

**Pre - Colonial African Gender Behavioral Flexibility And The Psyche Of
Womanhood In Culture And Military Dexterity**

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Abstract:

In Africa before the advent of white men and subsequent colonization of African Kingdoms and the imposition of new orientations of colonial masters, Africa had their own unique way of life, culture and way of doing things. This reflected in the culture and language of the people and the attendant behavioral dispositions of the people. These dispositions were inclusive of gender perceptions and its relatedness. There was no societal fixation as to particular exploits that women could or could not make. As it were, the societies were gender neutral. There were therefore women who rose in different kingdoms and societies to make military exploits and exploits in governance amongst others that reflected the psychological and behavioral disposition of the people and societies.

This paper brings to fore, gender disposition as reflected in the culture, politics, governance amongst other societal activities. The paper further argues that the slave trade across the continent notwithstanding, the inherent behavioral tendencies of the people as regards gender manifested itself among the slaves taken to the new world such as the Americas, which found women being in the forefront of militant agitations and actions not only to free slaves but for race equality with the others in the new societies. And further concluded that the new call for gender equality in societies, Africa inclusive, was what was operational in Africa before colonialism, shoving Africa to retrogression in gender equality advancement as one of the major impact of European colonization.

Key Words: Androgyny, Gender, Behavioral, Flexibility, Dexterity, Social Order.

Introduction:

Personality traits and characteristics are biological as well as environmental. Gender is a universal dichotomy in any given culture. Strict gender behavioral traits are however believed to produce inhibitions, especially for females, which may lead to inhibitions in achievement and success situations. Most importantly, they inhibit females from subjects, careers and specializations which have been stereotypically ascribed to males. However, where there are gender behavioral flexibility traits, there may be no inhibitions as to choice of a career.

Cultural myths can become self-fulfilling prophecies, that thus lead to the phenomenon known as “sex-typing” (Bem, 1981) . Sex-typed individuals are said to differ from other individuals not primarily in the level of femininity, or masculinity they possess, and the extent to which their self-concepts and behavior are organized on the basis of gender rather than some other dimension.

One of the early protagonist for a gender blind society , Sandra Bem (1981) believed such gender flexibility would enhance societies rather than what is general presently. She went further that gender schematic means a college student who might want to decide just what new hobby to try will readily make the decision through the lens of gender and would therefore ask what sex is the hobby? What sex am I? Do they match? If so then the hobby will be considered further, if not then it will be rejected without further consideration. Most people are said to be unaware that their perceptions are organized on the basis of gender.

Sex-typed individuals are seen as processing information in terms of and conforming to whatever definitions of masculinity and femininity the culture they are in happens to provide. It is the process of partitioning the world into two equivalent classes on the basis of gender schema. This tendency is reflected in the thinking of parents and guardians and it influences the training they give to their wards. This is more so for female wards . Parents who believe that their wards would not play roles apart from those of a wife, mother and homemaker , would not make much efforts to give high educational training apart from the essentials that suits wifehood and motherhood .

The European way of life and perception is that a woman’s place is at the background of activities, to be seen but not heard. And this orientation was what the colonizers bequeathed to their colonies in various forms such as schooling, school texts and readings (Mowaiye Fagbemi, 2021). However, in the African setting, before colonization , men and women complemented each other. Psychologically and behaviorally, women were gender blind and androgynous, and so did not feel that because they were “females”, they should not do some things. Womanhood was not seen from the perspectives of “sex symbol”. Women could therefore be seen in different spheres of life like science and technology, as it were. For instance, women were into agriculture – hoeing, farming, harvesting and partaking in all that it entailed as well as other societal activities . They were into gold and blacksmithing, pottery and weaving. They progressed with their men in different activities of life.

Pre - colonial african cultural orientations:

The traditional African perception of gender before colonization was healthy, positive and makes for a wholesome development of humans and societies, where the woman had a vital place in the scheme of things within the African social and world order. There wasn't an entrenched trace (s) of male chauvinism which is characteristic of the European life and the egocentric male psyche vividly epitomized in their social formations, culture and basically all spheres of activities, even to creation stories, proverbs and the English language itself.

