



Female Priviledges And Challenges Cradle to Old Age



Theme 2016/2017



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Touch A Heart



Theme 2016/2017



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Your indulgence is solicited for any inadvertent errors or misspelt name that might have remained despite our best effort!

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of gender inequality is as old as human society has existed. Without a broad based world-wide testimonies from women on the issue of the uneven power relations in society, it is very easy to think that the localized gender oppression that women are subjected to are uniquely localized. Nothing can be further than the truth. The editorial assignment from the President, IIW, 2015/2016, Oluyemisi Alatise, to us has been an eye-opener. Testimonies by women across the world have shown that local colouration apart, gender inequality is a world-wide phenomenon.

One of the things which stand out from the testimonies of the women is the fact that the lack of economic and political power plays a powerful role in contributing to and perpetuating repeated abuse of women around the world. Since women as a group tends to have lesser economic and political power in society, they are likely to be victims of sexual violence and domestic homicide. The testimony of Martine Gayon, a member of the Inner Wheel Club of Avon Park, D696, Florida, who IIW United Nations Representative, New York Headquarters and Past President of IW Club of Amiens, D67, France, is quite instructive in this regard. "Every year, millions of women and girls world-wide suffer violence, be it domestic violence, rape, female genital mutilation, dowry-related killing, trafficking, sexual violence in conflict-relation situations, or other manifestations of abuse."

If one considers the above views of Martine Gayon as a world-wide generalization, the testimony of Silvia Castana Audretta who is a member of Inner Wheel Club of Monza, Italy, is specifically Italian, as it is European. Testifying to the nature of violence suffered by Italian women, Andretta informs us that "In most cases of violence against women in Italy, they are victims of a man within their effective context - husband, friend or relative - and women of all ages and economic status are affected. The reasons favoring the continuation of abuse within the couple are complex: they include the presence of children, economic dependence, feeling of guilt due to cultural background putting the responsibility for keeping the family together on the women." The report from Mexico given by Mercedes Velten Diaz, a member of the International Inner Wheel Board Director between 2009 - 2011, follows the familiar pattern of what is reported from other parts of the world. Her account which is backed up by statistics goes as follows: "The growing number of murders against women is a tragedy and a national shame in Mexico. Between 2006 and 2013, most of the murders occurred at home and that speaks of high levels of family violence. In 2009, the numbers of murdered women began to grow, especially the number of women killed in public. From 2010 to 2012, half of the murders took place on the street. In the last 15 years, from 2000 to 2014, the number of women killed in Mexico amounts to 26,267, that means on average of 5.1 murders per days." The testimonies from other regions of the world equally follow the same pattern.

Another issue that stands out in the unending violence visited on women is that the oppression of women has its roots in traditional beliefs, religious practices, moral and values cut across must societies around the world. The issue of gender oppression seems to have been instituted through patriarchal modes of socialization within the family structures which kept the girl-child within the confines of domestic sphere of activities revolving family welfare while the male-child is granted freedom to engage in wild adventures and public affairs revolving around the exercise of power and authority. These issues, that arise from socialization within the family, are regularly reinforced by social institutions which ensure that women are perpetually exploited. Osenike Ajadi's testimony on the challenges of widowhood in Nigeria is quite instructive in this regard. As she reported, women who lost their husbands are subjected to various inhuman rituals intended to prove the innocence of the women. For instance, in some ethnic groups in

Nigeria, the widow is made to drink the water used in washing the corpse of the late husband. According to Ajadi, “If the deceased had contagious disease like Hepatitis B or Ebola the widow may also die as a result of this horrible tradition.” Of course, if the woman subjected to this obnoxious tradition dies of the contagious disease of her husband, it would be taken as proof that the late husband has killed to prove her guilt. Other practices include forcible marriage of the woman to the sibling of the late husband to ensure that the industrious woman still remains within the late husband's family; or family members of the deceased husband may forcefully acquire the property of the deceased. These obnoxious traditional practices help to perpetuate the enslavement of women within society.

An aspect of the struggle for gender equality which we find interesting is the advocacy work for self-help which women bodies like the Inner Wheel, across the world, are undertaking to help the less privileged women in society. Some of these advocacy works relate to the establishment of centres for the rehabilitation of abused women and children such as the ones reported by Luisa Vinciguerra, IIW Board of Director between 2013-2015. In Italy, advocacy work by women resulted in the establishment of Ministry for Equal Opportunity, with provision for Conventions such as the Authority Guarantor for Childhood and Adolescent, the Commission for Childhood and Adolescent and the National Observatory for Childhood and Adolescent. The Ministry for Equal Opportunity has also set up Anti-Violence Centre, Associations and NGOs (Inner Wheel included) which “in Italy are engaged in helping, informing, training and sensitizing,” the society for “childhood and women rights.” Other advocacy works include the provision of soft loans to less privileged women to assist them in earning a living. A typical example is “Tapiola Soft Loan,” from the Inner Wheel of Tapiola, Finland, to help needy women in Nigeria, especially widows, to help them sustain their families. This soft loan allowed such widows to start small businesses which shielded such vulnerable women from being exploited by men. Many of these philanthropic activities are little known around the world. This is where a book of this nature becomes very important because it will serve as an invaluable documented evidence of the contributions of the International Inner Wheel in providing financial support to poverty stricken women and their families around the world.

We want to end this editorial write-up by thanking the President, IIW 2016/2017, IWM Oluyemisi Alatise, for granting us this opportunity to digest, appraise and edit the testimonies of women from around the world on the state of the struggle for gender for gender equality. The evidences before us from around the world show that patriarchal authority and the degrading atrocities which women are subjected to daily in terms of women trafficking, female infanticide, rape, physical and psychological abuse of women, hate crimes against women, sexual and economic violence against women, sexual enslavement of women in conflict situations such as the Yazidi women in Iraq and Syria, or the sexually enslaved women of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, all testify to the growing experience of violence against women around the world. It also heart-warming to see from the testimonies of women around the world that women are tearing down the fabric of patriarchal authority through advocacy projects which are helping to bring joy to exploited and oppressed women. Such advocacy projects needs to be sustained so that the burden of the less privileged women and their families around the world can be mitigated.

Professor Femi Okiremuette Shaka
&
Olorogun Onajomo Orere
Lagos, Nigeria.
17th July, 2016.

PREFACE

The second edition of Women for Africa was organised by District 913 in 2014 and we had the privilege of receiving a comprehensive lecture from Prof. (Mrs.) Dupe Onadeko with film slides about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Until then, I never took the topic seriously, because I belong to one of the few tribes that did not practise this harmful culture on our girl-children of any age. My grandmother's generations were mocked for not practising FGM (hence the adage, Ijebu oni ibon n'di). It sounded very strange and horrifying seeing the film.

I attended the 60th Session of the Commission on Status of Women by UN ECOSOC in New York and the topic of FGM was dominant. It had many faces from various countries at different ages. There were cases of teenage girls offering themselves to be mutilated in some countries. The culture has no relevance except being harmful. After seeing all the angles of the problem, I thought of seeking the opinion of members world-wide about the topic. May be the more we talk about the harmfulness and unproductive culture, awareness will be created and it may stop its practice.

I know there are some female privileges as well. My mother's village, Ode-Lemo in Ogun State, Nigeria, is rich in cash crops of kola nuts. Acres of kola nut plantations are harvested through the help of farm hands, with children and wives. The men are not allowed in the market to sell the kola nuts. The crops are given to a trusted wife or sister or any female to sell in the market. Whatever she brings as proceeds is what the men accept. The economic power is in the hands of the woman. It is a village that allows the senior brother of married woman to take away her sister from the matrimonial home if she is not well treated and be married off to another man. Divorce is not strange, and the woman is free to drop any man at will and remarry.

From all these experiences, the idea of the book evolved: Female Privileges and Challenges (Cradle to Old Age). International understanding of various cultures can only help to appreciate what we have and improve on any shortcomings.

Having decided that I needed a book as part of my project for IIW year 2016/2017, the idea began to take a life of its own. I had to opt for a topic that will appeal to all segments of the world: Developed countries and developing countries; sub-themes that have urgent undertones; and areas that can galvanize a world-wide agenda and be good enough to take to boardrooms of organisations that have the wherewithal to effect a change. All these coalesced into the title of this book: The abuse of the girl-child from cradle to teenage years and from adulthood to old age.

The abuse of the female child is an age-old practice. It has many angles. The beauty of it is that no angle is pleasant. No part is appealing even to the conscience of the main culprits - the males - and some of their female collaborators. The practice of the girl-child abuse is cultural, at times religious, most times borne out of ignorance, never morally defensible, health-wise abominable, socially repulsive, psychologically degrading, yet many races, many Homo sapiens still cling to it. It is baffling.

As the idea of writing the book further unfurled, I began to hear new angles of the blight. From horrible female circumcision to child rape, to basic rights denial, degrading treatment, servile punishments and other despicable acts. I therefore, set out to develop the idea with many sub-themes so that we can get almost the best for the topic. Next, I started contacting my dear sisters in Inner Wheel to let me have their gut feelings on the subject matter. I contacted my sisters in both hemispheres of the world, all five continents and those in developed economies and those still developing. The Coffee Table Book I dreamt of, the product of this effort, I hope, would not just be kept by the coffee table to gather cobwebs but I expect it would be read and translated into action for a world-wide coalition to protect the girl-child from cradle till she returns to her Maker.

A few countries have enacted laws for the protection of the female. Even from such climes, the story is not Eldorado yet. The female, all agreed, is a unique being created by the Almighty. All also agreed that modernisation has not brought fair or adequate deal to the girl-child. The young, the old, all agreed in this book that the girl-child deserves a better treatment.

The Inner Wheel that I am privileged to lead for this one year until 2017, is not known for political advocacy. That is not the intention of this book. Rather, we are known for championing noble causes for the emancipation, remediation, growth and development of the less privileged in the society. That is exactly what I intend to achieve with this book. We want to appeal to the conscience of world leaders, opinion moulders, movers and shakers of institutions of the world to take a second and critical look at the lot of the girl-child (who by the way is someone's child, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, a being who would grow up to be a wife and mother tomorrow) to be given a chance to grow up in a secure and friendly environment devoid of abuse, over-use, inappropriate-use and whose rights are guaranteed by strong institutions and laws of the state. Ultimately, we hope everyone involved in the abuse of the female will have a change of heart, bury the idea of inequality of the sexes and help in the advocacy for the rights of the female child from every home. It is such inward change towards the girl-child that we seek from all and sundry. If this happens as we hope it should, then, our efforts would be worth it.

I cannot appreciate enough all those who helped in one way or the other to make this book a reality under my tight working schedules. Many people I asked to make a contribution thought we needed to give them longer time to put their thoughts together. Some even declined. Many were happy that the Inner Wheel had thought it fit to bring the issue of the denial of the rights of the girl-child into world focus instead of as club projects which though salutary, but was localized.

I want to thank a long-time friend of Inner Wheel and my family, the man I will describe as the He for She, Olorogun Onajomo Orere, a retired editor from The Guardian Newspapers of Nigeria and Professor Femi Okiemute Shaka of the University of Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, who helped with the editing of the book under my tight watch. I also want to thank my daughter, Peju the artist, for supplying many of the illustrations for the book without attaching a cost. There are several others who I may not be able to mention here one by one but your efforts and contributions are greatly appreciated. For all those whose materials could not be accommodated, we offer our sincere apologies as we did not have the luxury of a voluminous book. I also want to thank my printers who had to endure my many correction and revisions of materials. Thank you all for your support.

If there are errors of omission or commission, they were not intentional rather, they are genuine errors that can be corrected when the book will be revised in the future.

I hope I have stirred the hornets' nest. The issues surrounding the rights of the girl-child are too grave, too scary, too fundamental and too entrenched to be left for Inner Wheel alone to tackle. I have in my own little way, brought them to the attention of all people in all climes. Together, from now on, we can attempt to solve them moving forward. That will be the joy, not for me, but for the future generations to have a better life.

IWM Oluyemis Alatisé,
President, IIW 2016/2017.



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Instill in us O Lord the meaning Friendship
Never let us forget that we are all Thy children
Notwithstanding the differences in our cultures and creeds
Endow us with a desire to serve our fellow men
Remembering that we too often need help
Whenever or wherever the need for service arises
Help us be ready to serve
Endeavouring to make our badge of Inner Wheel worthwhile
Ensuring that we have not
Lived in vain,

OBJECTIVE OF INNER WHEEL

The objective shall be:

- 1. To promote true friendship**
- 2. To encourage the ideals of personal service**
- 3. To foster international understanding**

We are the club called Inner wheel
We pledge with all our zeal
To spin the wheel of rotary
To more to serve mankind
Inner Wheel! Inner Wheel!! Inner Wheel!!!
To promote true friendship over land and sea
Inner Wheel!
Our club has come to stay

We are beside all Rotarians
To help them change the world
Through charity and spotless lives
We are loyal to both Wheels
Inner wheel! Inner Wheel! Inner Wheel!
We profess excellence in all that we deal Inner Wheel
Our club shall never die.



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I was born on the 25th of December 1951. Had my primary, secondary and tertiary education in Lagos. I served for five years as a Juvenile Magistrate on contract. I attended the 110 AMP of Harvard Business School (Spouse Course). Currently an Executive Director of Family business Tuntise Investments Ltd. A Paul Harris Fellow and a recipient of IIW MGAwardee.

Joined Inner Wheel Club of Lagos in 1978 created the Children's Transit Centre for Lost and Found Children, which houses over 60 children up till date, with an average turnover of 10 children every month.

I became the District Chairman in 1995/96 and started the raft foundation of the current Vocational Centre that has trained, empowered hundreds of people with the contribution of successive District Chairmen.

I was elected as the National Representative 2008/2009 when the Vocational Centre was commissioned by IIW President Susan Nielsen.

Became a Board Director in 2010/2011 and initiated the Women for Africa programme that started the Micro Credit programme which is growing in big capital base.

I participated in many International conference, seminars, conventions, with many Inner Wheel members. The inter-action has taken me to the Indian Ocean of Reunion Island, Mauritius. In India, Mumbai, Agra, Jaipur, Delhi, and Calcutta. In Italy, Torino, Verona, Trento, Florence, Naples and Venice. Africa, Ghana, Cotonou, Bamako and Dakar. England, Plymouth, Bath, Somerset and Manchester. Germany, Frankfurt and Hannover.

Joint Project: I worked with Royal Netherland Embassy, Canadian High Commission, United Nations Wives Association, Diplomatic Wives of West African, American Wives Association, at Club level with transparency and accountability. Department of Children of Family, Miami, USA as a Home Visitor/Vendor. Since year 2000, Karin Uwaje brought the International Joint project to Nigeria. Thousands of Euro has been handled and accounted for yearly. Succour to Orphans of HIV/AIDS, every year scholarship at District level. Solar Power for Idembia Health Centre at National Level. Revolving Micro Credit Loan from IWC of Tapiola Finland.

My election as IIW President will also give me more opportunity to meet members in as many countries as possible. I offer my humble self to serve.



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Touch a Heart



This year's Theme is taken from our second objective "to encourage the ideals of personal service"

Touch a Heart, gives birth to kindness, being generous with your time, money, resources and willingness to help. Your true wealth is the good you do in the world. Be kind to earth, honour the idea of a global community, that we are each other's keepers, ensuring safety, security, comfort, wellness, beauty and peace. Be kind to yourself, take care of your body by eating well, it goes through to the heart. Be kind with your words. Words spoken are like a broken egg, you cannot park it back. Be careful your word does not hurt your heart and the heart of others around you.

