as proffered by Esiaba Irobi in the light of politics in Africa generally is a total condemnation of using violence as a yardstick to achieve political goal.

The expected outcomes of such rehabilitation are cultural and leadership change. Anthonia Makwemoisa Yakubu states that “culture indicates the totality of a people’s way of life, physical and metaphysical...” (123). Society is dynamic in

nature, the implication being that change is of significant value to life and for societal development. This is the demand of the cultural presentation of Osioma by Irobi in which ritual bloodshed becomes inevitable. Mrs. Nwokedi simply refers to it as “a festival of life, a festival in which the old year dies and the New Year is born” (16). This recommends bloodshed as a significant and inevitable cleanser that spurs up growth and development of the society. This explains the urgency in the demand of Obidike from Mrs. Nwokedi, “Listen woman, we have no time for trading words. The night is performed with songs and the ram is bleating at the shrine. At this portent moment, the spirits have gathered at the arena awaiting the spill of blood” (17). Irobi portrays basically two types of shedding blood in the play: Senator Arikpo’s killing of his wife and children is unjustifiable and abominable but the shedding of Senator Arikpo’s blood is acceptable to the society as it is for cleansing of the atrocity he has committed. It is purgative.

On the other hand, Irobi emphasizes the cultural significance of maleness in the Nigerian society. In spite of the fact that the „Ekumeku“ is Nwokedi Junior’s age grade, Mrs. Nwokedi is a mere woman to them due to the significant position they occupy in the society as custodians of the culture. In Nigerian patriarchal society, the male child is placed above the woman, irrespective of her age. Irobi’s demand for rehabilitation of the „Osioma“ society through the whirlwind group simply affirms this. Irobi does not distinguish himself properly as a feminist because of his portrayal of the female characters as weak, second fiddle and who can thrive under the protection of the male including their male children.

Politics in Nigeria is for self-aggrandizement. Culture demands purity and holiness as against the corruption, embezzlement and exploitation characteristic of the Nigerian politics. The essence of the annual festival under the leadership of Nwokedi Junior’s age grade, „Ekumeku“ is for the purification of the land through animal sacrifice as modernity has countered human sacrifice. The chaotic situation engendered by Senator Arikpo’s sacrifice of his wife and children prompted the „Ekumeku“ under the leadership of Nwokedi Junior to use his blood to purify the land instead of animal blood and this becomes a point of recall to a culture already overtaken by modern tradition. Irobi therefore demands the separation of the chaff from the grain, though, he at the same time, believes that two wrongs cannot make a right, which is evident in the nature of the end of his

play, *Nwokedi*. Obidike states, “His hand will defile us” (18) because of the human blood he had shed. What the youths demand for is change and a better future for all. To them, the mode of politicking in Osioma has to change for peace to reign. Obidike therefore confirms that “Senators and Members of Parliament are part of the rotten burden we are purging away with the old year” (20).

The “Ekpe” festival is a very significant culture in the fictional society of Osioma and the eastern Nigeria. Only the males are empowered to carry out certain significant rituals inherent in their positions. For instance, the significant role of Nwokedi Junior in the Ekpe festival of Osioma is expressed thus, “I am the one empowered by the land to slaughter the sacrificial animal at the shrine of the gods and renew the strength of the earth with its blood” (37). The significance of the „ekpe“ festival is to usher something new into the society, which is the characteristic change for the better and such demands blood cleansing. “Because it celebrates the death of the old year and the birth of the new; Today is 31st December. The old year dies today. And mine is the hand that murders it” (37) concluded Nwokedi Junior.

Culture has spiritual undertone which locates, charges and permeates its custodians at the time of necessity and demand of services. It sensitizes, magnetizes and draws its victims as can be seen in the case of Senator Arikpo, to the point of contact with the spiritual. Its proper hold is the placement of one in trance, making him to dance to the tune of the call of the gods in fulfillment of the cultural demands, needs and prophecy for the land. This is what Wole Soyinka demonstrates in the *Death and the King's Horseman* in which Elesin Oba is found in a trance in answer to the demand of culture and the call of the gods. Thus, Nwokedi Junior becomes possessed spiritually in spite of the fact that he is still outside his town. He exclaims, “I am the spirit within the mask!” (39).

Brutality and killing are of two faces. An aspect is termed violence and abominable while another is culturally permitted because it has to do with somebody who has committed an abomination in the society. As culturally believed, Senator Arikpo’s blood is believed to serve as a purging agent of the society of impurities for the emergence of hope and good living. Thus, the killing of Arikpo, a ritualist on the night of 31st December is seen as a cleanser. The Ekpe festival is permitted due to its purging effect to reduce crime to an extent. This simply means that the person that performs the blood sacrifice in the person of

Nwokedi Junior has immunity being empowered by the „Osisioma“ society. Hence Nwokedi junior maintains that “it is blood that renews the earth”

(45). The „ekpe“ festival in Igboland is an annual festival in which there is a renewal of the agricultural season, a cosmic prayer for plenty and a cry for change.