European creation stories have it, that the man was created first before the woman. And some opine that this presupposes the superiority of males over females. This is a rare creation tale that can not be found coming out of any part of the African creation myths. African myths believe most often than not, that creation, especially the human beings, of males and females were both at same time, same day and have equal divine rights and privileges. It is rare for any creation myth to assign divine superiority of one over another. In fact, among the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, creation myth according to ifa odu; the divinity that foretells, had it that when the first set of human beings came from Ikole-Orun; the heavenly abode, to build human society, Ikole-Aiye; earthly abode, that disaster, struck when the men tried to marginalize the female members of the entourage. When Orunmila, the Ifa Oracular deity was consulted, it was revealed that the female members had been marginalized. And for tranquility to be restored, the anomaly had to be corrected. (Sofola, 1991). This is contrary to European cosmology where the woman is shut out or even further conceptualized as an agent of evil.

Sofola (1991) believed further that the horror of women lay deep in the psyche of men of European culture and why writings on women reflect same. And may equally explain why women from their culture had to fight to have same privileges of men. They had to fight to attain university education, and engage in literary activities. Activities such as literary writings. Those who did at a period in their history had to do so using pen names. Those who wanted to act on stage had to dress like men! Everything spoken by female lips was suspect, no matter how admirable or holy. Women were identified with the lower, physical aspects of the human being, and men with the higher, spiritual and intellectual aspects. Women were weaklings, soft and therefore permanently relegated to a state of subordination and helpless dependence on men. She was only to be seen, not heard. She occupied the back seat of life and remained perpetually an appendage to the men. The European mind on the gender question according to Sofola (1991) is put succinctly by Patricia Hollis:

The man is intended for the world, women for the home; man's strength is in the head, woman's in the heart; the man's function is to protect, woman's to soothe and comfort; men must work, and women must weep ... (Patricia Hollis, 1979; 17)

Such traces of male chauvinism is characteristic of European egocentric male psyche is further vividly epitomized in the English language. Sofola (1991) argued that even in that language, differences exist in perception and appendages of women to men. And examples abound in the language. For example, the word "woman" cannot but be from the male root word, and the word "female" cannot be without a male base – male, fe-male, man, wo-man. And when it is not necessary to identify her at all,

man and human are used inclusively to refer to both genders! Whereas in African languages, to use Igbo and Yoruba languages as examples, the word for child, Nwa (Igbo) is used as a root word for both sexes ; Nwa-oke, male; Nwa-nyi, female. In Yoruba, the commonality is Rin; any kind or type of being , be it human or animal that is male, goes by ; Okunrin, while the one that is female, goes by ; Obinrin. And to refer to both human genders inclusively it is Madu in (Igbo) and Enia in (Yoruba) languages of Southern Nigeria.

In proverbs and sayings, the gender divisions is apparent between the sexes on quotes from the European, who says “behind every successful man, there is a woman”, the Southern Nigerians would rather say and give proverbs such as ; “the strength of a man is in his woman”, or “a soldier with a mother does not die at the war front”, or what a woman can do, a man cannot do . The respect that is accorded to the female folk is equally reflected in terminologies given to the female folks in Southern Nigeria where among the Igbos, young girls are referred to as Ada meaning daughter and among Yoruba ,they are called Iya meaning mother . And from whence cometh such saying that “If the Ada (Daughter) says that a day-old chick is a hen, so it is”.

African women were participant in every facet of life ,either political and economic and the social life organization. The women were farmers and traders in their own right ,which were major economic activities of the time. In fact , some powerful women of the time such as Efunsetan Aniwura of western Nigeria just like some other Iyalodes in Yoruba land owned slaves just like other rich and powerful people of their time and used their slaves for economic activities to widen their scope of influence .

In religious sphere, women were also active participant. They equally commune with ancestral spirits and performed traditional rites and ceremonies to appease the gods and were powerful in their own rights . They were also seen as voice of the gods . Some priestess actively participated against the intruding colonialist in revolts and wars.

Pre- colonial governance and political structures:

The African woman has not been inactive, irrelevant and silent. Rather, African tradition has seen the wisdom of a healthy social organization where all its citizens are seen to be vital channels for a healthy sand harmonious society. Hence the establishment of a dual-sex power structure which is lacking in European and Arab cultures .