Touch a Heart, applies to our relationship with other people, animal, plants, and the Earth. It may be offering of a helping hand, patiently waiting your turn, returning a phone call or favour, or even cheerfully responding with a smile. You can touch a heart by listening, not necessarily giving advice, just listening to someone pouring emotions out, with

patience. Giving someone a part on the back, a warm hug, when there is no one to acknowledge, can give the courage to move a mountain. A wink of an eye that means you can do it.

Touch a Heart through the way you treat your environment, the trees are our lungs, the rivers our bloodstream, they are all inter connected and what you do to the environment ultimately you do to yourself. Kindness in the way we handle our environment, the oxygen we breathe works through our lungs and fuel our blood through our heart.

We can give compassion through "Touch a Heart", an essential part of our life. The smile expressed by the recipient of your kindness is an experience more powerful than words. To become acquitted with touching a heart, one must be prepared to learn new things, and feel new feelings.

Touch a Heart is more than a philosophy of mind, it is a philosophy of the Spirit.

Oluyemisi Alatise

IIW President 2016/2017



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Gender Equality? or Equal Opportunity for both Genders?

By Bisi Solaru,

*Past Board member International Inner Wheel 1987/1988.
Year's Theme – Have Patience.*

So much has been written and spoken about Gender Equality. Equal means 'of the same degree with each other as in magnitude or value; neither greater nor less; adequate for the purpose; commensurate; having the same rank; rights or importance; level; uniform in operation; equal laws.' Equality is defined as 'The state of being equal; exact agreement; uniformity'.

The question may be asked. Are men and women equal? Is a man equal to a woman or vice versa? If by processes of birth - either natural or surgically assisted yes they are born by equal methods, but biologically they are different. It was not by accident because there are roles for each specie. Two men plus 2 women can never be 4 men or 4 women. They can only be 4 people.

Therefore, even though different biologically, the mental faculties of either gender have not been



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proven to be weaker than the other. What is expected of the different genders then? The ideal would be to recognise the differences, accept them without prejudice, appreciate and honour either gender.

Some words such as 'man-made, manslaughter, mankind, smack of discrimination. We don't hear woman-made, womanslaughter, or womankind. The female gender accepts all these for the sake of harmony never grudging the use.

In the quest for asserting their rights, women have had to prove so much in order to be accepted by men. For example, women like, Joan of Arc, Lady Godiva, Emotan, Moremi, Queen Amina, Amelia Earhart, Indira Ghandi, Golda Meyer, Margaret Thatcher, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Emmeline Pankhurst, Eleanor Roosevelt to name a few. All did their best to compete with men.

Men of course took pride in their explorers, scientists and world leaders such as Christopher Columbus, Michael Faraday, Albert Einstein, Ferdinand Magellan, Napoleon Bonaparte, Winston Churchill, George Washington, Gengiz Khan, Hannibal, Joseph Stalin, Haile Selassie, Nelson Mandela, Julius Caesar. Slogans such as 'What a man can do a woman can do better, incensed some women to the point of burning themselves out just to prove a point. Perhaps there is no need for this anymore. Women have made their point and it is noted.

There is inheritance hierarchy too among the rich and most privileged. The first son of such families is

heir to the inheritance regardless of whether he has older sisters. The paradigm shift will be to abandon all prejudices and give equal opportunity and right to both genders.

A great revolutionary step which should be lauded by all women was taken about three years ago in the UK to change the rules of succession to the throne by which a male in the family succeeds to the throne even when he had older female siblings. The new change enables the first born to ascend the throne regardless of gender. It is hoped that many families will emulate this great change and remove all prejudices about the female children.

Women's Emancipation across the world is linked to rights and privileges. Women's rights are defined as 'The effort to secure equal rights for women and to remove gender discrimination from laws, institutions and behavioural patterns.' The behavioural patterns will be the most difficult to remove because individuals also have rights to their thinking and actions. The decision to comply or not will come voluntarily from the male gender.

In her article on Emancipation, Emma Goldman wrote in 1906, 'Peace or harmony between the sexes and individuals does not necessarily depend on a superficial equalisation of human beings nor does it call for the elimination of individual traits and peculiarities. The problem that confronts us today is how to be one's self and yet in oneness with others'. This holds true even today in 2016.



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She further wrote 'Emancipation has brought women economic equality with man, that is, she can choose her own profession and trade. But as her past and present training has not equipped her with the necessary strength to compete with man, she is often compelled to exhaust all her energy, use up her vitality and strain every nerve in order to reach the market value'.

Even when she is doing the same work as her male counterpart a female is usually paid less. It should be equal pay for equal work. From the foregoing phrases like 'Breaking the ceiling' should not apply. There should be no ceiling if either gender is given equal opportunity and recognition and prejudices are removed.

There is some progress on this issue. Some men are happy with an all-female children family, and raise them to the highest level they could go. But in other men prejudices still endure; they tend to value male children more than female, because the female would eventually marry and go away. Usually it is the female gender that is the more committed to taking care of the parents in their old age. Females are traditionally the home makers. They are also brilliant office executives, philanthropists etc. They were ordained by God to be the carrier of pregnancies for nine months in utero, to nurture and to bring babies to life.

They are endowed with inner strength, patience and care by the Creator. The female is highly honoured already and should not therefore have an identity crisis. The male is also usually endowed with greater physical strength to be able to cope with manual work, lifting, climbing etc.

It is time for mankind to review the role of women, their input to the population balance, harmony and peace of the world, remove prejudices, compliment and not antagonise either gender so that men and women will be comfortable in their own skin, appreciated for who they are so that they can all enjoy the beautiful world as one entity.

This does not preclude the female from pursuing roles that used to be predominantly male dominated. There are many occupations today which were predominantly male but now have almost equal representation by both genders.

This is most admirable but should not be at the expense of other responsibilities which either gender should play such as motherhood, parenting and nurturing. Parental roles have been replaced in most homes with gadgets and enrolment in all sorts of activities. They just do not add up to good parenting.

Too many parents in the quest for greatness are starving many homes of good upbringing. The neglect is alarming and is really showing worldwide on the present generation. Peer pressure has taken over the roles of absent parents and the world is not better off for it. Happily, females have proved to the world the stuff they are made of. Now is the time for unconditional acceptance, recognition, and mutual admiration of either gender's capabilities.

Men and women can work it all out at a roundtable talk and achieve Harmony, Peace, Equity and Fairness, and be done with the strain of proving who is superior.





Random thoughts of an Oldie

Stella Marie Awani: Born on December the 2nd, 1939.

Education: Queen of Apostles College, Kakuri, Kaduna. St. Agnes' Teachers College. University of Connecticut, USA.

Career: Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation, Controller Spoken Word. Manager, National Training and Manpower Development. Manager National Programmes.

Specialisation: Teaches Phonetics. Widow of Rotarian, Arc Dan Edo Awani. Five children and 11 grandchildren.



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What I envisaged would be my pattern of life at old age is not happening. In the murky waters of politics, graft, and terrorism etc, a future so precarious - how does one cope!

What's happening to that spirit of adventure that exuded in practically every plan and action - promising myself that on retirement I would devour all the Greek Mythology I'd lay my hands on. I'd even go into proper study of Church History and the Lives of the Saints. With the Magisterium at my fingertips I'd never prevaricate on any issue of Catholicism.

What has become of that aggressive mind that drove an argument to a point of precision that left no doubt!

Interest in letter writing has evaporated; but I do write letters and try to get back my beat as an engaging 'gister.'

I don't bother to assuage the minuses of Old Age phenomenon, and try to accept gracefully its constrictions and innuendoes especially 'relegation.' Frankly it's not very pleasant finding myself now and again in a world of fantasy filled with glimpses of reality which at the end of the day are a mere mirage.

Often reminiscing, I'm fixated (no apologies) on memories of my beloveds who slipped away into an irreversible end - Gone Forever! And oh! Each

departure prompts deep feelings because it strikes at a hidden fear.

Do I not envy (in a strange way) the natural features - hills, the sky etc that remain immune to the machinations of time and weather - they never grow old or die!

Still I have convincing reasons to believe that GOD hears and answers prayers.

Back to the roots - The Reverend Sisters (ladies of special genre and orientation) were excellent in loco parentis to us in the convent schools.

Mind you, the Reproductive System in Biology was not taught the way it's done these days for fear of its connotation of obscenity. We used rabbit as Homo sapiens. I leave the rest of this scenario!!!

Lifelong friendships were formed and character formation fashioned at that stage of life.

I pray that this beauty of Educational life does not disappear completely as I observe the worrisome decline in social graces all around.

At this point in time, being old, I'm content to see everything, overlook a great deal and correct a little.

Cia O!

Stella Marie Awani IWM



Woman power

Abha Gupta

IIW President in 2014-2015.

We for Women the thought provoking IIW theme this year which at once ignites our hearts with an unflinching fire of awakening that we are for the women, by the women, of the women! Indeed, women power is unlimited. Oprah Winfrey very aptly remarked, "It doesn't matter who you are, or where you came from. The ability to triumph begins with you always." Marianne Williamson once said, "our deepest fears are not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fears are that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light that frightens us most. We wonder why I am so brilliant, talented and fabulous!" Only woman has to know her strengths. She has to understand and perceive her "Viraat Roop," like Lord Krishna showed His Viraat Roop in

the Geeta. A woman is a full circle. She is creator, nurturer and a powerful transformer.

Since times immemorial, she has been a source of amazing strength. When we look back at our mythological heritage, Durga destroyed all vices proving woman is an epitome of GOD - Generation, Operation, Destruction! Lakshmi is a House of Wealth and Saraswati, the house of Learning. And all are women! Sarojini Naidu the inimitable Indian lyrical poetess. Maha Devi Verma's poetry of agony is timeless. Exquisitely beautiful Cleopatra and Apsara Rambha possessed mesmerizing power to lure the wisest of men. This is the Power of Woman. The amazing strength of a woman. Margaret Thatcher, the iron lady, Mother Teresa, the synonym of Compassion, Florence Nightingale, the lady with the lamp who nursed the needy to life. Madam Curie invented Radium. Indira Gandhi was the first woman Prime Minister of India. The grand Queen Elizabeth, Bhandaranaike, Sheikh Hasina, Benazir Bhutto all are the glory and pride of women-race.

Kalpna Chawla went to the Moon. Bachendri Pal climbed the Mount Everest. Mathematics wizard Shakuntala Devi, the singing legend Lata Mangeshkar. Aishwarya Rai, Priyanka Chopra Hasleen Kaur the beauty queens with beautiful body, mind and heart.



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There are so, so many who are the power houses and set the world on wheels of pride unlimited. We can't forget Nargis of Mother India or Saroja Vaidyanathan performing Bharat Natyam. There are thousands and millions who are fountain heads of inspiration. They exude immense power. There is every mother who creates and nurtures her child into a wonderful human being. Once a surgeon overly impressed by his ailing mother who was his mentor, friend and motivator examined her and got her ultrasound done, he laughed and told his mother, "mom, how are you surviving? There are no muscles, no veins, nothing..." His mother interrupted, then what do you find there, my son?" "Oh mom, there are tons of courage, conviction, determination, optimism, limitless knowledge and my God, dollops of fond love, compassion and concern are flowing." And he was speechless: "You are the image of God." Yes indeed, a woman is an impression of God. I'd like to share a story about the Making of a Woman.

By the time God made a woman, he was into the sixth day working overtime. An angel appeared and asked: "Why are you spending so much time on this one?" God said, "This is a special one. She has to be washable, but not elastic, have 200 movable parts, all replaceable, run on tea, coffee and leftovers, she is all in one, a caring wife, mother, sister, teacher, home-maker, cook, she can cure anything from a bruised knee to a broken heart with a kiss. And yes, three pairs of eyes and six pairs of hands to do all chores." Angel was astounded. The woman has to have minimum of three pairs of eyes, at the front and back of her head and a pair to chase her children! Angel said, "there is so much to do. Why don't you wait until tomorrow to finish?" "I am so close to finishing this creation that is so close to my heart. Even if she were sick, she can heal her family members." Angel touched and exclaimed: "Oh but you made her so soft!" God agreed, "yes, she is soft but I made her tough also. You have no idea what she

can endure and accomplish. As powerful as dynamite." "Will she be able to think?" God replied, "not only she will be able to think but she'll be able to reason and analyse also." Angel noticed something, he touched her cheek, "oh, there is a leak. I told you, you are putting too much into this model," the angel said. "That's not a leak, that's a tear!" God objected: "Tear is to show her expression of her joy, her happiness, her sorrow, her disappointments, her pain, her loneliness, her grief and her pride." The Angel was impressed. "You are a genius. You thought of everything for her. You even created the tear." God smiled and said: "No, I created the woman but she created the tear."

This is the woman power. Manu wrote in ManuSmriti: "Yatra Naryestu pujyante, tatra ram ante devta." Women possess amazing strength of head, heart and soul. The strength is so hugely overpowering that once a noted writer Ayn Rand wrote, "the question is who isn't going to let me, it is who is going to stop me." Williamson, during a very overwhelmed moment said, "You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. You were born to make and manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is in every one. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated, our presence automatically liberates others."

In India, a woman is all powerful. She is Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, she is Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning, she is Goddess of Durga. Yes, there are still many more faces of woman. In spite of an amazing evolution and revolution, woman is facing a downcast humiliation and considered just an object. In certain communities, women are deprived of education or any kind of exposure. But over the ages, women have come a long way.

WOMEN OPPRESSION: FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE

I am Janinka de Beer-Rabsztyn, 60 years old and married. We have children and grandchildren and we are a happy family in the Netherlands. I realize that I am a lucky one and that to live in freedom is not so normal for everyone. I believe in "strength of many people..... for many people." In my work as manager and also in my work as volunteer my focus is on working together. In that way we can help the people that need our support to get a better future. I conclude that I am in a very fortunate position where I have never been confronted in my own family with any harassment I will describe below.

Through the ages women are using their power and have been fighting for their freedom and rights. We all need to admire the way strong women protect their families and their children and the way they make sure the next generation has a better life than their own generation. The topic of the discussion is a very broad one. I will describe the issues around various abuses of the Girl-Child from birth to teenage and from married life to old age.

TheCradle

In principle every child has the same rights when it is born, it has the right to live as a start but it also has the right to be safe and to grow up.

The Toddler

The protection of toddlers against sexual harassment is clearly described in our legal system and there are strong punishments against misuse but it happens nevertheless. In the past many of the misuse



situations were hidden and absolutely not discussed for all kinds of reasons. Nowadays numbers of systems have been introduced like a mandatory certificate of "good behaviour" for all people who work with children. We also now have a "trustee" in all organizations working with children, somebody you can turn to if you have certain suspicions against

a colleague related to misuse or any other type of harassment.

High School Age and Puberty

A recent study in The Netherlands indicates that in the age group 12 to 25 year 17% of the girls and 5% of the boys experience some form of sexual harassment. The highest numbers are between 12 and 18 years. In order to protect the young people there are numerous institutions in the country that have roles in education, publicity, opening discussions, offering counselling and even offering safe houses for victims. The authorities actively promote these institutions. In the last decade a special focus has been on victims of so called lover boys: predominantly sons of immigrants who seduce vulnerable girls by giving them a lot of attention and presents to make them feel important. When the girls are totally in love and under the influence of these boys they slowly lead them into prostitution. The government has been fighting this partly by developing and using legal proceedings, partly by bringing this out in the open in the public domain.