Irobi presents poor leadership as the major problem of Nigeria. This he does from different perspectives and at different levels. He presents leaders as cheaters, embezzlers, selfish people, power drunk and die hard. The current political leadership has failed hence the youths agitate for change. The youths demand for democracy in which everybody will have equal opportunity in the society. Hence, they refer to themselves as “the government!” (21). According to Folasade Ifamose, “various groups have been engaged in political struggles that can refine the political and legal basis of Nigeria. The endemic nature of these conflicts has emphasized the importance of system maintenance and social adjustment” (53). The military is also seen as a failure in their leadership style. The event at Bakalori between the corpsers and the military testifies to this.

Nwokedi Junior states that “marching deflects a man’s thoughts, deflects his reasoning, and turns him into a zombie” (26). Nwokedi Junior refuses to be cowed by the military any longer. He sensitizes the corpsers into revolutionary action though the fear of the outcome of any form of revolutionary move turns the corpsers into spectators and Nwokedi Junior into actor.

The agitation for change of leadership in Nigeria by the youths is summarized by this premise presented by Nwokedi Junior through the revolt by his age grade. Leadership failure in Nigeria and its possible causes are presented by Nwokedi Senior in this way: “We failed because we were selfish. We failed because we thought only for ourselves, our families and our tribes...we had no vision...” (78). To Mary Kolawole “the theme of social change is focused on an improvement of the women’s condition, as we see in the case of public sphere” (147). Women therefore constitute the cream of the society that needs empowerment and to be self-reliant.

One notion that destroys the Nigerian polity is the sustenance of evil, inheriting the vices of the predecessors due to lack of faith and belief that one “...can’t survive in the country with ideas alone; you must try to beat the system” (78). This is the clear point of divergence between the politicians and the masses as represented by the youths whose agitation is for an honest, selfless, and patriotic leadership that can identify with them. To them, interest of the

community is paramount in good leadership. They agitate for change that will usher in a brighter future and give freedom to the people.

Irobi portrays politics as being devoid of sincerity, patriotism, sacrifice and humility. He presents flirtation as a mode of lavishing money on irrelevances instead of embarking on meaningful development. Politicians are seen as oppressors, corrupt and selfish people who lack political will and commitment.

The Nature of Women and their Political Stance

The resilient nature of women is portrayed in the character, Mrs. Nwokedi, who has several traumatic experiences in life, especially in connection with her grandchildren. She conserves her actual feelings and plays along with Arikpo in spite of the fact that she knows his insensitivity to the future of the younger generation. She told Senator Arikpo, “it may be because you have their future” (8). Irobi clearly presents the enduring nature of woman, their patience and sharp wit in the play *Nwokedi*. In spite of the fact that the ashes are still with her, she tolerates Arikpo under her roof. “Yes, six months...after he has seen the remains of his sister and three nephews we will bury the ashes” (6).

Irobi presents women as being more focused and direct in dealing with political and societal issues. Mrs. Nwokedi stands for truth. She does not exhibit sentimentality of a mother in the affairs concerning their children. Love is not blind in cases of social reality and women seem to be objective in their judgment of Nigerian politicians and societal issues. Mrs. Nwokedi is emphatic and candid in her report to Arikpo, “Nwokedi’s father also promised these young men jobs before they voted him four years ago. But he didn’t fulfill his promises. That’s why, this time around, they treated him like fowl – dropping that cling to the sole of a rich woman’s slippers (8-9). The blood tie of a woman with her children exists but does not in most cases become a yardstick for her judgment of reality. Their deep sense of responsibility to their family (both husband and children), contribute to their conservative and careful nature, especially when the house is divided.

The non-radical nature of Mrs. Nwokedi as presented by Irobi portrays part of the woman’s role as the peacemaker of the family, the nut that holds the center together. The conservative nature of women does not ginger them into spontaneous action but calculated efforts to express their actions in the most

appropriate way. Hence, Mrs. Nwokedi manages her home in spite of her secret knowledge of the position of things in her home and society at large. She expresses herself to Senator Arikpo in the following manner,

I hate politics. I detest it. It is a useless game; Very dangerous and violent; Breeds every species of evil. What is mashing up this house? Politics; what has poisoned our peace? Politics; Honestly, I will be even happier if you and my husband will cease to participate in this festival of foolishness, this ceremony of deceit you call politics; Old men who sell and retail lies. No! You should leave this mischievous enterprise to the younger ones, at least for the sake of your lives (15).