Governance of the state and kingdom began from the head of the family unit, which sees to the welfare of the family members, control and seeks for the peaceful co-existence of all in the family, and extends to the larger extended family unit with the oldest family member as head of the unit and is regarded as the elder, who governs, resolves conflicts and gives directions and corrections. In fact, in traditional African settings, such extended families would all be co-habiting in a large family compounds fully demarcated for the different families within a given village and town .

The principle of the dual-gender political line of power and governance therefore evolved from the principle of father and mother as heads of family units to the larger extended families where the eldest in the different extended families

automatically becomes the head. And the various extended family units together makes the villages and from whence the village councils emanates from. Thus the mechanism within the micro-unit of the home to the extended families led to the political, economic and larger governance of villages and towns.

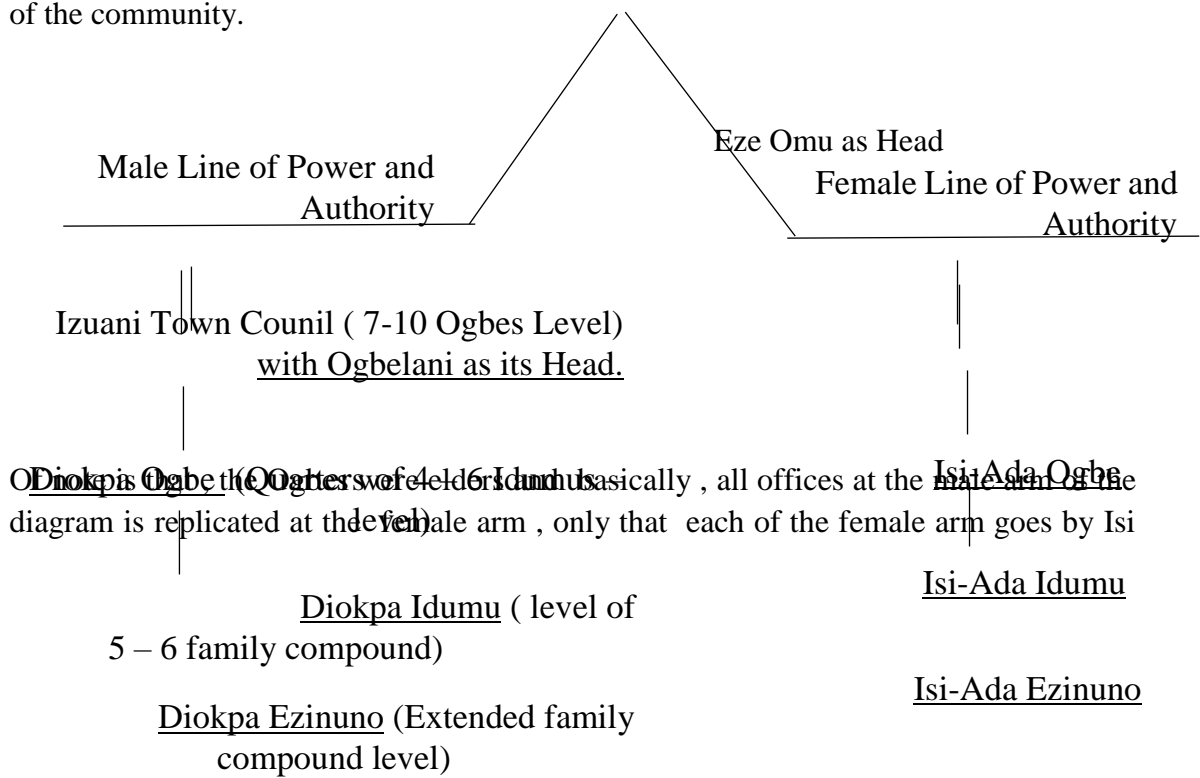
Thus, with females in governance from the family micro units to the larger extended families and societies, it was rare to find an all-male dominated governing council in societies, villages or towns and kingdoms where there will not be a female voice to represent the voice of other females in the community. At least, there will be a female priestess or head of market women in council who can be called in at critical moments to articulate the opinions and wishes of others.