Adulthood and Marriage

In our country lots of brave women have fought hard during the last 100 years to achieve the same rights for adult men and women. Nowadays all women have voting rights and exact the same rights as men on all other matters. Women still form the majority in the victim group of household violence, at least 75% is female. The governmental and non-governmental institutions have started initiatives to reduce the number of household violence occurrences and also specifically to reduce the number of female victims by means of education, support structures, counselling, safe houses and changes to the legal system. The divorce rate in the

Netherlands is high, approximately 40 % of the marriages fail and end up in a divorce and, in general, women are worse off in divorce situations. The position of women in the immigrant families is not comparable to the position of women in the Dutch families. An intelligent, but also controversial Somali-born politician, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, came to the Netherlands seeking political asylum. She became a high-profile member of parliament and dealt with integration and emancipation of immigrant families. As a hardnosed opinion leader she sought debate with Muslims, she brought up all the aspects of equality and did not spare the 'sacred cows'.

Elderly

Although the pension rights of men and women are equal now, in practice women get a lower pension because they mostly worked part time, had lower paying jobs and were jobless during the period they had young children etc. In recent years there have been lots of activities to make sure that vulnerable elderly people get the right protection against all kinds of violence and harassment. The main focus is on physical and psychological violence in their homes and in the institutions they live in. This type of violence is difficult to discover because it all happens behind (sometimes literally) closed doors. There have been several campaigns to increase the awareness.

The Grave

There are equal rights for men and women in this respect, the main difference is that women still live a few years longer than men and enter the grave later.

*Janinka de Beer
(April 2016)*



FEMALE PRIVILEGES AND CHALLENGES CRADLE TO OLD AGE

Aparna Keshav has been associated with Inner Wheel since 2007. She is primarily a spiritual seeker and at work a counsellor who has worked for more than 16 years in the field of Human Resources, CSR, Training in Mental Health domain and also to a small extent persons with disabilities. She has a Master's degree - M.S in Counselling and Psychotherapy, P.G.D in Industrial Relations and Personnel Management and several certifications in the related field. Currently she works with adolescent students and parents in terms of Career Guidance and Counselling and conducts brief workshops for seeker parents and students.

No matter your social status or your gender or how powerful you feel you are, we all are equal. We all came here by birth and we all will leave by death. Yet there are many man-made belief systems that differentiate us from being humans and also as human beings. While introspecting I found that in the urban community that I live in, I see a phenomenal growth and rise in women power - those who are normal by growth and functioning. I see lot of women breaking gender stereotypes and getting into unexplored areas like

military, defence, spirituality, cab drivers, sports, media, working in night shifts and many more. Hence I like to write about that category of women who are either by birth or by chance become vulnerable to disability and specifically visually impaired who are at peril of insecurity and lacks sufficient support system in my vicinity.

Women who are visually impaired have additional challenges - along with dependency in many other areas such as Education, Mobility,



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Computer Training, Linguistic abilities, Marriage, Community Living, Employment and other economic activities and its comparatively more if they live in a rural place or if they are economically deprived. The two major challenges some of them are still facing are stigma and social sympathy which is resulting in poor mental health conditions and they become more susceptible to depression, anxiety, suicide, phobia, tension and high stress levels and most of them usually go unnoticed.

There are a few non-governmental and service organizations doing their bit, yet they fail to reach out to majority of them due to lack of support from government, essential services and due to heavy population. Few of them are misused either at maternal home or after marriage and find no way. In few other cases visually impaired women are treated shabbily either like an angel or looked upon as worthless. Cases of abuse and neglect have been reported by many institutions and counsellors and sometimes I find they lack resources to guide and direct them to a safe place. There are negligible amount of hostels, crèches or day care centres, old-age homes or even fee-paying guests accommodation to house visually challenged women.

However on the brighter side we are also seeing few visually challenged women breaking the challenges and those who used two major tools such as education and employment to empower themselves and are role models for many others by entering into mainstream society. In the recent past we have also seen visually impaired women in professions such as Chartered Accountancy, Research, Civil Services, Banking, PROs, BPO and many more others than the usual fields such as telephone operators, teaching, music etc. The transformation is taking place but at a very slow pace due to lack of support system and skill

based training in our community.

Education and skill-based training with employment is the best tool to empower visually challenged women. To support education they also need grooming in self-defence, martial arts, confidence building, self-esteem, communication, social skills, mobility training and so on. There are many government schemes, concessions and aids given to them but many are not aware or not making use of it. Some schemes have too many conditions and especially here it's difficult for a visually impaired person to choose science or other main stream in education due to lack of facilities and experienced teachers. Though IT industry is coming up with some facilities most of the public places are not disabled friendly and even mobility training and updates on technology those which can be used are not been brought to their notice.

Hence chief work in creating basic awareness must be made especially in highly populated places amongst all.

In conclusion I like to recall that “what unites us as human beings is our brokenness, inadequacies and our imperfections. We all are perfectly imperfect.” Usually from childhood to adulthood parents and family support is found, what is more needed is accessible financial schemes especially at old age for self-sustenance. And for visually impaired women to come up they need to cut across the stereotypes and stigmas to reach beyond all expectations and walk through by setting practical examples to others.



Shalini Hathiramani

My Childhood was spent in India. Bombay and Poona are the places where we resided, in a very happy and safe environment with my wonderful family. Then in 1996, after getting married, my journey in Africa began. This was the first time I set foot on African soil and I must say it has been a splendid experience. Malawi is known as the warm heart of Africa, which is the most appropriate name for it. It is a beautiful country with

MY INNER WHEEL CLUB ODESSEY IN BLANTYRE

so many natural features, the most amazing being the lake, which is really paradise on earth. The people here are warm, friendly and polite. Interacting and getting along with them is a very easy. My husband, Raj, owns an Interior Decorating Store, Bombay Bazaar Ltd. in Blantyre. He is also an avid Rotarian. I have been a member of The Inner Wheel Club of Blantyre since 2003 and served as President from 2012 to 2014. Apart from being President for 2 years, I have always been the Treasurer. I have 2 teenage children, my son is pursuing his education in Chemical Engineering in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A, and my daughter is in Form 4 at Saint Andrews International High School, Blantyre.

My passion and my career is Healing by Holistic methods, my quest has been to find alternative ways of healing our bodies and I practice Reiki, Reflexology and other divination tools like reading the Tarot and Angel Cards. Cooking, Pottery and Painting are my hobbies. A nice way to interact with ladies in Malawi, has been the cookery courses that have been held at my home since 2013. The Malawian and expatriate ladies enjoy learning how to make our Indian food. I would like to thank Barbara Barratt, who is the Secretary of our Inner Wheel Club and my dear friend Anamitra Dasgupta, who is a film producer in Mumbai, India, for their valuable support in writing this article. References have been made to the Newspapers, Internet and spoken to many local people about the situation of women in Malawi.



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VARIOUS ABUSES OF THE GIRL -CHILD FROM BIRTH TILL...

Womanhood has been subject to abuse since time immemorial. No woman has ever been spared, be it a little girl, be it a woman in her prime, be it a woman past it. This is sad, but unfortunately, remains true. Female infanticide, rape, physical and psychological abuse, forced suicide, etc, are just a few forms of the tortures that have been inflicted on the female gender. A country that is more advanced and has a higher level of education is less likely to have a big ratio of gender-based violence.

In Malawi, a poor country in Africa, violence against women is a significant problem. Starting at birth and all the way till the warmth leaves a lifeless body, women are discriminated against and subjected to various kinds of horrifying, degrading atrocities. HIV/AIDS has greatly changed the meaning of the average common household in Malawi. In poorer sections of the society, elderly women are obliged to look after their grandchildren, orphans of this deadly disease. These women, mired in the direst straits of poverty have been left to fend for their extended family, often without any proper means or income and with no say in the community due to lack of education.

Girl-children born in poor Malawian households are subject to many different types of violence occurring in the home, community and workplace. Surely this is a misconceived notion, wherein having sex with a baby girl can cure men afflicted by the deadly HIV, often young babies from the age of 2 months and older are brutally raped to satisfy the men who pretend that they have found a cure for AIDS. Another foolish notion, whereby the witch doctors or traditional healers advise men to have sex with their mothers or sisters, as a sure guarantee to becoming rich overnight!

The girls are not even safe in their own homes, where fathers, brothers, uncles, etc. have been raping

the young girls from a young age. Fetching water, carrying heavy buckets on their head, walking for miles, performing household chores, like cleaning and cooking all are the young girl's responsibility, who due to their sex are denied a proper education.

Female genital mutilation is also rampant, young girls are caught unawares and mutilated in the bush, their private parts excised and left to bleed to death. The female genitals are then used as medicine for witchcraft. Physical abuse is also common, whereby, limbs are cut off and the girl victim left writhing in pain and agony to die a hideous death. Many a time, women have had both their hands chopped off by their husbands due to a domestic dispute. Nowhere is rape and abuse more prevalent than in the home, rape is the ultimate act of dominance; to endure rape is to tolerate it; to practice it, is one of the most effective weapons of medieval culture. In some parts of Malawi, women are blamed if their unmarried daughters become pregnant. The young girls are battered to death and their mothers assaulted, humiliated and degraded.

Sexual harassment in schools is very common, 27% of secondary school girls have experienced some sort of abuse by someone close to them. Young girls who walk to men refuse to accept the girl-child, if a woman gives birth consecutively to girls, the man abandons her for another woman, in the hope of begetting a male child. Many young girls, who have no choice, but to give birth to an unwanted child, land up dumping the new born or babies in toilets, dust bins, on railway tracks, in sacks on the street and many other places. Not only is this a terrible crime, it serves to dehumanize both victim as well as the criminal - one who takes to crime because he knows no better, and the other who is obliged to abandon her offspring because she is taught that she shouldn't care less or more. Women are raped, women are tortured, women are murdered, women imprisoned often in gilded cages. Women are endlessly degraded in this Man's world, when will we learn to stand up for our rights, learn to say "NO" and to change the existing



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framework of this society?

Woman is the creator of life. A wife in India is called Ardhangini in Hindi meaning half the husband implying equal status. In order to understand economical, social and cultural glory of any nation, the best way is to analyse the status of women. Biologically speaking, women are the stronger sex. Leaving aside female infanticide, more boys die as infants, say statistics. Women are less prone to age-related stress diseases too! The privileges are ours, get it or snatch it!

The Rig Veda abounds in shlokas which say women like men can become judges, women can adopt a child, remarry, be the owner of movable and immovable property, marry of her choice, get education and earn livelihood and be key figures of family and society! Then what changed? From time immemorial men have been expected to be the provider and protector, which gave way to becoming the dominator!

Empowerment of women aims at giving women power to exercise autonomy over their destiny. Careers are not merely to earn money, but for recognition, growth, self-actualization. Repeatedly it has been demonstrated through scientific tests that women are in no way inferior to men in any activities. Indian women have made a name for themselves in every arena of life.

Women in India have constitutional rights and legal power, right against domestic violence, dowry, sexual harassment, indecency. They have right to equal remuneration, maternity benefit. Reservations in education, in local governance, in travel in buses and trains are available. Is this required or beneficial are questions often asked. The reasons were noble to start with and populist in continuance. It has helped women from disadvantaged backgrounds to some extent.

Practically speaking very often the Draconian laws make the situation worse. We need laws which actually work, give practical power not theoretical ones. Dowry and harassments laws are misused too...I relate a few fictionalized versions of instances I know, of exploitation of woman.

Tina was happy to hold her girl in her arms and

promised to be a better mother than her own! The trauma of being abused by her own uncle in her home dogged her life. Back home from school, she met her uncle who took her into his arms, nearly tore her clothes and tried to force himself. She escaped and hid till her mother came home. She narrated the incident to her mother, to be given a hard smack and be told, don't defame my brother! Silence was the lesson taught, 'cannot trust mother' was the lesson learnt.

Naina was pregnant... the joy she felt, evaporated when she heard her mother-in-law tell her husband... take her to the physician who will test and tell us if we are getting an heir to the family. If that is not the case, do the needful then and there! I want my baby! she cried...But to no avail as her spineless husband bowed to his mother's wishes!

But let us be realistic, we have come a long way...we have achieved equal status, have an equal voice...today girls from families, where generations were uneducated are turning professionals. Though a proper structure is still to be defined thoroughly, innovations and improvements are definitely in place. I conclude by saying:

Women have strength that amaze,
They bear children, carry burdens, hardships,
Yet hold faith, happiness, love joy,
They smile when they want to scream,
They sing when they want to cry,
They fight for what they believe in,
They stand up against injustice,
They lend a shoulder to cry on.

Pat the back at the same time,
An ear to listen, a voice to suggest,
The beauty of a woman, must be seen
from her eyes,
For that's the doorway to her heart,
The heart of a woman makes the world spin!

From Shalini Hathiramani (Malawi)



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A LONG STRUGGLE



Handan Ozgul
(IIW DC.242 Secretary 2015-2016)

When an awkward silence has fallen during a conversation, we have a saying like; "a baby girl is born in somewhere." In old times families were expecting baby boys instead of girls and they were cherishing boys. So when they had baby girls they retreated into silence. Not only in our culture but in many cultures, women always

I am Handan Ozgul from Suadiye IWC, DC. 242 Turkey, Istanbul. I am proud of being in the Inner Wheel world since 2001 and played host for the IIW 2012 Convention in our beautiful city Istanbul. I have served from 2003 - 2006 as Club Secretary; 2012 IIW Istanbul Convention Committee Member; from 2013-2014 Club President; 2014-2015 Club ISO; 2015-2016 DC. 242 Secretary.

I was born in Istanbul in a cold winter day on 25th December. I was raised in a small but happy Istanbulite family. I left home by the full support of my mother and father to go to university in London. I graduated from St. Godric's College, Hampstead, London in 1977 and came back to Istanbul on October 26, 1985.

I am married to my beloved husband Alev Ozgul. As the gifts of this marriage, I have two grown up sons. They are both engineers following their father's footstep.

As a housewife, I tried to value my personal time to improve my abilities. As a wife of an amateur photographer I also improved my photography skills while shooting with friends from club all around the world. We also attend international and private exhibitions.

degraded. For example, "langehaare, kurzersinn," in English "long hair, short sense" is a German/Dutch saying that underestimates the perception and intelligence of women. Or as another example we can take an Italian saying "le dome fanno le chiacchiere, gliuominifannoifatti," which means women make chitchat, men make things happen. Once the



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mentality settles into people's mind and social codes, then the acting follows. It shouldn't be surprising that the women around the world suffer from gender abuse from cradle to grave. The first and the main abuse that the women face, is being degraded. If people do not hold esteem for someone's rights that directly relates to humanity and life of dignity, they can easily humiliate and abuse them. In fact, the abuse generally starts at home and continues. The global average of domestic violence against women was about 30% in 2015. Here in

Turkey, many women also suffer from physical or psychological violence at some point in their lives. We know that rape and violence are taken as crimes; marrying before 18 is not allowed for both men and women; women allowed to work in all fields. But, are these enough to equalize women and men or even protect the women? To be honest, the laws can't succeed but the minds. If we look at the United Nations Development Programme reports, we see that one out of three women is a victim of violence mainly in poor and rural areas of Turkey and if we deepen the study we see that most of these women suffer from violent abuse from a spouse or family member. Last year 369 women were victimized in domestic crime in Turkey and 193 of these women were under 18. When we focus on the root causes we can clearly say that the main actor of these cases is man but the crux of the problem is also woman.

A mother is the first influencer in her children's life. She feeds, she takes care, she gives love and she teaches. However, if she is uneducated, she cannot educate and lead her children properly. She cannot easily convey the morals of the life of dignity that everybody should carry. As a result she will raise children who will have similar lives to her.