On the other hand, Irobi's conception of women is stereotypic, non-violent, fearful people with lesser roles to play. Mrs. Nwokedi, in spite of all her experiences, could not take a firm stand. She is reduced to a mere housewife whose pivotal roles are to bear children and nurture the family. She is not empowered and therefore cannot contribute significantly to the growth of the society. Agitating for the transformation of women's condition, Kolawole calls for "the eradication of any existing tradition that oppresses, degrades, exploits or endangers women; [The] transformation of the women's condition" (148).

Irobi's handling of women is not in line with the Millennium Development Goals which include eradication of hunger and poverty through the promotion of women's empowerment and develop a global partnership for development. Thus, liberation of women is not fully projected especially on the part of Mrs. Nwokedi. Though Habiba loves Nwokedi's bravery, she could not partake in his revolutionary moves. She tells Fingesi, "Because Nwokedi dares. I guess every man admires a man who dares. I like Nwokedi because he dares" (47). Habiba is not just educationally empowered, but she also has artistic gift in painting, which she freely explores. In response to Fingesi's comment, Habiba states, "Painting that is the lot of all artists" (33).

One thing is unique in Irobi's female characters. They love men who express their "discontentment with a cosmetic society" (48). Women stand for justice and equity. This is in conformity with the Millennium Development Goals, which states that women demand equal opportunity to be given to all and sundry. They frown at oppression, subjugation and domination of the good things of life by a particular group of people in the society. This is why Mrs. Nwokedi takes side with the young generation who are mostly unemployed youths. She disliked

Senator Arikpo's comments about the youths, "Jobless vagabonds; an irresponsible generation; A brigade of unemployed devils...Who left them employed" (15). Mrs. Nwokedi discountenances the actions of the old politicians especially and sympathizes with the youths who seem to be relegated to the background by the old generation of politicians. In the same vein, Habiba believes in revival of a society especially when the leaders outline their usefulness. She doesn't see anything wrong in coup d'état if it will usher in a new lease of life in the society. This is why she sees Fingesi as a "coward! You are afraid to face the world; afraid to die, you are afraid even to dare" (48).

What makes a society worth living in is change which offers life sustaining opportunity to all individuals. This is the womanist position presented by Irobi in *Nwokedi* through Habiba whose love for the late husband has a replica in Nwokedi junior for the following reasons: "He was defying the old order. He had seen beyond the façade of grunt hems and pledges. They understood the foolery that informs the arrival of the independence show. That is why he defied the anthem, (in a rapture) Nwokedi! The defiant one! Defiance! And that is why I admire him" (48-49). Irobi simply proffers change as solution to decadence in the society and bad leadership. This is why he makes his protagonist a defiant character in order to achieve what Habiba summarizes as "a destiny for posterity; a future for the children...a new world" (50).

Women are mother figures. They outwit men in family matters especially in the aspect of averting disaster and shame in their homes. They are simply necks that direct and position the head without looking rebellious. Thus, Mrs. Nwokedi devised means of restoring peace between her husband and son in her home. She played on her husband's intelligence to avert violence: "senior (smiling) Nwokedi has agreed to tell Ozoemena Nwakanma to step down for you" (67). Irobi presents sharp wit as a very unique attribute of women, whether literate or not. He proffers hope as a solution to looming disaster. This, Mrs. Nwokedi explains as "a lie of convenience. A lie told to save lives; theirs and yours" (69). In the same way, Habiba outwits Fingesi, using confrontational means to arrest his lust for her, "the desire to screw...have you forgotten that night you came back here from a gyration? I was painting...first you pointed your finger towards my southern hemisphere like this...and said to me Habiba, at a certain age a young girl must know how to smile with her thighs. Habiba, can you smile with your thighs?" (49). This again disarmed Fingesi who so much desires sexual desire.

The nature of the ending adopted by Irobi in the play, *Nwokedi* indicates his detest for unjust, ritualistic shedding of the blood of innocent souls like the wife and children of Senator Arikpo; infidelity and womanizing, and a clarion call to trim down the excesses of patriarchy, especially the high handedness of male gender. However he believes in punitive measures which yield positive results through corrective modes.

Political crisis has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigeria as a nation. It is almost becoming customary. Power tussle causes a lot of havoc in the society. Political culture is yet to evolve in Nigeria. The military has no political culture and does not give room for evolution because theirs is a dictatorial government. Selfless leadership is therefore proffered as solution to leadership problems in Nigeria. For the feminist issues raised in this paper, especially those concerning women, implementation of the millennium development goals is very important.

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