As noted in traditional African settings, the female folks not only had a say in governance at one level or the other, but in some groups such as Southern Nigeria, there existed a dual-gender system in concept and actualization from the smallest family unit to the governing council of the kingdom. Consequently, both male and female citizens had equal channels for self-expression, self-realization, and relevance at all levels. Okonjo, 1989, in Sofola, (1991) enumerated further

All the Igbo of each political unit to the West of the Niger were subject to two local monarchs, both of whom were crowned and acknowledged heads who lived in palaces and ruled from thrones. The two monarchs were the male; who in theory was acknowledged head (father) of the whole community but who in practice was concerned more with the male section of the community, and the female; who in theory was acknowledged the mother of the whole community but who in practice was charged with concern for the female section. (Okonjo, 1989; 47)

The above was how the dual political structure evolved and how the citizens were politically organized among the Igbo, west of the Niger and Onitsha, to east of the Niger.

Sofola (1991) succinctly and explicitly with a diagram explained further that there was Ndi Olinzele, ; composed of the King's Olinzele members (males) and representative of Ndi Olinzele – Omu (females) headed by the Eze-Omu. It is a joint council of both arms and presided over by the King known as own Obi, ; the father of the community.



Ada before the office name. While the male arm starts with Diokpa before the office name.

She went further to explain that within the political and governance structure, the female arm, by virtue of the fact that women leave their family home to a matrimonial home, has an extra arm within its body that is meant for wives; the women who married into the family. The female arm with the institution of daughters; that is females born into the family, has its supreme head in the person of the eldest daughter known as the Isi Ada. And for the wives, there is the institution of wives headed by the eldest married wife of the extended family. Thus the female section has two lines of power, through the line of institution of daughters, which is stronger than that of the Institution of wives.

But the composition of the governing council of each arm, male and female, demonstrates more clearly the reality and significance of the dual gender power structure. The council for males and females and the offices for each arm with what the head of each office or ministry was known by is as follows according to Sofola (1991);

<u>Male</u> <u>Office - Hread</u>	<u>Female</u> <u>Office- Head</u>
Ndi Olinzele Obi	Ndi Olinzele Omu
1. Obi – Head	1. Eze-Omu or Omu – Head
2. Onishe – King maker	2. Onishe – Omu, ; - Omu maker
3. Iyese – Onu Ani (Spokesman)	3. Iyese-Omu –; Omu-Ani (Spokewoman
4. Odogwu – Isi Aya, (Head of Militia)	4. Odogwu – Omu ; - Isi Aya – Head of Militia
5. Uwolo – Representatives of the Military	5. Uwolo-; Omu , Representative of the Military
6. Isagba – Council	6. Isagba –Omu ; - Council
7. Chi Obi – King’s godfather	7. Nne-Omu – Official Royal Mother
8. Ogbelani, Head of Izuani Town Council	8. Agbani –Omu , Head of Omu Intelligence
9. Isi Okwalegwe, Head of Police Force	9. Isi-Okwalagwe-Omu , Head of Omu Police Force
10. Oga Obi – Public Relations Officer, for the king	10. Oga-Omu , Public relations officer for the Omu.

It must be noted the Eze-Omu, the head of the female line of power, was not the wife of the king nor are they necessarily related. She is a duly elected head of that political line of power, and with her governing council; Ndi Olinzele-Omu. She caters for the interest of the female citizens, controls certain areas of power in the combined central council of the kingdom, is in charge of some vital aspects of the spiritual life of the kingdom, is in charge of the commercial life of the state, and is vital in the enthronement and burial ritual ceremonies of royal heirs and family, is a priestess and spirit medium, and has a primary role to maintain a sustained spiritual health of the kingdom both at peace and war time. In some instances where there could have been

variances ,even in what the offices were called or in structure, such were slight and insignificant .

Among the Yoruba people of present day Western Nigeria was a structure almost similar ; based on gender line , each with a political head as ruling monarchs; Oba-Okunrin (Male) and Oba-Obinrin (Female). Specifically , among the peoples of Ijebu land, Owo, and Ondo of the Yoruba race , the same system of dual political power line existed, but with a difference in the political structure. Among the Ondo in general, and Ile-Oluji in particular, were such strongly dichotomized power structure based on gender line , each with a political head as ruling monarchs, Oba-okunrin , (male ruler) , and Oba-Obinrin , (female ruler) , and Oba meaning ruler . Consequently, there were two ruling monarchs simultaneously ruling the kingdom on gender line, each having his and her own governing council and ruling over its own gender citizens, though periodically a joint council would hold to discuss matters of common interest.