We cannot underestimate the powerful role of the father in the family but even another woman first raised him. A young boy who is raised by a weak mother tends to abuse women compared to the rest of the society. If the mother figure is not raised in the family he directly absorbs the cultural code and acts accordingly. First, he starts to degrade women, second he starts to humiliate them and finally he thinks he owns the right to abuse them. We see that there are numerous social codes which are transferred to the generations at first by the mother, bear the traces of degrading the gender and normalizing the abuse to the women.

Let's take female abuse under 18 as an example. There is numerous female abuse has been perpetrated by male relatives like father, brother or uncle and the most terrifying fact is that generally mother knows the issue and hides it. The underlying causes of this behavior are fear from male relatives, fear from the society and ignorance. Uneducated women are not aware of their value and power in the society; they underestimate themselves and their daughters too. So she cannot protect her daughter from abuse, she cannot teach her how to protect herself and teach his son how to behave in morals.

As a result, if we want to make some change in women's life, we have to focus on women's education at first. Because once the women become self-aware, the generations become self-aware. Once the woman realizes that she is the inner wheel of the society and believes her own power she ends up her own victimization too. Both education and love starts at home, a morally well-raised boy becomes a good father and a girl who holds a strong personality becomes a good mother. Once the woman changes, the world changes.



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REVISITING OLD CONCERNS RELATED TO RAPE AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF 21ST CENTURY

I'm Nayar Islam. I was born on 21st July 1972 in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. I went to Dhaka University to study Zoology and did my MS. I enjoyed teaching and as a Biology teacher and taught graduating classes in few different prestigious schools in Dhaka for 12 years. I joined Inner Wheel Club of Dhanmondi in 2004 and held all key positions in my club. At present, I'm serving as Vice Chairman-2 in the District 328 in Bangladesh. I love reading, travelling, gardening and watching movies. I'm happily married with three children. Inner Wheel inspires me every



Independence, two major burning issues are resurfacing more graphically in the social sector of Bangladesh; rape and child marriage.

Failure to address these issues without any long term solutions would be an impediment to any development in the future.

A UN report revealed that one in eight men in rural Bangladesh admit to having committed rape. Although it is a crime punishable by death, there are no accurate government figures for rape in Bangladesh largely due to social stigma. Violence against women rose alarmingly by 74% within a year. This is the highest incidence of violence against women in recent

Bangladesh is densely populated country where 50% is female where there are stunning success in the development on life expectancy, child mortality rate, girl's education, women's health and basic livelihood. Bangladesh has achieved successive UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and has become a role model for others. After 45 years of

years and it is worth to note that as many as 87% married women are abused in Bangladesh, mostly in rural areas. National Human Rights Commission listed delays in justice delivery, the reluctance of police to arrest the perpetrators and the easy procedures to grant bails in rape cases as the



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significant causes behind the sharp rise in rape. This cycle of crime will go on and on unless the loopholes in the laws are plugged to end the culture of impunity.

Incidences of rape are dangerously increasing cannot be stopped without the strict enforcement of existing laws to deliver swift justice. Not only justice has to be delivered but it must be shown to the people that it has been delivered so that the awareness of prevention can increase. Regarding gruesome rape and murder of “Tonu” a young girl in Bangladesh recently, the Chief Justice of Bangladesh has vented his concern by stating that without the change in old inadequate laws which are dealing with rape nothing could be done to deliver swift justice. Therefore, without the new set of laws which prescribe harsh punishment with clause of enforcing swiftly, only awareness will not bring any changes to this present horrific situation related to rape in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of child marriage worldwide. Available statistics has it that 65% of girls are married by their 18th birthday and 29% by the age of 15. This tradition of child marriage has its roots in deeply embedded cultural and religious beliefs, poverty, parents' desire to secure economic and social security for their daughters, and the perceived need to protect the girl child from harm, including sexual harassment.

Financial pressure often means that girls from poorer families are more likely to be child brides. Bangladesh has the 4th highest rate of child marriage in the world. Bangladesh comes second to India for the number of girls married before they are 15. Child marriage could drop by 40% if girls receive educational support or skills training.

In September 2014, the Cabinet of Bangladesh approved the drafted law of Child Marriage Restraint Act 2014, to lower the minimum age of marriage from 18 to 16 years for girls, representing a regressive step for efforts to end child marriage. While there has been much outcry, the situation remains still uncertain. Historically speaking, the minimum legal age for marriage was 18 for women and 21 for men. However this was poorly enforced and the punishment of either imprisonment of up to one month and/or a fine up to 1,000 Taka (US\$12) rarely acts as a deterrent.

Rape and child marriage have become clear eminent danger for the society in Bangladesh. All the dreams will be lost in peril if Bangladesh does not enhance its knowledge and act on it now. The clock is ticking. In the words of greatest poet of Bangla literature, Rabindranath Tagore, Bangladesh needs following more than ever before:

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high Where knowledge is free Where the world has not been broken up into fragments By narrow domestic walls Where words come out from the depth of truth Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

A LONG STRUGGLE



Ceja Gregory-Hu was born 04-08-1949, Leiden, The Netherlands. Married to Gerd Klaus Gregor - without children. She has lived in The Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Belgium before moving to Austria in 1988. She has worked as Executive Secretary for international companies. She speaks Dutch, German, English and Italian languages. She has been a member of Inner Wheel member since 1993. She was Club President between 1996/97, and has served at various other functions at the club level. She was the Founding Chairman District 192, Austria, between 2013-2014; International Inner Wheel, UN Representative, since 1998; Vienna NGO Committees on Ageing, on the Family, on the Status of Women. She won the Margarete Golding Award in 2003 for social engagement.

For many years I have served in different NGO Committees of the United Nations in Geneva, New York and Vienna. These Committees have played a vital role in the development of policies and the realization of recommendations, declarations and resolutions by the General Assembly. One example is the “Convention on the Rights of the Child,” which was adopted in 1989. All children have the right to be protected from violence, abuse and exploitation. Unfortunately worldwide children from all social backgrounds, religion and cultures suffer violence, abuse and exploitation. Every 5 minutes, somewhere in the world, a child dies as a result of violence. There is significant evidence that violence deeply damages the child's mental health in the short and long term and has an impact on its transition to adulthood with serious consequences later in life.

On December 19, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 to declare October 11 to be the International Day of the Girl Child. Every girl has the right to a safe, educated and healthy life, not only as a child but also as an



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adolescent. While over the last 15 years we have seen significant improvement in education, health and nutrition, there is still a lot to be done in many countries.

Looking at health, we must definitely face the issue of female genital mutilation. The UN General Assembly Resolution 53/117 of February 1, 1999 calls upon all states: "To develop and implement national legislation and policies prohibiting traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, including female genital mutilation, inter alia, through appropriate measures against those responsible, and to establish, if they have not done so, a concrete national mechanism for the implementation, law enforcement and national policies."

Education is essential for girls and women to attain gender equality and eventually become leaders of a change and it is the key towards a better future. There is a definite connection between the participation of women in society and its positive development. We have to realize that any form of discrimination against women anywhere in the world without any exception is an obstacle to their claim of economic, social, cultural and political rights. The fight against it has been and still is an ongoing process.

The General Assembly declared 1975 as The International Women's Year and organized the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City. In 1979 the UN adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, an international bill of rights for women, as well as a blueprint for action by countries to guarantee those rights. More than 160 countries have ratified the Convention, committing them legally to ensure women's equality.

Other conferences and congresses followed in

Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, and Beijing 1995. In July 2010 the UN General Assembly created UN WOMEN, an organization which focuses exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment.

A frequently hidden crime against humanity is elder abuse which by nature is mostly suffered by women. Despite the existence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, older people are not recognized explicitly under the international human rights laws that legally oblige governments to realize the rights of all people. A UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons is necessary to ensure that older women and men can realize their rights. With such a convention governments can have an explicit legal framework, guidance and support that would enable them to ensure that older peoples' rights are realized in our increasingly ageing societies. In December 2011, the United Nations General Assembly officially recognized Elder Abuse as a global issue and each year on June 15th the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day will be officially celebrated. Only recently the Commission agreed on a draft convention "Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing" in which the governments of the member states are urgently called upon to finally meet the goals of the Madrid Plan of Action.

Over the years Committees, Commissions and the United Nations as a whole have done a lot to create a better world for females. But it is the duty of national governments to convert these international conventions, treaties, declarations and resolutions into their constitutions, national laws and regulations. Involved NGO's, doing the grass-root work, are of enormous value and play a crucial role in monitoring and observing the implementation of these changes. But it is also important that women's organizations such as I have cited make their voices heard.



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Martine Gayon is a member of Inner Wheel Club of Avon Park, D696, Florida, USA. She was a United Nations Representative, New York Headquarters and Past-President of the IW Club of Amiens, D67, France. She was also past District-Chairman of D696, USA. She joined the Inner Wheel, of Amiens, D67, France in 2002 when she retired from her job as a flight attendant for Air France. After moving part time in Florida in 2008, she transferred her membership to the Club of Avon Park, Florida, D696. She was appointed by our International President, Catherine Refabert, and her international Board as UN Representative in 2012. Since then, she represents International Inner Wheel during these sessions and reports to the International Vice President: The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; The Commissions on the Status of Women; The Commission for Social Development; The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing; and the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Every year, millions of women and girls world-wide suffer violence, be it domestic violence, rape, female genital mutilation, dowry-related killing, trafficking, sexual violence in conflict-related situations, or other manifestations of abuse. Violence against women takes many forms: physical, sexual,

psychological and economic. These forms of violence are interrelated and affect women from birth to old age. Some types of violence, such as trafficking, cross national boundaries. Women and girls who experience violence suffer a range of health problems and the inability to participate in public life is diminished. Violence against women harms families and communities across generations and reinforce other violence prevalent in society. Violence against women also impoverishes women, their families, communities and nations. Up to 70% of women experience violence in their lifetime. Women aged 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, car accidents, war and malaria. Violence by an intimate partner is the most common form, with women beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused.

Sexual Violence

A World Health Organization (WHO) study in 11 countries found that the percentage of women who had been subjected to sexual violence by an intimate partner ranged from 6% in Japan to 59% in Ethiopia. Half of all women who die from homicide are killed by their current or former husbands or partners. In Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa and the United States, 40 to 70% of female murder victims were killed by their partners. In Colombia, one woman is reportedly killed by her partner or former partner every 6 days.

Worldwide, 1 in 5 women will become a victim



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of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. The practice of early marriage, a form of sexual violence, is common worldwide, especially in Africa and South Asia. Young girls are often forced into the marriage and sexual relations, causing health risks, including exposure to HIV/AIDS, and limiting their attendance in school. One effect of sexual abuse is traumatic gynecologic fistula, rendering the woman incontinent and socially undesirable.

Sexual Violence in Conflict

It is a present-day atrocity and a conscious strategy employed on a large scale by armed groups to humiliate opponents, terrify individuals and destroy societies. Women and girls may also be subjected to sexual exploitation by those mandated to protect them. Women and girls as old as grandmothers and as young as toddlers have routinely suffered violent sexual abuse at the hands of military and rebel forces. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, approximately 1,100 rapes are reported each month, with an average of 36 women and girls raped every day. It is believed that over 200,000 women have suffered from sexual violence in the country since armed conflict began. This kind of violence is also pervasive in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Violence and HIV/AIDS

Women's inability to negotiate safe sex and refuse unwanted sex is closely linked to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Young women are particularly vulnerable as over half of the new HIV infections worldwide are occurring among young people between the age of 15 and 24, and more than 60% of HIV-positive youth in this age bracket are female.

Female Genital Mutilation/Genital Cutting

Between 100 and 140 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM, mainly in Africa and 3 million girls a year are thought to be at risk of FGM.

Dowry Murder.

It is a brutal practice where a woman is killed by her husband or in-laws because her family cannot meet their demands for dowry. Dowry murders occur predominantly in South Asia.

Honour Killing

In many societies, rape victims, women and girls suspected of engaging in premarital sex, and women accused of adultery have been murdered by their relatives because the violation of a woman's chastity is viewed as an affront to the family's honour. The annual number worldwide maybe as high as 5,000 women.

Trafficking in Persons

Between 500,000 to 2 million people are trafficked annually into situations including prostitution, forced labour, slavery or servitude. Women and girls account for about 80% of the detected victims.

Violence During Pregnancy

It has serious health consequences for both mother and child and leads to high-risk pregnancies and pregnancy-related problems, including miscarriage, pre-term labour and low birth weight. Female infanticide, prenatal sex selection and systematic neglect of girls are widespread in South and East Asia, North Africa and the Middle East.

Discrimination and Violence

Indigenous women in Canada are 5 times more likely than other women of the same age to die as the result of violence. In Europe, North America and Australia, over half of women with disabilities have experienced physical abuse, compared to 1/3 of non-disabled women.





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Brigitte Köhler
(Past District Chairman D 81 Germany)

The Motive of the late 19th century all over of Central Europe is still in our mind. Some years after the end of the 2nd world war, I was born and grew up in an extended family in the country side in Middle West of Germany. My childhood was formed with equality and a humble personality to be thankful for all things of everyday life -with modesty and

restraint. The freedom to choose the best education and the best university was the social phenomenon for this time and it was more or less successful. In my youth it was my biggest wish to fly like a bird, and at the age of 18, I made my examination as a private pilot and I'm still flying with passion. That's was a good choice. A bad one; could not learned to be a good piano player. I still regret it. The next free choice, I had, was for my professional life. It was a passion that needed hard work, a great challenge and a lot of self-confidence to be successful. At last I was able to specialize in pre-opening hotels. But at this time, there was no chance to get in the top Executive - I'm a woman. Luckily, now it has changed. But still it's a hard fight between the species for the best position. It's still a competition between men and women.

My Inner Wheel life started in 1996, I was founding member of our Club IWC Trier and Club president in 2001, District Chairman in 2009, Delegate and Proxy Vote Holder at 5 Inner Wheel world conventions. I get inspiration and fine friendship in all these activities. Being a delegate and active member of the Inner Wheel group "Women for Europe." It's a

FREEDOM-EQUALITY - INDEPENDENCE

long way and a step towards uniting Inner Wheel successfully achieving to get the community involved in real care for humanity today and tomorrow. We support the idea for a sustainable planet. Sustainable means on different way: air, water energy and food. In these meetings we share thoughts and experiences concerning our Inner Wheel projects. I'm sure we can pool our efforts and make a contribution - but its need a global solution - please share information and knowledge.

The global community of Inner Wheel gave us so many opportunities we can share. My experience in the service of Inner Wheel in the previous years has brought me in close contact with member all over the world and I have acquired a deep understanding how to reach out of our multi-cultural and diversified membership, and sharing experiences across the border. I consider myself to be just one among 8 billion human beings. If I were to think of myself as different from others or as something special, it would create a barrier between us. What makes us the same is that we all want to lead happy lives and gather friends around us. Our friendship is based on trust, honesty and openness. I believe that International Inner Wheel with all the international contacts we can choose care for the best and shortest way to promote peace. I'm convinced that Inner Wheel places a vital role for a peaceful world.

The best way to understand the concerns and hopes within our great Inner Wheel family: participate in the community. Now, in the 21th century the world social community has changed rapidly. We have small family or single household - depending on the global working condition. So we have more elderly people who live a lonely life and no more extended family who can catch this phenomenon. The overpopulation has to share all the jobs in our technological world and a movement and migration of the peoples started. That will be the next challenges for our global world. In our so social community we have to find solutions democratically. It's my goal, to bring smile and laughter into a soul. Love, peace and happiness to all.