However , history has it that at a period in time, there arose a need to have a merger of the two lines of power with an overall head. And in a system of patriarchy, the male line of power became the ceremonial head and presided over the joint council of both arms of government. A compromise was then further arrived at , that , at the death of the king, the Oba , a female regent would reign until a new king is enthroned. This is still in practice in Ile-Oluji to date .

In the same similar mode of the Ondo system, the people of Ijebu land , also in Western Nigeria , had the Erelu (female leader) in the governing council ; the Osugbo council of governors. There was a female line of power which combines with the male line of power in the joint council of High Chiefs which serves as the Supreme Executive Council of the kingdom ; the Osugbo. Then directly below this council is a Lower House where the Iyalode (an other female leader) system also existed. It must be noted that today, notwithstanding colonial pollutions – positions such as Iyalode, Erelu, still exist in some parts of Yoruba kingdom, though these positions are not as powerful as before colonial period . In other parts of Yoruba land were found female kings and rulers at one time or the other. However , there was always the constant of either an Iyalode or the female priestess in the governing council who would represent the voice , needs and wants of the females in the community.

The kingdom of Ile-Ife (western Nigeria s) has a record of Ooni Luwo, Oba Obinrin or female Queen and ruler , the magnifying ruler of Ile-Ife whose reign over the kingdom of Ile-Ife experienced and brought several changes and great development. Among her physical developments were tiles usage out of her rare artistic talent that made her to tile the palatial ground in Ile-Ife in a typical intricate style of African civilization. She was the first and the last monarch in Ile-Ife history to perform such feat. Remnants of those tiles have been preserved at Ile-Ife for posterity.

In recent times in Western Nigeria , there was Iyalode Tinubu of Lagos, who strongly supported by Efunsetan Aniwura, the Iyalode of Ibadan , resisted the signing of a treaty that was to sign off Lagos into a British colony. She was finally betrayed by the Oba of Lagos and the treaty was signed !

There were also constant positions and powerful Queens, and Queen-Mothers in other parts of present day Nigeria such as Queen Idia and the Queen-Mother of

Mai (king) Idris Alooma of Borno Empire in Northern Nigeria. These were pointers to how females were perceived, regarded and held in high esteem in African societies. They were not relegated to the background in the scheme of things or in governance. Such orientations began with colonialism, western education and attendant orientations.

Also in Hausa land of Northern Nigeria, there was the Queen warrior; Queen Amina of Zaria who as the daughter representative of her father's throne in the supreme military council of Zauzau (Zaria), seized power at a diminishing point of the kingdom, and restored the lost glory of the kingdom.

Among the present day Edos of Mid-Western Nigeria were the eleven dynasties of the Ogoja era where there was a High Chief Council level ruling and where women also had their own power line. It was from that structure that some female Ogojas; female rulers, emerged as the ruling monarchs in their own rights as astute and powerful politicians and rulers such as Ogoja Emose and Ogoja Orhorho.

Among the Asantes of present day Ghana, was Yaa Asantewa (1863-1923) the monarch (female ruler) who fought to the last blood against the British and finally gave her life in a bid to save her people. There was the Priestess and the Spirit-Medium by name Mbuya Nehenda of Zimbabwe, who mobilized her people and fought the British when the Shonas were invaded. She was executed to make way for easy take over of her kingdom.

Queen Amanirernas ruled the Kush people between 40BC-10BC and the Kushites were in present day Sudan. She was known to be tough and refused to yield nor cede ground nor land nor pay tax to invading Rome who was overpowering the area. Because of her military dexterity and determination which the invaders could not easily overrun. They therefore resorted to casting aspersions on her and even nicknamed her the one eyed queen.

Among the people of present day North Africa, there were many female Pharaohs such as Hatshepsut, Nefemeferuatn and Nefertiti. Queen Nefertiti (1370-1330 BC) was one of the most powerful Queens of the 18th dynasty of ancient Egypt and wife of Pharaoh Akhenaten. There were also outstanding women such as Queen Makeda; the Queen of Sheba of Ethiopia (960-930 B.C.) who governed Ethiopia and Saba and having Axum as the capital city of her empire.