I, IWM Adebayo Egunola Victoria, a Past District Chairman, District 913, Nigeria hereby congratulate our Mummy, Sister and Friend, IWM Oluwayemisi Alatise on her election as

A SINGULAR DECISION TAKEN DURING MY YOUTH AGE THAT TURNED MY LIFE AROUND FOR GOOD



the First African/Black woman President of International Inner

Wheel Organisation worldwide from 1st July, 201 to 30th June, 2017. I, IWM Adebayo Egunola Victoria, JP, a one star Paul Harris Fellow and a financial member of Nigerian Association of Women Entrepreneurs (NAWE) joined the International Inner Wheel in 1993 through Inner Wheel Club of Garki-Abuja. I joined International Inner Wheel after my dear husband became a Rotarian through the Rotary Club of Garki-Abuja in 1993. At the Inner Wheel Club of Garki-Abuja, I was at a time Club Sergeant at Arms and Treasurer before being elected the Club's President in 2000/2001 Inner Wheel Year. During my tenure as the President, the club empowered so many widows and gave scholarships to several deserving students among all other charity works.

Later at the District level, I served as International Service Organiser, 2nd Vice Chairman, 1st Vice Chairman before being elected the District Chairman, District 913, Nigeria, in 2012/2013 Inner Wheel Year. During my year as the District Chairman, the District in addition to the

IWM Adebayo Egunola Victoria, JP
(PHF+ Past District Chairman,
District 913, /2013Nigeria.)



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usual charity works/projects was able to donate branded Educational Rescue Kits, (Exercise books, Mathematics Sets, Biro and Pencils), Uniform/Sandals and payment of school fees to selected deserving students, empowered widows and Orphanage Homes throughout the District. In addition, the District was able to carry out the STAR PROJECT of drilling of a motorised Hand Driven Borehole with overhead plastic water tank at Iyare-Owo, Ondo State and chartered 2 no, new clubs, Inner Wheel Club of Kuje-Abuja and Garki Rubys.

While congratulating the International Inner Wheel President, I wish to refer to a singular decision taken by me at my adolescence age that turned my life around for good. I could recollect at a later stage in life that my mother divorced my father when I was very young, so I had to live with my step father throughout the later part of my life during primary and secondary school ages. Being the eldest in my step father's home because my mother had 5 additional younger ones for my step father, I was made to cater for the whole family in terms of washing and ironing clothes, cooking for the family at the same time, helping my mother with her business of feeding student in Apapa-Lagos. The time devoted to all these family assignments left me with not much time for my academic works. I really struggled with my academics because even over the weekend, I was made to prepare meals for the friends of my stepfather on Saturdays and after church service on Sundays. Most of them enjoying prepared meals, and some even send funds to our family before the weekend for their meals.

In view of my involvement with all these family assignments, my first attempt at WAEC was not that successful. Having weighed my difficulties in coping academically, I had a heart to heart discussion with my

boyfriend then and the only man I had known throughout my life (who later became my husband to date) on my challenges, we both agreed that since my cooking hobby had endeared me to the family/friends of the family, that I should develop my hobby into a profession. With help of my husband (boy friend then) I got admission to Lagos State Catering School in 1980 and graduated in 1982 with Diploma in Hotel Management and Catering Services. After my graduation, I worked briefly with Mainland Hotel, Ebute Metta, Lagos before I started Gino's Catering Services/Restaurant in Apapa-Lagos.

I got married in 1985 and moved to Kaduna in 1986 to join my husband where I started Vitkay's Restaurant and at the same time supplied plantain chips/chin chin in large quantities to Leventis Stores, Kaduna, with the sole aim of augmenting the family upkeep. In 1990, my husband was transferred to Abuja and I joined him with the children in 1993 where I expanded Vitkay's Restaurant and later got engaged to give lunch to staff of 5 No. branches of Standard Trust Bank (later UBA), Guaranty Trust Bank at Garki Area 3 and Access Bank at Wuse II, Abuja. My involvement with these Banks opened up my catering business. The catering Business was so successful but time consuming up to 2006, when I decided to reinvest my interest into Vitkay's Nigeria Enterprises, a company that deals in Whole sale/Retail Merchandise, Hotel Catering etc, so that I can have more time for my children and husband.

I thank God, that my singular decision to turn my hobby into a viable and worthwhile profession has paid off considerably. As at today, apart from Vitkay's Nigeria Enterprises, I am a proud Managing Director of First Fruits Royal Bureau De Change Ltd. Finally, I pray that IWM Oluwayemisi Alatise year as International Inner Wheel President (Worldwide) will be marked with an uncommon huge success with Allah's blessing. This is by no means a real fit. Congratulations.



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TUAREG WOMEN



Touch A Heart



Behind the ancient way of life of the Tuareg tribe of the Sahara is a culture so progressive it would even make some in liberal western cultures blush. Women are allowed to have multiple sexual partners outside of marriage, keep all their property on divorce and are so revered by their sons-in-law that the young men wouldn't dare eat in the same room. What is even more surprising is that even though the tribe has embraced Islam they have firmly held onto some of the customs that would not be acceptable to the wider Muslim world. It is the men, and not the women, who cover their faces, for example.

Photographer Henrietta Butler, who has been fascinated by the Tuareg since she first followed them through the desert in 2001, once asked why this was. The explanation was simple. But this is certainly not the only place the Tuareg who are related to the Berbers of North Africa differ from the Muslim world of the Middle East, and even other parts of their own continent. "Before a woman marries, she is free to take as many lovers as she wants. They turn a blind eye," explained Butler. "The young girls have the same great freedoms as the boys."

For years, the men of the Tuareg have been able to ride to a young woman's tent, and sneak into the side entrance - while his well-trained camel stands quietly and waits. There, they will spend the night together -

while the family, who all live in the tent, politely pretend not to notice. Should the woman choose to welcome a different man into her tent the next day, so be it. However, there is also a code of practice which none would dare break. Privacy is all important for this centuries old tribe of nomads, who once crossed the desert bringing dates, salt and saffron south, and slaves and gold north. The idea of breaking the rules of courtship would be mortifying; as a result, the man is always gone before sunrise.

"The Tuareg are utterly discreet. Everything is done with utmost discretion and respect," said Butler. The relaxed customs around sexual partners has resulted in the girls getting married later than they may otherwise do, with the age of 20 not being uncommon. Although, before then, they will have been wooed with poetry written by the men, who spend hours carefully crafting the words which they hope will win their beloved over. But it is not a one-way street: the women are just as capable of putting pen to paper, using their own alphabet, taught to them by their mothers. "The women also make poetry eulogising the men," says Butler. "There is high romance and idolatry."

Unlike in so many other cultures, women lose none of their power once they marry. Many marriages end in divorce among the Tuareg. And when it happens,



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it is the wife who keeps both the animals and the tent.

And it is she who normally decides that she's had enough. His wife, meanwhile, will keep possession of everything she brought to the marriage and that includes the children. The mother's camp, Butler explains, is the root of the community, the home everyone returns to - and this arrangement ensures it stays that way. And there is no shame in divorce. Families will often throw their daughters a divorce party, to let other men know they are available once more. But this is not a matriarchal society, where the women are in charge. Butler explains it is still the men "who sit and talk politics." But even here, the women can be deferred to. They are often consulted for their views by their sons or husbands, and are quietly pulling the strings behind the scenes. However, Tuareg society is matrilineal, which means the families trace their lines through the women, rather than the men, right the way back to their first queen.

According to Butler, "Traditionally, the man would belong to the woman's group, rather than the other way around." The preference for the women's line goes as far as man leaving his possessions to his sister's son as it "is considered a stronger link to your family than to your own son." In other words, it can be guaranteed that your sister's child belongs to your sister, rather than a man's son, who cannot be absolutely guaranteed to share his genes. But there is one tradition which is certainly far more unusual: it is highly rude for a man to eat in front of a woman who he cannot have sexual relations with, or any of his elders. In front of his mother-in-law it is especially shameful: "I didn't realise this until I was having dinner with a Tuareg woman, who had brought her son-in-law as her travelling

companion," Butler recalled. "We were all sitting down to dinner, and the man has his back turned. She said the poor man was completely horrified because he has to eat with his mother-in-law." But it is unlikely he would have ever complained about it, or felt sorry from himself. The very idea is horrendous to the Tuareg. "You would shame yourself."

The Tuareg will go to great lengths to maintain personal dignity. They will suffer," said Butler. "If they are not offered water, they won't ask for it - even if they are thirsty." Perhaps for this reason, the Tuareg welcome is legendary. They never forget to offer water, and travellers who appear on the horizon will always be "treated like a king."

The Tuareg's many small groups are joined together by the same family tree - and at the top of that tree is the person who brought them all together. And it should probably come as no surprise for a tribe which views women in such regard, that person was a queen. Tin Hinan is said to have travelled south from modern day Morocco to what would one day become Algeria in the fourth century, where she became the first queen of the Tuaregs. It is from Tin Hinan - whose name translates as "she of the tents" - that every noble family is said to descend. Takamet, her handmaiden who travelled by her side, is believed to be the ancestor of the peasant caste. It is unlikely there will be any quibbling over who gets what. Pre-nuptial agreements are the norm. In practice, this often means a man is forced to return home to his mother, possibly with just his camel and nothing else. Now the Tuareg living in south-western Libya face a new threat - that of ISIS - while those living in Mali, Niger and northern Nigeria now have to contend with the rise of Boko Haram.

'I never allowed any boy to take advantage of me during my teen years'

I am Inner Wheel Pamela Jestam Odu, Past President of Inner Wheel (IW) Club, Calabar, in District 914, Nigeria. A past District Officer and International Service Chairman. I was once Personal Assistant to the wife of Rotary International President (RI) who visited Nigeria and Calabar in 2002. I hold a Bachelor's Degree. I am a civil servant and married to Hon. Justice R. I. E. Odu (rtd.) who was himself a past President of Rotary Club Calabar. Our marriage is blessed with two lovely children who are currently in the university. I am in my forties. I try to attend all District meetings, National Rallies and Conventions. I love my IW.

My teenage years were very interesting and challenging. Even though I did not have all that I needed but I was happy and had God on my side. That was why I was able to make the right decisions. I come from a humble background where we basically worked hard to feed, to pay school fees and make ends meet. I sold oranges to augment the income of the family. I am the first child of my parents but my grandmother brought me up. I did everything legal to survive as a girl. While in secondary school, my teen years, I took the decision never to compromise my principle of chastity in spite of my situation. I went on to the University of Calabar and graduated successfully still holding my head high. I held on to this principle until I got married.

Today, I have what I wanted in life, such as a beautiful family with strict Catholic Church virtues. I decided to have a God-fearing family and have achieved it. But I won't say I did it all by myself. I had good friends



that also deeply believed in God who assisted me achieve my aim. Early in life, I decided to focus my attention on acquiring good education and worked hard so that my unborn children would live better lives. Because of the strictness of my upbringing, I never allowed anyone to take advantage of me in spite of our low situation then. I was so strict that my peer boys nicknamed me Jessy Black coined from my native name.

But today, I thank God for my life so far. What advice would I give to younger people today? Listen to the advice of your parents and above all, have the fear of God in your heart always. Be focused on positive things. The youths should be friendly with their parents, they should not be scared to discuss their difficulties with their parents.

‘Now, we have hope’



For Mr. Adeleke and his wife, Olawunmi, life would perhaps have been one dreary continuum but for the intervention of Inner Wheel Club District 911 Nigeria. Since 2015

when the beautiful minds of Inner Wheel came into the life of the couple and taught them how to fish instead of handing over a piece of fish to them, they now have hope of a secure living. Okusanya, about 40 years old, married Olawunmi in 2009. Then, he had no higher education other than secondary school. He had no other skills for

the labour market. In Nigeria of today, that qualification guarantees only menial jobs with little pay. Okusanya tried hard to apply himself to lift the family out of poverty line but the harder he laboured, the more things remained the same: staying in the clutches of poverty until the couple were introduced to the Inner Wheel Club. According to Okusanya, both of them were trained in events planning and decorations. In a mega city such as Lagos where events are held almost every weekend, Inner Wheel had just opened their senses to a career to make money and live a comfortable life.

The empowerment given by Inner Wheel has “given us hope of better living standard. We were trained in events decoration and planning. Now, we thank God as life is better than before. We have also just realised that it is indeed better to work for oneself instead of waiting for pay day every 30 days,” a happy Okusanya enthused. He is even planning big already. He said that even though the big break has not come, but their focus is fixed on it. And when it comes, “I will not hesitate to join Rotary Club so that we can give back to the society in return for the life changing assistance Inner Wheel gave us,” Okusanya said. He said that he and his wife have never stopped praying for Inner Wheel members since the “huge change they brought to our lives. Only God can reward and bless them for their charity work for all of humankind to banish poverty from the land,” Okusanya said.

Quote: *I will not hesitate to join Rotary Club so that we can give back to the society in return for the life changing assistance Inner Wheel gave us.*

From birth to teenage

PNR Dr. (Mrs.) Bukie Balogun: is of the Inner Wheel Club of Bodija, District 913, Nigeria.

She is a Medical Doctor, an Ophthalmologist, a Public Health Consultant, who rose to the peak of her career, as the Director of Health Services, University of Ibadan. 1988 - 2002. She was later the pioneer Chief Medical Director of Dideolu Specialist Hospital Ikenne. Since retirement, she has focused her attention and energy in rendering free medical services to her environment, communities, religious bodies etc. One of these out-reaches was witnessed with admiration and satisfaction by Mrs. Suzanne Hem Nicson, President of International Inner Wheel 2008/2009 when she visited Nigeria.

PNR Bukie Balogun was a Charter Member, Charter President Inner Wheel Club of Apata Ganga 1985/1986; District Chairman 1990/1991; National Representative/President 1997/1998; Margrette Golden Awadee 2010; Coordinator "Women for Africa





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(1) Female Genital Mutilation

This is female circumcision (not in the Bible). This is removal of some parts of the vagina, which can cause infection and scar tissue. Scar tissue can cause delay in future child delivery, child brain injury, death of child or mother or both.

(2) Female Child Rejection

An ignorant husband may be angry with his wife for delivering a female baby instead of his desired male baby. This is total ignorance, because a female has only YY chromosomes, while a male has XY chromosomes. It is only when a male X chromosome fertilizes a female Y chromosome that a male child XY is produced.

(3) Rape :

Rape of girls by family male members are fortunately reported nowadays. This can lead to tear, infection (STD), infertility and even pregnancy. (A 10-year-old mother) has been reported to have had such a pregnancy which had led to legal or illegal abortion, infection and even death of the teenage mother.

(4) Girl's Early Marriage

Early marriage of girls (below the age of 18) can lead to VVF (vesico-vaginal-fistula) which usually leads to awful smell, infection, cast aside or cast away of these underage girls whom a callous male had had carnal knowledge of.

(5) Child Labour

Female children are sometimes sent to hawk wears to help their parents in maintaining the family. But this exposes the children to lots of hazards in the community, i.e. road traffic accident, rape, drugs etc.

(6) Child trafficking

Some underage children are sent even across nations to work illegally as house helps, prostitutes etc. This should stop.

(7) Lack of Good Child Education

Some girl-children are denied education because their parents are poor, or they are in child-labour, child-trafficking etc. This should stop. All children should be educated.

B. From married life to old age

(8) Forced Marriage

This should stop, young ladies should be allowed to choose their future partners under their parent's flexible guidance.

(9) Wife's Dehumanizing Treatment

A wife is a partner and a helper, she should not be beaten, starved or ill treated. An unhappy wife cannot maintain a happy home.

(10) Sexual Abuse

Women should not be raped or sexually abused. She should not be a sex slave, she should be allowed to space pregnancies and bear only planned number of children.