Women had always been active participant in varied governance in different kingdoms in one form or the other all through the continent. Such was the case among the Buganda people also so much so that such women were referred to by some writers as Queen mothers, Queen sisters and the royal Queens when there are array of such women with known powers and with no understanding of the on going system of the period. Some of the women so referred to as Queen sisters may actually not be from the royal families but title holders.

It is apparent that African's governance and politics was different from the western and eastern dispensation as regards governance and political structures. The European, not having a system of dual powerline, incorporating both sexes, could not fathom its significance nor relevance and the reason why they could not understand such powerful female characters such as the Queen Mother nor other significant women in their kingdoms and were particularly irritated by the women who dared to

challenge their encroachment in many African kingdoms . These accounted for why they had no qualms in summarily exiling or executing those women who steadily stood against colonialist encroachment in their kingdoms.

Pre - colonial feminine military dexterity:

In governance , female politicians, rulers warfare and military dexterity, there were arrays of women warriors, kingdom spies and military strategists over time that proved that Africans were not gender fixated nor thoroughly gender structured in their way of life. Not surprising therefore ,with such a background in pre-colonial Africa , there could have been such an array of female politicians, rulers, military warriors , tacticians , strategists , resilient and skilled negotiators . Examples would suffice .

Queen Amanirenas leading over thirty thousand officers of her army defeated the Romans resoundingly in the Nubian region of present day Sudan.

The Queen warrior, Queen Amina of Zaria (present day Northern Nigeria) the daughter who was also a representative of her father's throne in the supreme military council of Zauzzau , had no other option but to seize the ruler ship power when her kingdom was nose driving , and there was no progress nor development. And thereafter built a strong army which she led and expanded her kingdom far and wide through her military leadership and tactical mobilization of her warlords and soldiers. The ancient city of Zaria, which was built under her leadership and legacies , is a testimony of her greatness .

Queen Idia of Benin Empire . (present day Mid Western Nigeria) had so many accomplishments that her series of successful war exploits in defense of the throne could not but sway the mind of the Oba and won her the favor of Oba Esigie such that an end was put to the ritual killing of Queen-Mothers during the coronation ceremonies of their sons, the heir apparent.

There was also Emotan of Benin empire who risked her life as a spy to save the kingdom of Benin at a very dangerous point in their history when the throne of Benin was viciously threatened . Then the Moremi saga in Ile Ife, present day Western Nigeria is a testimony to it that women have always over time been great under ground spies for kingdoms and nations , to garner information and strategies to overcome enemies for one's own people and kingdom. And she so did it excellently well for her people that her name still rings through her people till date and to honor her , numerous things and objects still named after her such as Moremi hall at the University in Ile Ife. So also are books, drama and songs still made in her name.

Yaa Asantewa (1840 -1921) was a successful farmer who became Queen of the Ashanti empire ; now in present day Ghana . The Ashanti nation was blessed with gold which were used in varied arts works including a golden stool, that symbolized the power of the kingdom and in whom it resided in . It was a stool the people protected with their blood and lives . And it was so intricately woven that it caught the attention of the invading British colonialists. When she refused to relinquish either her throne nor her stool, the British resorted to force and guns which did not faze her . She led her army to confront and ward off the invading colonialists . She was later captured and exiled only because the British had more sophisticated weapons than her army (Aidoo, 1977).

In present day Benin Republic (should not be confused with ancient Benin empire and kingdom , an area now in present day Mid West Nigeria) which used to be known as Dahomey, there used to be what was known as the Amazons even to the invading colonialists. The Amazons, known by different names even to the locals , wielded a great influence on the social and political organization of Dahomey from about 1600 to the late 18th century. The Amazons were an all female army that became a force to be reckoned with , in resisting the French invasion of the area in about 1892. Even after the French because of the use of guns were able to kill and defeat the Amazons, snippets and remnants of them continued to give the invaders headache for decades even into the 20th century with different warfare tactics such as guerilla warfare. King Ghezo had no option but to depend on them and use them to resist the colonialist for as long as they could. (Mowaiye Fagbemi, 1994).