(11) Will and Inheritance

Parents are encouraged to leave inheritance for all their children - male and female.

(12) Inhuman Treatment of Widows

This should stop and widows and their children should be allowed to inherit their husband's and father's property.



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When Life Throws Lemon At You, Make Lemonade Out Of It

Mrs . Zainab Dada Ikheloa

Mrs .Zainab Dada Ikheloa (nee Braimoh) was born on February 16, 1961 in Asaba, Delta State, to Alhaji Braimah Imador and Alhaja (Princess) Memunatu Braimah (nee Afegbua) (both of blessed memory). I attended St. Mary Catholic Primary School, Apapa, Lagos and later proceeded to Momodu College, Agbede, Edo State, where I passed out in flying colours. I gained admission to Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, to study Catering and Hotel Management. In quest for more knowledge, I enrolled at Central London College, for a Certificate in Business Studies. I also attended several professional training and development courses in House-Keeping, Front Office, Food and Beverages Management within and outside Nigeria. As a trained and Certified Caterer, I am currently a Fellow of the American Hotel and Motel Association. I have worked with Nigeria Airways and Arewa Hotels, from where in 1989, I decided to float a general merchandising company of my own, Zainab Enterprises. Today, I am the CEO, Patzell Nig. Limited and a co-Director of Ikheloa International Nig. Ltd. I joined Inner Wheel in 1995 as Charter

President of Inner Wheel Club of Gowon Estate, Past District Chairman District 911, Co-ordinator of so many International Conventions and Conferences and a Past National Treasurer of NGB Nigeria. At the club and District levels, I have won several recognitions and laurels which include Best Club President 1999-2000, Best Chairman Representative, 2000-2001 and Best Supportive Charter President, 2005-2006 among others. The best supportive Spouse for the 2014-2015 Rotary year (Rotary International Award). I am married to Rotarian (Engr.) Patrick Ikheloa who is the Incoming District Governor, RI District 9110, Nigeria from the Rotary Club of Gowon Estate. We are blessed with four lovely children. My hobbies: I love travelling and cooking. Passion: putting smiles on peoples' faces and impacting positively on everyone that comes my way.





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When life throws lemons at you, my mother used to say, make lemonade out of them. Growing up in Asaba, in the sixties as a girl-child was a watershed period for me. It was a period where a promising life and a clear future were snuffed out before my eyes. My parents who emigrated from our village in the mid-western part of Nigeria had a thriving business in the eastern part of the country and had cemented a reputation as astute business people. As a girl I stayed back at home with my mother after school while my brothers learnt the way of business with my enterprising father. I was sheltered and all I did or learnt to do were things reserved and restricted to the female child; cook, wash, sweep and learn how to be dutiful. Then the civil war broke out. We never thought it would get to us until it did. We became strangers in a land we had lived in for decades and had made our own. Father dug in and refused to flee despite mother's pleas. When the gruesome reality finally eroded father's stubborn stance, it was nearly too late. We fled a burning town, the clothes on our backs our only possession; years of toil and sacrifice left behind in the ruins of a falling town. We got to our town, now Edo State and the grim reality hit us.

We shuffled between relatives until our house under construction was completed. When we finally got a place to lay our heads, mother started to sell cooked food outside the house. Coolers of rice and stew and jollof rice placed on a table in front of the house. I had to learn how to attend to customers, how to source ingredients in the market, how to get them cheap and how to cook for a lot of people. I had to assist my mother whenever she was not available. Thus, began my foray into the gritty world of business. From a sheltered life into the unwelcoming belly of a commercial city too busy to acknowledge greenhorns. It was tough. Tough because the experience

was totally different from that which I had been programmed for years. I had to sell, I had to learn how to make friends, especially with the street boys, I had to learn how to evade the guile and dark claws of the street, I had to learn how to smile when customers insult me, and I had to learn fortitude in the face of poor sales and dark days. I had no choice. I had to contribute to the survival of my family and, I never complained. I never complained because I knew no one in my family wanted it that way but fate had dealt us with no choice. My brothers tried their hands on other things but selling food because of the belief that female children are better cooks and food vendors.

I found myself enjoying the food business even though I never thought I would. I enjoyed relating with customers. But bit by bit things started to pick up, father was able to start his business and even made enviable forays into politics, mother was able to afford a shop which she turned into a restaurant and eventually a truck which we used to move things to the shop. But one thing remained; the entrepreneur spirit I had acquired never flagged or left. A reason I specifically chose to read Catering and Hotel Management to build on what I had learnt from my experiences. Cooking and restaurant business became my forte and a business which I have become very successful in. I did not allow the circumstances that pushed me into it define me, or colour my ambition and perspective. I chose to turn them into privilege for myself and my future. I took away the positive and ran with it. I never regretted it. When life throws lemons at you, as my mother used to say, make lemonade out of them. And that exactly I did.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS UNRELENTING, SAYS CHEVAL

I'm Isabelle Cheval. I was inducted in October 2005 into the Inner Wheel Club of Tours, District 72. Between 2008-2009, I became the Rotating President of the inter-clubs of my Department (2 Inner Wheel Clubs, 8 Rotary Clubs, 1 Rotaract Club). Also, between 2009-2010, I was Secretary and Vice-President of IW Club Tours and became President of IW Club of Tours between 2010-2014. Between 2013-2015, I was involved in the creation of the Inner Wheel Club du Perche, from the first contacts till the Charter ceremony on 5 June, 2015. I served as District Webmaster between 2015-2016 and was made Honoured Active

When I received this invitation to work on this matter, I was completely thrown out. In my every day's life of a "standard" French woman, I never inquired on violence abuses on women or children. Like many of us, I heard about them on radio or television but was not initially committed to the crimes. I had to begin a real enquiry on the web to find some information and take some more care to what I was listening to. For a while my information on the issue remained rudimentary until I found information on the association "Stop aux Violences Sexuelles" and met its President for my area.

First I found an official website: www.stop-violences-femmes.gouv.fr. This website champions the national campaign on violence against women by linking victims



to women professionals.

There is a toll free number, available 24/7: 3,919. When I asked some women around me to see if they knew about it, the answer was “no”. This number is available to everybody but as long as you are not involved you won't know about it. This led me to search more and I discovered several types of violence that women suffer from. They include the followings:

* Sexual violences; Sexual harassment; Violences within the couple; and

* Forced marriage; Female genital mutilation;

In France, as probably in many countries, rape is the object of a tolerance, supported by a code of silence and a scandalous denial. The rapists benefit from an almost systematic impunity but it appears that in France, 8 out of every 10 victims of sexual violence are minor.

In 2015, a national campaign: “Stop the Denial” was launched but information on rape and other sexual abuses of minors, women and men are still very scanty and often untold. I decided to focus my article on sexual violence as a tribute to the work done by the association “Stop aux Violences Sexuelles.”

According to this association our country is lagging behind in terms of epidemiological studies on the scourge of sexual violence. That's why appropriate answers can't be given about the fact that 1 man in every 6 and 1 woman in every 4 are victims of such violence. Also, thousands of children are victims of incest every day in French families because incest is still rife in our country. People committing these violence are men but also women. This violence ravages not only the victims but also their relatives and descendants and leads to still not very well known medical consequences that cost

over 10 billion Euros every year. The association “Stop aux Violences Sexuelles,” is committed to the followings:

- Ø Eradicate fighting.
- Ø Zero tolerance of sexual violence.
- Ø Rape is not a common event.
- Ø 5 years to fight against this scourge.

Who are members of this association? They include doctors, nurses, midwives, artists, etc. Members of the association are dedicated the action plan such as an epidemiological and medical economic survey which results were presented during the National Congress of January 2016.

- Ø Creation of tools of information and prevention useful for all the contributors.
- Ø Formation of persons and teams acting within the eradication strategy.
- Ø Creation of local and international units.
- Ø Set-up of programs of prevention in maternities and schools.
- Ø Set-up of relevant process of treatments for victims within the shortest possible time.
- Ø Set-up of treatment process through art therapy, fencing.

The President, Dr. Violaine Guerin wrote a book entitled: Stop aux Violences Sexuelles! Ecoutonsces corps qui parlent! (Stop Sexual Violence. Listen to the Speaking Body).

www.stopauxviolencessexuelles.com; Email: stopauxviolencessexuelles@yahoo.com.

Postal Address: Maison des Associations - 28 rue Laure Diebold - F - 75008 Paris.



I was born on July 2, 1950 in Ondo, Ondo State. I joined Inner Wheel Onigbongbo in December 1985, and was inducted on April 12, 1986 same day I was elected club secretary in a keenly contested election. I served Inner Wheel with awards. I have served as club President between 1989-1990, 2007-2008, and 2011-2012. I have also served as Service Chairman between 1992-1993 and Chairman between 1998-1999. At the national level, I have served as Council Treasurer between 2000-2001, and between 2010-2011, and Governing Body Secretary between 2012-2013, Deputy National Representative between 2013-2014, National Rep./President of Inner Wheel Clubs in Nigeria between 2014-2015, Immediate Past National Rep. between 2015-2016. I served meritoriously with awards. I worked with the National Orthopaedic

CHALLENGES OF WIDOWHOOD

Mrs. Osenike Ajadi

Hospital Lagos from 1977 and retired as Theatre Manager in July 2010. I am a Florence Nightingale Awardee. I am happily married to Rotarian P.P. Osuade Ajadi. We are blessed with children and grandchildren. My hobbies include making peace, serving less privileged, travelling and dancing.

A widow is a woman who has lost her husband by death. Women are always suspected to have killed their husbands in Africa. As a result of the suspicion and other assertions or norms, widows are usually subjected to violence against fundamental human rights through harsh and rigorous traditions. Unfortunately fellow women are responsible.

Treatments meted out on widows

Dehumanizing widowhood practices in Nigeria are many and vary from states to states, only few will be stated due to space:

- Ø Some tribes insist that the widow drinks water used in washing the corpse or go through other rituals to establish the innocence of the cause of a husband's death. If the deceased had contagious disease like Hepatitis B or Ebola the widow may also die as a result of this horrible tradition.
- Ø A common but ridiculous norm is forcing widows to be remarried to a junior brother or relative of the late spouse, this happens in almost all the states in Nigeria and particularly in South Western State. This

is to ensure that the industrious woman still remains within the family settings.

- Ø Widows who are dependent on their late husbands for every need are driven out with the children instantly. Family members (siblings) of the deceased forcefully acquire the property of the deceased. These widows usually face excruciating financial vulnerability.
Inner Wheel succour brings required relief in this critical period
- Ø Some tribes prevent women who normally have their bath twice daily from having a bath from the burial day till the 8th day, this usually causes untold hardship, however “ceremonial bath” is organized by the traditionalist on the 8/9th day.
- Ø Some are prevented from washing of hands with soapy water after meals from day of burial till the 8th day, this can lead to ingestion of microorganisms and further cause of general infections particularly abdominal problems.
- Ø Some widows are prevented from receiving condolence visit from sympathizers during period of mourning this usually aggravates mental and psychological distress.
- Ø Compulsory sitting on bare floor is equally hazardous to health and dehumanizing.
- Ø Restriction/confinement of widows is a serious health hazard to arthritic or hypertensive widows.

Remedies for violence against widowhood

Every woman should be economically strong and should not solely depend on her husband for existence because death remains unpredictable.

- Ø Women should ensure cordiality with in-laws as much as possible.

- Ø All elected female lawmakers should vigorously sponsor bills on prevention of violence against women and ensure the bills are passed into law.
- Ø All states in the federation should pass bills that prevent malpractices against widows and widowers. The widowhood law of Anambra State of Nigeria No.: ANIA/LAW/2005/2 signed by former Governor Chris Ngige on 17th February, 2005 is a good example.
- Ø Enlightenment, advanced social development and religious belief can minimize if not eradicate the negative traditions and norms.

Woman and inheritance

Generally, women suffer gender bias in inheritance, although this varies according to tradition and culture in Nigeria. In Yoruba land of the South Western states in Nigeria, the eldest son referred to as Dawodu has special recognition because they are traditionally in-charge of all property of the deceased. In Edo State, the Bini custom supports the eldest surviving son to inherit the last house where the deceased lived. This implies that the widow or daughters are excluded from this inheritance. In Ibo land, widows and daughters do not have right of inheritance of property of the deceased husband or father, however, if a woman dies her husband and son will inherit her property and her daughter will inherit her wardrobe. If there is no son any property given to the daughter will be enjoyed by her if she remained unmarried for life, otherwise it will be withdrawn after re-marriage. Similarly, Islam recognizes the right of woman to inherit property but does not accord equal treatment to men and women. The rules of inheritance make more provision for men than women.

FEMALE PRIVILEGES AND CHALLENGES - CRADLE TO OLD AGE

I, IWM Habibat Patricia Eluameh, an Assistant Chief State Counsel with the Federal Ministry of Justice. I have worked in the office of the Secretary to the Federal Government as an Administration Officer. After acquiring my Law Degrees from the University of Abuja and the Nigerian Law School, I sought and obtained conversion to the Legal Cadre in the Public Service in 2009. I have worked in the Department of International and Comparative Law for a period of seven years where I worked with the UNODC as the Desk Officer on Anti-Corruption Issues, Transnational Organised Crime, collection and collation of data for the preparation of Conference papers for UNCAC and UNTOC. I was one of the experts trained by the UNODC for the Review and implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Anti-Corruption. My interest in the work of the United Nations encouraged my love for Humanity. This also led to my



association with the Inner Wheel Club of Nigeria, where I served as a Secretary, Vice President and President of my Club in the year 2010 under District 913 Garki. Presently, I am posted to the Ministry of Interior as an Assistant Legal Adviser. I am married with three children.

The privileges and challenges of

the female gender, otherwise known as the Girl-Child in my Community, Agenebode, Etsako-East, Edo State of the former Benin Kingdom cannot be discussed without first looking at it from the time of creation. God gave mothers (females) power to bring forth children into the world and that is divine. As we all know, “Birds of identical plumage congregate in the same proximity.” (Birds of the same feathers usually flock together). With this, it is presumed that women should flock together in love, sharing and protecting one another but in reality the opposite is the case.

Next to God is a woman, a successful man has a woman beside him and yet a fellow woman usually prevents her from enjoying that privilege. When we talk about privileges we are not talking about equality alone. It can be seen from the above that from cradle the woman is blessed. These blessings are not achieved due to challenges caused by women themselves. From the things listed below you can see the encumbrances involved:

- Ø Female genital mutilation is a cultural act carried out by women and it is compulsory.
- Ø Exclusion of the girl-child from inheritance and owning of landed property.
- Ø The girl child is made to believe from childhood that the position of a woman is domestic (kitchen) only. Lack of adequate entrepreneurship.
- Ø The girl-child is not encouraged to further her education as it is exclusively reserved for the male child.
- Ø Women segregate amongst themselves- social stratification.
- Ø A single mother is not applauded or encouraged but discriminated against by fellow women.
- Ø Widows are mal-treated by fellow women after the loss of a husband whom she has slaved and lived with.

Some of these challenges that prevent the girl-child from benefiting from the privileges have long been reduced due to the influence of western education but some are still prevalent, especially the “Female genital mutilation.” This must be eradicated to prevent the death of the girl at birth

MY AUNTY ABUSED ME TO NO END, SAYS KAFILAT

My name is Mrs. Kafilat Abdul. When I completed my Secondary School at Aiyeye High School (now Aiyeye Comprehensive High School) in Ijebu, Ogun State of Nigeria, I told myself that I would not stay in the rural area to grow up and marry. "I did not want to remain a village girl. I must go to the city to have a better life," I told myself. Today, that decision young Kafilat took several years ago has handsomely paid off. But it was not all rosy from the beginning. She migrated to Lagos, the former federal capital of Nigeria, south of Ogun State, after leaving high school in 1978, to live with a paternal aunt. She suffered untold hardship and abuse. According to Kafilat, her aunt was not the only one meting out the abuses on her but her (aunt's) children. Kafilat was made to hawk fruits, nuts, all kinds of foods to bring in money for feeding the home. She rose from sleep earlier than everyone else and went to bed last.