In the same Dahomey , the female ruler ; Queen Hangbe ruled between 1716-1718 , and she was the one who for her own ease and the confidence she reposed in her own sex, established the well known all female unit of bodyguards and warriors who were known as mino to the locals, meaning “our mothers” in their Fon language as a form of respect and regard. She also included minos in her government and council . Apart from the all female army and bodyguards guarding the palace, she had different units of all female army units with different army uniforms and female commanders for each unit. And at a time was said to have between one thousand to six thousand female officers in some units. The army outlived her so much so , that the army expanded over time and used during battles especially against the invading colonialist even by later men rulers and King Ghezo who ruled at a period the colonialist became desperate for more colonies that had become more of a competition among them , and who was in the middle of all the fires., He had no option but to use and rely on them to ward off the invaders and keep his throne for as long as he could. Eventually, he lost his kingdom only because of the use of guns by the colonialist which proved more sophisticated and killing more than the weapons of the local army. However, into the early 20th century , the remnants of the female army members who by then found it difficult to encounter the invaders as a formidable force and unit, kept their mandate of safe guarding the empire by resorting to guerilla warfare , which entailed disguising and hiding to suddenly attack the enemy unawares , or at a weak moment when attacks not expected , and maiming and killing such enemies. That became the terror of the invaders such that where ever they went to in the area, around the period , they went with guards and guns. The fear of Minos not to be encountered or seen became the beginning of wisdom for the invading colony seekers.

Queen Warrior Nzingha Mbande (1583-1663 AD) was the ruler of the Ambundu kingdom and people of present day Angola between 1624- 1663. With her military expertise , she enlarged her kingdom to the Matamba area also in present day Angola which she ruled over from 1631 till she died in 1663. She successfully put an end to the slave trading in her kingdoms. She engaged Portugal in varied guerilla warfare that frustrated them to no end. Run away slaves fund her army a haven as they go to her knowing she will enlist them into her army, this increased her army rapidly and making her army never short of men enlisting . She strategically allied

Netherland in 1641 to push back Portugal . With such tactics, she was able to push back invading colonialists for years.

Priestess Mbuya Nehenda (1840-1898) of present day Zimbabwe , was a fortune teller , spiritualist and a spirit medium who became a military leader of her people and a force to be reckoned in her time , with especially during the British invasion of her land which led her to lead the revolt against them in 1898. When she was captured and to be executed, she made the famous declaration that her bones will rise again. A declaration that became agitation slogan in later years in the fight for independence.

There was also Queen dahia Al-Kahina, or Dihya as otherwise known (FT, C.667, AD. 0702 A.D.) of North-Africa, who gave Arab invaders a fierce resistance after the fall of Carthage in a bid to prevent Islam from supplanting Christianity in Christianized North Africa. Queen Dahia Al-Kahina, (fl. C. 667 A.D. – 702 A.D.) of North Africa, who gave Arab invaders a fierce resistance after the fall of Carthage in a bid to prevent Islam from replacing Christianity in Christianized North Africa. She defeated the Umayyad forces in the battle of Meskiana and led her forces to fight the powerful Berbers .

In South Africa, are inclusive in finding arrays of such women also. And prominent among them is Queen Nandi , the mother of the king, Shaka the Zulu. She was a force to be reckoned with in her kingdom. And it was no secret that she was the force behind the throne and was respected for it. She planned military battles and nothing goes without her permission. Her presence was so pervasive in the kingdom and the environment that at her death not only was it a time of mourning , but slaves were killed and buried with her . And the king was so devastated that he ordered the killing of pregnant women in the kingdom along with her.

Conclusion:

It is apparent that African's governance patterns and politics was different and poles apart . With the root being in the frameworks available and operational and that of Africans were different from the western and eastern mode and dispensation as regards genes and gender structures . This differences inevitably reflected in the politics , governance and other aspects of the peoples lives including military and warfare participation and patterns. The Africa womanhood had her essence , she was not limited nor confined to a box or corner . She was given her dues and respected and had her say. When the need arose to step up in any role or to any role , she was not found wanting. The traditional education did not gag her nor cage her and the only border lines and confines of expectations and rules were majorly on morals and right conducts within the given communities.

The psyche and psychological leanings and orientations of the African woman could not but have been healthy and positive to make for the exploits and achievements that past heroines made across borders. Were it not so, the array of achieving women in risky arenas such as the military would not have been made possible. They could only make such feats because there were rooms to make such attainable. It was not a conditioning made from childhood teachings that there were constrictions as to what was given; as to professions to go into and participate into. They were given school

texts, books and novels to read to further enhance the psychological conditioning that there could be lines and roles or places they cannot be found in. (Mowaiye Fagbemi , 2021). Such new orientations and psychological leanings came and thrived with colonial and western education .It was the product of perceptions and gender structures and patterns in existence among the west that was imported into the African soil, that germinated , took roots and became the big Iroko tree , that is now difficult to uproot.