She was the last to eat and usually, her portion was the least. She fetched water from a nearby road to take to the first floor for all to wash clothes, flush the toilet and for cooking. "Oh! See wastefulness of my aunt's children," she recalled with a sob during this interview.



"The back pains I suffered from since that period still relapse up till today," she said.

After a while, unable to bear the suffering any longer, she opted to be impregnated by a young man in the neighbourhood. When her aunt noticed the pregnancy, the beatings were unprecedented. Kafilat returned to her parents in Aiyeye. According to her, her parents summoned the young man, Semiu, who accepted paternity of the baby and married her. Done with marriage rites, she returned to Lagos, first to another aunt, this time, from her maternal side before her husband rented an apartment for them to live in. Today, she has had five children, some of whom have graduated from the university. Her first daughter, a graduate, married in December 2015 and has had a baby of her own. Kafilat is a landlady, using the money she made from a borehole the Inner Wheel Club of Lagos helped her to construct. Unfortunately, she has been widowed for about 10 years.

Kafilat said she has refused to re-marry because she was correctly advised not to by her fellow Inner Wheel members: "be wary of men who want to creep unto your bed to have pleasure without assisting you and your children," she said she was advised. "And I have internalized that advice till this day and I am happy for it," she said. "Even though I am an illiterate, I still joined Inner Wheel to fellowship with them and my life has changed for the better in the last three years I have been a member," she said.



Quote: Be wary of men who want to creep unto your bed to have pleasure without assisting you and your children. And I have internalized that advice till this day and I am happy for it.



WOMEN FOR WOMEN IN ITALY TODAY: PRIVILEGES AND CHALLENGES

I'm Luisa Vinciguerra, IIW Board Director between 2013-2015. I'm a graduate in Pedagogy-Sociology from the Faculty of Teachers' Training, University of Turin. I have carried out scientific research at the Chair of Anthropology of the Faculty of Biological Sciences of the University of Turin, performing studies in the field of Ergonomy and Proxemics in School. I became a member of Inner Wheel in 1993, and has occupied various offices including, being Council President in Italy (2005-2006) and IIW Board Director (2013-2015). Since 2009, I have been a member of the Rotary Global History Fellowship. Some of my publications are, "The Inner Wheel Spirit" (2010) and The Inner Wheel Spirit - History and Actualities - Second Edition" (2015).

Italy is my Country. And I find it important to consider what happens here today with respect to violence, an issue which never stops upsetting our conscience.

Babies and teenage girls

Unfortunately, Italy still registers many cases of crimes against minors. As reported in the study of the Authority Guarantor for Childhood, supported by Istat, in cooperation with Cismai Terre des Hommes Italia, and also considering the information supplied by the Police, the data about crimes committed, and denounced, against minors are really alarming, featuring an apparently unstoppable growth, with last year reaching the record number of 5,356, of which 60% were girls. And, as a matter of fact, the victims of violated

childhood, till today, are more often baby girls. The main forms of violence analyzed were: material and/or emotional negligence, assisted violence, psychological abuse, care pathology, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

A further serious cause of concern is the increase of victims of juvenile pornography, with almost 80% of the cases regarding baby and teenage girls. The cases of sexual violence, aggravated ones included, denounced last year were 962, of which 85% were against girls. Furthermore, maltreatments in family are the crimes with the highest number of victims, thus confirming the fact that the family, which should represent the safest place for children, has the highest-risk place. The only data which seems to be decreasing is the one of minor prostitution, passing from 89 to 73



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victims (-18%), 60% girls, a decrease which is probably due to the changes within this kind of exploitation.

And all the above without considering those minors who are victims of the so-called gender assisted violence, i.e. physical violence, psychological and economic abuses perpetrated on mothers, particularly by husbands and partners, at home, with children being helpless and vulnerable onlookers.

Violence on women

According to Istat (year 2014, updated last June), 6,788,000 women suffered in the course of their life, some form of physical or sexual violence. Of this number, 31.5% were aged between 16 and 70. Also, 20.2% women suffered physical violence, 21% suffered sexual violence, and 5.4% suffered serious forms of abuses such as rapes (nearly 652,000 cases) and attempted rapes (746,000). Also, 10.6% of women suffered sexual violence before they became 16 years of age. Furthermore, the percentage of children who witnessed a violence episode against their mothers increased (65.2%) in 2014. That year, 2014, the most serious psychological abuses (threats of being locked in, in a house, or being stalked) involved 1.2% of coupled women, a total of 200,000 women, whereas children suffered threats and retaliation for nearly 50,000 women (0.3%). For separated women, children exploitation and threats reached the 3.4%, while serious psychological abuses reached 3.5%. The number of murdered women in Italy in 2014 reached 152 victims, of which 117 were killed within their families.

The state action Childhood: The Convention on the rights of the child acknowledges any child or teenager the right to be protected against any abuse, exploitation and violence (cfr. articles 19, 32 and 34). In

order to assure, also in Italy, the full implementation and the protection of the rights and interests of minors, according to the provisions of the Convention, the Authority Guarantor for Childhood and Adolescence was constituted, in synergy with the parliamentary Commission for Childhood and Adolescence, the National Observatory for Childhood and Adolescence.

Women: "Violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. This, according to the Art.1 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. In 1996, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers founded the Office of the Ministry for Equal Opportunities. Within the implementation of the equal opportunity and non-discrimination policies, the Department promotes initiatives, draft agreements and national and international projects. The national regulations include a series of law, the latest of which, Law No. 119, was enforced on 15th October, 2013, all aimed at protecting women from violence. For both situations (babies, teenage girls and women), the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Department of Public Security, the Ministry of Justice, Istat, and many other entities interact with each other.

Associations: Of great importance also is the contribution of many Centres for the protection and the help of abused childhood, Anti-Violence Centres, Associations and NGOs (Inner Wheel included) which, in Italy, are engaged in helping, informing, training and sensitizing all realities operating with and for childhood and women rights.



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My name is Julie Funmi Awoponle. I was born on the 5th of October, 1965 to Pastor Joseph O. and Mrs Felicia A. Tolufashe. A native of Kabba in Kabba-Bunu Local Government Area of Kogi State. I studied Statistics in Kwara State College of Technology now Kwara State Polytechnic. I became an Inner Wheel member from Inner Wheel Club of Garki District 913. I'm the current Incoming Chairman of District 913. I'm married to Barrister Michael Abiodun Awoponle and blessed with three beautiful children and a grandchild. I'm a child of God, a Chorister, a Sunday School Teacher and a lover of the things of God. I love charity and loves happy people. Ummmm, this betrayal came from a friend whom I don't hide anything from. A friend who has become a family member, like a sister to be precise, every member of my family knows her and I know hers too. We were very close to the extent that even her mother (of blessed memory) discuss issues that are connected to her with me. This is somebody who knows everything when I say everything I mean everything about me. Intimate things that I might not be able to discuss in this forum.

I noticed or sensed the betrayal when somebody who is very close to the two of us warned me that I should be careful of issues I discuss with her. He now after some days told me about a particular thing I told nobody in the world not even my husband, siblings or children. I was quite sure she was the only person I discussed it with. It really baffled me and I kept mute because if I asked her she would know the person that told me. In my heart I tried forgiving her but I was now mindful of things I discuss with her, but to my greatest surprise as if God wants me to know the real person she is, more stories started coming out from other people about things she had said about me, my home, my family.

Lies that didn't happen but she coined happened. I believe a friend should be one you can run to when in need of advice or anything, mine wasn't like that. A friend should be one that will cover your shame not the one that would even put shame on one or expose one. A friend should be one that will make sacrifices for you not the one that would always want you to sacrifice but not her. A friend should be able to keep secrets, secret. As for me those that are my friends know I can defend them anywhere, anytime. Thank God now I have separated myself from her, we talk, we gist, we play but no more intimate talks.

UNEXPECTED BETRAYAL FROM AN UNEXPECTED PERSON





Girl-child abuse in secondary schools: Challenges, consequences

PDC Beth Nnenne Oluka, Ph.D., belongs to the new generation of African women who are determined to excel in their chosen careers and hobbies through hard work, commitment and determination. She has great passion for the education and development of the challenged and excluded individuals in the society.

Beth is a special needs educator by training. She has served at all levels of the profession - primary, secondary and tertiary. Presently, she is a lecturer with the Department of Educational Foundations, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. She has coordinated seminars, workshops and conferences on community and educational development, youth and cross-cultural issues.

Beth, as a committed Inner Wheel member since 1987, has served at all levels of club and district leadership. She has attended all district meetings, national rallies, and 3 international conferences that included the recent International Inner Wheel Friendship Conference Cruise with the Royal Caribbean Liberty of the Seas cruise ship with the IIW President Yemisi Alatise (2016/2017). She is married to Rtn George Paul Ifeanyi Oluka and blessed with 3 lovely men - Barr. Chidimma, Engr. Ifeanyi, and Dr. Chijioke Favour Oluka. Beth likes singing and listening to



master or prefect, as the case may be. The resultant effect is usually traumatic. Unknown to the school heads or principals, the girl-child sent out of the class to the street often fall prey to sexual advances from gangsters who use them to achieve their desires. Some of the affected students are most times involved in unwanted sexual intercourse, sexual molestation and lesbianism. These have catastrophic effects on our educational system in particular, and our larger environment in general.

As a form of child abuse, flogging/battering intimidating school children by school teachers and the students' senior school mates, which has a very low

Introduction

Girl-child abuse is a social phenomenon which erodes the fundamental human rights of the girl-child. In Nigeria schools, girl-children are usually thoughtlessly sent out of their classes to the street after being flogged/battered by their class teachers, discipline



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attention in the country, constitutes causation of over 30% of girl-child's involvement in social vices. Again, emotional abuse involves actions by many teachers, society and the government that interfere with the healthy personal and social development of a school girl-child. Abused girl-children sometimes come from large families; thus, family size is a determining factor in the incidence of girl-child abuse and neglect. Abuse of the girl-child leads her to depression, lack of self-esteem, communication difficulties, self-destructive behaviours, feeling of shame or guilt and danger or hostility. Abused girl-child is fond of crying in a very helpless manner, lacks expectation or assurance or comfort from parents and guardians; always on guard, sizing up every situation and afraid of what comes next. She's always suspicious of her immediate surrounding and is emotionally not well balanced.

Challenges of the abused girl-child in secondary schools

It has been discovered that majority of teachers employed in both public and private schools in Nigerian secondary schools are not well trained to handle students. This affects the way they interact and handle students especially the girl-child. Majority of the teachers go into the teaching job through connections from top politicians who do not care whether these applicants are competent in handling the students or not. Many of the teachers also lack adequate educational background for teachers as a profession. Many of them are young men who just finished their tertiary education, waiting to gain better employment, hence the issue is that majority of the teachers never wished to be teachers in the first instance. For this, they lack the competence to handle the students. To them, the only way to correct students would be to flog

them, beat and punish such earing students. Such harsh conditions put the lives of the girl-child at risk of physical or psychological trauma.

Another issue observed in Nigerian secondary schools is neglect of the girl-child by the teachers. School teachers may neglect these children by shifting them from one class to another, effectively leaving them behind on lessons they need. They also neglect them to be on their own. Sometimes they concentrate on making sure that only few students understand them in class and leave others without any care. This is a form of maltreatment which adversely affects the well-being of the girl-child.

Another issue that is currently making headlines in the media is the issue of class teachers sleeping with these female students. Most times, beautiful girls among the students are sexually harassed, molested and even raped by their teachers. In most cases, if the teacher approaches the girl-child and she refuses, the class will be made very uncomfortable for her. Sometimes, the male teachers would lure them into their beds to offer better marks after their major examinations. These and many more are the major issues that are begging for attentions in Nigeria secondary schools as regards the girl-child.

Conclusion

Girl-child abuse is a serious social problem which affects the performance of the victim in school. To combat it effectively, we need clear and effective policies which will deal not only with the treatment but with prevention of the anomaly. Such policies would take into consideration the welfare of the girl-child, the state of mind of the abusing teachers while coming to the aid of the victims.

THE UNMAKING OF A HAWKER

I, Princess Adekemi Adeyemi, was born on 10th July, 1958, in Aiyepe, Ogun State, Nigeria, to Olori Christianah Folashade Odumosu and Oba Jacob Olaniyi Odumosu (The Obiri of Aiyepe) both are deceased and hailed from Aiyepe, Odogbolu Local Government Area in Ogun State. I am a Cartographer by profession. After my secondary school education at Ordinary and Advance Course in Cartography. I later went to school of Catering Lagos Aiyepe High School, Aiyepe, I proceeded to the Federal School of Surveys, Lagos for both my where I obtained a Diploma in Catering and Hotel management. I worked briefly with Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, Survey Division, Lagos before joining my husband who was transferred to Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, Warri in 1984. I am a member of the Inner Wheel Club of Effurun since 1991. I have served as Treasurer, Vice President and President of Effurun Club between 1998-1999. I have also served at the District level as Editor between 2000-2001, Vice District Chairman and District Chairman between 2002-2003; National Editor, National Secretary and elected National Treasurer for the years 2016-2017. A founder and President for four consecutive years of Merchant Wives Association based in Warri, I am a philanthropist and a strong supporter in helping the needy in the society. I believe that collectively we can do more to help the less privileged in our society. Born as an Anglican, I am now a member of Chapel of Resurrection, Warri. I am a knight of PCC, and a member of the Women's Guild and Mother's Union. She's also a Patroness of the Girl's Guide, Leader of Deborah Group and Welfare Committee. I am happily married to Mr. Stevenson Adeleke Adeyemi and blessed with three children and four grandchildren.



I grew outside the circle of many of my peers. As a daughter of a reigning monarch, I didn't see the other side from the sheltered environment of the palace. I only saw the normal things. Like waking up and going to school, playing 10-10 with other girls, and being ferried to and from school in our air conditioned car, until the day I met Nike and she showed me that my "normal" was privileged normal. She showed me it was normal for them to drop their school bag for the



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hawking tray after school hours. An integral part of their daily lives. Integral because in many low-income families, whatever was earned through the long hours meandering through busy and lonely neighbourhoods supplemented the family income.

And it was fun. She said. After a quick meal, she is out; cooler of iced drinks on her cushioned head reconnecting with select schoolmates who also now had different wares on their head. Remi was the bean cake hawker, Lola, “pure” water, Simbi was fried yam and plantain, Bukola had her basket of fruits. Through busy streets and empty neighbourhoods they shouted out wares, braved the sun and laboured through uncaring rain; chatting, laughing, frowning when the conditions were unfavourable but keeping to the mandate from their mothers - to try their best to empty the wares before returning home.

She had friends whose mothers beat or insult them when they fall short on sale targets, though her mother never did that. She only encouraged her to do better the next day. Her father never liked the hawking regime but I guess he never spoke against it because it added to the eternally meagre family income. And it was fun, she said. Fun until one day she hawked with her friends right into an excited crowd. The mob had caught an alleged kidnapper and were about to treat him to mob justice but for the intervention of a traffic policemen. The officer tried to shield the already bloodied man while Nike, and her friends, tip-toed above the crowd to get a good view. These were the kind of free entertainment the street provided. As they moved with the angry crowd, business was brisk, people who had expended energy screaming in the sun bought her cold drinks.