The first level of African governance damage was done when the female line of authority and power were destroyed and completely eliminated in the new European and Arab systems of socio-political order of governance. Suddenly, women have no more voice in the new dispensation of governance . To be seen , to be heard , to have a say becomes a battlefield for women in a new world order now predominantly male . And with a new male psychological conditioning that sees the woman supposedly venturing across a line made for him and therefore an intruder , that must be pushed out and if resistant, be pushed aside, shoved , labelled, whatever it takes for her to know her limits and her place. The fear grows even worse for some who think to give space for such women to exist in their space is to encourage other women to follow suit. And the ear grows as to how such women can be handled ! Inferiority complex ensures to multiply the malady that festers , yet cannot be openly owned by men.

The European and the Arabs arrival on the African scene and space , introduced their philosophy of inferior position of women in the scheme of things, enthroned the superiority of men; and monopolistic intolerance of male psyche. Chaos set in and women were dislodged and made irrelevant, a fact that is now full-blown in today's European-Arab system of government of contemporary Africa. (Sofola 1991) . Women with the Euro-centric form of education, and the Euro-Arab philosophy of gender bias have greatly been marginalized, and severe damage done to the psyche of African womanhood . And through the process of Europe oriented formal system of education in concept and content, the African woman was thoroughly de-robed and most havoc was done to African womanhood in theory and in the actual re-ordering of the socio-political life of the people.

However , With the type of African womanhood reflected in the foregoing array of African heroines in governance and the peoples political lives , and even the murky military arena and their dexterity and victories , one would not have expected any less from women in the diaspora , where such women found themselves after the slave - trade . The women themselves , who were undoubtedly descendants of military warriors and Queens, Monarchs, women intelligence/spies, economic magnets and powerful daughters of their African ancestors could not but have exhibited what was in their genes by questioning their shackles , revolting and throwing off bondages.

In the new world ,the Africa women's healthy psyche and heritage that they carried over to the new world could not but have come to the fore . It was just a question of time. It was not brought about by a mere circumstances of being left in the home during slavery with time on their hands or accidents of history , nor the varied explanations the slave traders and owners could come up with as to why the slave women could lead revolts and sought freedom for themselves and for others.

Genes are powerful. And it is known to be carried over not just in physical features but also in intelligence and thinking, behaviors and other facet of life which it also influences. In the new world, where the slaves from Africa found themselves and had to live and mingle, they married, and had children, who though did not witness the slave trade lived the consequences of the trade. In time, that which they were born with could not but burst out. And this became manifest in varied ways. Women revolting in plantations, escaping, exhibiting courage and going beyond given limits. Such women included Harriet Tubman, (March 8, 1822- March 1, 1913). Tubman was nick named the general because of her militant activities. She not only escaped from her slave plantation but also took it upon herself to free other slaves and over time was said to have helped hundreds to escape slavery. She also acted as a spy for the Union army.

Another of the prominent women born into slavery was Ida Bells Wells in the United States of America (July 16, 1862- March 25, 1931). She became a civil rights activist and fought racism. She became more so when she refused to give up her seat for a white man as ordered and ended up being arrested. Other women of such ilk include Anna Julia Cooper –Haywood (August 1858 –Feb.1964) who was also born into slavery and fought racism. There was also Rosa Parks (Feb. 4, 1913- Oct. 24, 2005) of Montgomery, United States of America, a slave descendant who equally revolted against seating discrimination against blacks which led to bus boycott that resounded through the country.

With the sort of orientation in Africa before colonization, it is impossible for either of the sexes to be sex role fixated nor for any psychological inferior feelings nor any negativity to arise from such that could endanger the life of individuals and societal progress. Individuals would rather be prideful in their individualities and their heroes and heroines and no need for competition between the sexes nor shooting down of any member of any sex. The new orientation as noted is not only unhealthy for both males and females, but needs to be jettisoned and the African roots hitherto entrenched before colonization and lost, brought to the fore for faster societal progress and development.

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