After she had sold to an elderly woman, someone called 'Oni Mineral', she looked back, it was a bespectacled young man standing in front of a mud house opposite the road. He beckoned. She crossed the road and gave him a cold drink only to tell her he had N10 after he had opened the drink. The drink was 50 kobo. She told him she had no change. He told her he would check inside the house. After five minutes of waiting, Nike entered the house. It seemed empty. She called out. No response. The fourth time a woman came out. Nike asked for the man in glasses. The woman said no one with that description lived there. Nike went back outside, carried her cooler with tears welling up her eyes. As she stepped out into the street, she stopped. She realized for the first time - her friends had gone with the crowd and she had no idea where she was. She started to cry as she ran down the road looking for landmarks. It was getting dark. She passed by a group of thugs smoking hemp under a tree. One called out for a cold drink with a croaky

voice. She replied she was not selling. He advanced on her. She started to cry. It was that cry that alerted me where I was beside my mother who I had forced to stop her car to buy Okin biscuits for me. I tugged at my mother's skirt as I pointed at the crying girl. My father's guard who was with us chased away the thugs. After three hours driving around town, we finally located her house. My mother told her mother where we had seen her. Her mother was alarmed. From that day, Nike never hawked again, and she became my best friend. She told me her mother realized that if she didn't hawk, the family would not go hungry. The extra income was not worth the danger. Some risks are not worth taking. And I was happy it took just my pointed finger and a tug at my mother's skirt to make it happen.



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A Chapter In My Childhood

It was just immediately after the Civil War in Nigeria 1966. I joined Voluntary Youth League of Nigeria for Relief Duties. The group came to ask for donation of used clothes, shoes, books and any other things for youths our age in the eastern part of the country. I became the group representative for my school. I made announcement at assembly and visited classes to follow up. I collected donations of used materials from students. Took them home, washed, mended and ironed for good presentation. I was only 15 years old.

I enjoyed scholarship for my last year of Secondary School. My commitment to whatever job I was given to do endeared me to my Proprietor. I was School prefect at Form three. Prefects are usually from Form four or five. When I left Secondary I wanted to join the Red Cross, and travel to Eastern part of country to render help were needed, but my parents expected me to get employed and help financially, so I could not

Shortly after my marriage to my beloved Rotarian husband now of blessed memories, I was introduced into Inner Wheel in 1978 and found the second object "To encourage the ideals of personal service" very fascinating. I have never missed any activity that required my service in my Club, District and National Body. This I was doing without thinking of become the President of my Club talk less of getting to

this exalted position. I am so passionate about giving selfless service, I want to help in any situation I find myself. I occasionally had to caution myself, for fear of being misunderstood. The usual adage of no free lunch, does not apply to me. I do want I feel I should, without looking back or expecting a reward.





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In the early 80's, during the Secondary school age of my first two daughters, getting into a Federal Government College was very competitive, and anywhere your child is posted is accepted. There were no private secondary schools in that era. I found myself taking charge of finding suitable bus to convey the over 50 children to school in far distance of 800 km of 12 hours drive. I started looking for parents whose children were in the school with mine in order to have a chartered bus which requires a minimum number of passenger, otherwise the cost of empty seat will be shared to occupied seats. We could afford to take our daughter by private car, but I was all the time thinking of other students who might not have been similarly endowed. Flights to that area of the country were so irregular even and was highly undependable. This I did continuously for about 4 years. Went further to start an association of parents for the welfare and well-being of our children in transit to and from this far distance.

As President of Inner Wheel Club of Lagos I 1988, I picked up a project of getting a land, from the Government to approve the construction of a Children's Transit Centre, which was muted by two previous Presidents, because I was passionate about the project. It is the care of Lost but Found Children, being kept in Remand Home after court order for protection from moral danger, pending reunion with their parents or guardians. Funds were very limited as usual. The funds were stretched by personal service to just payment of skilled labour. We had free architect, and quantity surveyors. All building materials were bought and transported by me at no extra cost. The limited

fund was stretched to maximum value. All these I did without even looking back, because I enjoyed the idea that some defence less children were going to benefit from the quick completion of the home.

Being a member of Inner Wheel gave me the opportunity to exert my excess energy to productive and beneficial use to as many people as possible. Getting this far, I regard as fate, because I did not even think of it until it looked like it would be. That call to service at the age of 15, exposed the potential of giving selflessly innate. When I received the phone call of my success at the poll, it was more than a shock. Even though I contested, I never really gave it serious thought. Occasionally, when it crossed my mind, I would say, well if it happens it will be nice, if it does not, I will continue to enjoy my Inner Wheel service.

Oluyemisi Alatise

IIW President 2016/2017

My mother was my role model, her advice was sterling

I was raised by my mother in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. She nurtured and modeled my life to conform to the yearnings and aspirations of visionary parents who hold the welfare and future of their children at heart.

It is not hard to know that female children live a precarious life in Nigeria. Children generally are exposed to the challenges of cultism, prostitution, child trafficking, exploitation and inadequate social amenities such as healthcare services, potable water, electricity supply, education materials and lack of conducive learning environment in schools.

More worrisome is the fact that some parents cannot provide school run, balanced diet and other necessities of life that will enhance their children's education.



More affected is the girl-child who struggles to overcome certain obnoxious superstitions and cultural practices that impede her education

I am IWM Rose Chinwendu Ezeadikwa. I am a native of Anaocha Local Government Area, Anambra State and married to Chief Boniface Ezeadikwa, the Chief Executive Officer of Eze & Bros. Nigeria Limited.

My career started in 1967 when I enrolled into St. John's Primary School, Kumba Cameroon for my primary education. By 1998, I had obtained my First School Leaving Certificate, WASC, Teachers Grade 2 certificate, Nigerian Certificate in Education and Bachelor of Education degree.

In my quest to serve my fatherland, I took a job as a classroom teacher in 1985 and rose to the position of Assistant Head Teacher in 1992. In 2002, I was elevated to the position of Supervisor for Ebonyi North Zone of the State Universal Basic Education Board, appointed Permanent Member II in 2008 and presently, serve as Permanent Member I of the Board.

I had also served as a member of Ebonyi State University Management Board, President of Catholic Women Organization of difference parishes. Currently, I am a member of Mile Four Hospital Management Board, Abakaliki.

As a frontier of IW, I became a charter member of IW club of Abakaliki in 1987. Presently, I am the Extension District Chairman of IIW District 914 for 2014/2016 Inner Wheel year.

and sometimes, freedom of association.

However, fortune smiled on me with a mother who perfectly understood the dynamics of the society, and braced up to its challenges with brevity, foresight, resilience and commitment to duty. My mother courageously assumed the task of ensuring my development in all ramifications.

Her guidance and counseling

In clear terms, my mother provided the roadmap that



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brightened my future in the areas of education, religion, politics and other aspects of social life. She adopted the biblical axiom, which asserts: “train a child in the way he should go, and when he grows up, he will not depart from the way,” to direct the course of my future.

The operational guideline as anchored in this concept directed the frontiers that enhanced my character to greatness. I can recall, and rehearse some of the pieces of advice she gave to me those years of my childhood:

- Love everybody and help people who come around you.
- Respect your elders and be an obedient child.
- Embrace your education with diligence and hard work.
- Shun membership of any cult group in the society or school when you grow up.
- Avoid any association that may expose you to the dangers of alcoholism, rape, abortion, prostitution and other vices that bedevil the society.
- Remember, you are a potential mother tomorrow. Do not ruin your life through carelessness.

My mother brought me up in a godly manner. With time, I was in tune with her devotion to prayer and church activities. I identified with the Catholic Youth Organization and was attending masses on my own.

Adaption to life as a girl-child

I resolved early in life to remain focused and to embrace the challenges in the society with commitment. I committed to memory the lessons my mother taught me on morality.

In the Nigerian society where the craze for fun-fare, get rich quick syndrome, prostitution, early marriage, lack of access to basic education, etc hold sway, the lifestyle and future of the girl-child are negatively affected. It therefore becomes imperative for the girl-child to assiduously incline her attention to the advice of her mother, especially a virtuous mother.

My mother was a role model. I listened to her advice. I obeyed her instructions and worked towards achieving the standards she set for me. Occasionally, she would conduct checks on my performance in the home and school. She would identify lapses and proffer solutions or where I did well, would offer praises. And I would accept them with joy. These interactions boosted my morale in the discharge of my domestic and academic assignments.

Effects of my mother's advice on my future

The catalyst of my success story largely revolves around the advice of my mother. They were regarded as creeds for excellence that span through my as feats in education, politics, social status to humanitarian services, thus: Completion of my education up to tertiary level; successful marriage and raising my children in a godly manner; gainful employment as a career civil servant; ensuring the education of my children; and political appointments into government. Others are setting up of skills acquisition centres and employment of some youths; provision of humanitarian services as a member of International Inner Wheel; conferment of meritorious awards on me by religious bodies, student unions, government and non-governmental organizations; etc.

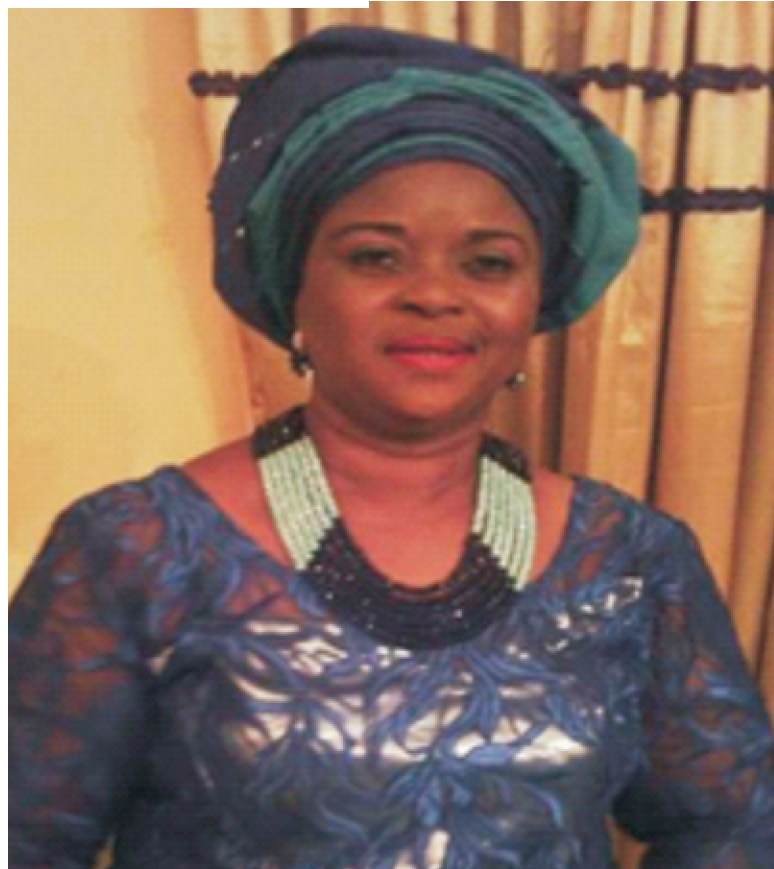
Conclusion

Today, the advice of my mother has formed the toast of my celebration in life. She assigned value to the course that rolled the fulcrum of my life to stardom. The mistakes of teen pregnancy, early marriage, dropping out of school, prostitution, etc could not be traced to me. A girl-child should be the envy of the society in terms of character modification, intelligence in domestic affairs, education, etc. Prominence therefore, should be accorded to the survival, welfare and protection of the girl-child in order to enhance her status in the society.

Inner Wheel, what a sweet experience

I am Dr. (Mrs.) Olasumbo Alashe. District: Mushin. Country: Nigeria. Age 56.

I've contributed to the growth of my community and feel fulfilled. I'm not a big believer in regrets and I have learned tremendously from every single mistake ... and my life is pretty great. However, becoming a member of Inner Wheel has affected my way of life in ways that I far expected. In 2005, I had my first Inner Wheel experience by going with a friend for a function. After attending several meetings with her in three months, I was admitted into the Inner Wheel Club. Since then, I have had the privilege to serve as secretary, treasurer and now the current President of Mushin which is giving me a platform to realize my dream of reaching urban poor communities and conducting interactive poverty alleviation awareness in Mushin. Since meeting such people, it has positively affected my way of life.



What follows here isn't an exhaustive discuss, but it's one that I hope proves useful to at least a few people.

1. Travel experience: after joining Inner Wheel, I have been privileged to travel to many states and cities which I never had intention or reason to travel to, and been fortunate to meet people of substance who share the same ideology with me as regards to how things can be done to achieve great results. This is



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a fine trade mark of Inner Wheel. As I reflect over my life of service, how much time I was devoting to charity work of Inner Wheel, I feel fulfilled. I am always now eager to doing more to affect more lives positively in conjunction with other members of the Inner Wheel. I joined the Club because of the opportunity to serve and to make quality friends. It's nice to travel and instantly make friends wherever I go.

Responsibility: a duty or obligation to satisfactorily perform or complete a task assigned by someone, or created by one's own promise or circumstances that one must fulfill, and which has a consequence.

As a member of Inner Wheel, I realize that the organization and success of clubs depend heavily on the quality and enthusiasm of its members. In one of the projects I am serving on its board, together, we are assisting children and families that are living below the poverty line.

The experience I have gained in several boards in the Inner Wheel, my work as a manager and the involvement and support of my family have been worthwhile experiences. I believe in "strength of many people for many people". Having a challenge all the time and executing it well is very important in my work for Inner Wheel and my personal affairs. To be transparent and to have the courage to look forward are very important characteristics that enable us to help people all over the world and to give strength to other people.

Together we have created a unique situation which keeps us in touch with each other. We share knowledge to enhance the future of Inner

Penalty for failure: my responsibility toward people has changed greatly because Inner Wheel has widened perception of life and the fact that it is our responsibility to care for orphans, the less privileged, the elderly and others.

3. Philanthropy: I must also add here that joining Inner Wheel has made me a better philanthropist, helping people get what they need mostly in life is at the heart of successful philanthropy. I now appreciate better human needs. I grew up where far too many people lived every day without primary needs such as good food, clean water and shelter. Compared to them, I feel I was fortunate.

Conclusion: that's not to say no one helped me. Many generous people helped me and my family when we needed them. And that motivated me too. I promised myself to work hard so I would never be hungry and work harder still so that I could repay my neighbours' generosity many times over - not just with money but with a clear path out of poverty. In some instances, the path out of poverty is through sports or other fields of excellence. In India, the path is through education.



Magdalene Nwakaego Adegoke

*(nee Ebegbune) was born in Lagos
some 42 years ago to the family of
Mr. and Mrs. Francis Ebegbune.*

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Literary Studies from Delta State University, Abraka and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Lagos State University.

Meg as she is fondly called, started her life in Inner Wheel in the year 2003 as the Secretary of Inner Wheel Club of Mushin, a post she held for two years and was later the Vice President and eventually President in 2007. Her stint at the District level began in 2011-2012 when she was elected as the District Secretary for 2 years. She has served in various committees in the District.

Meg is a volunteer counsellor at her church, she has a passion for working with the youths.

She is married to her soul mate and partner, Babarinde Babafemi Adegoke with whom she shares the same birthday. The marriage is blessed with a wonderful son Iyanuloluwa.

Aniocha, Delta State Females' Appalling Plight



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The birth of a male child is usually heralded with so much joy and celebration in most developing countries of the world and Nigeria is no exception. Friends and relatives exclaim congratulations. However the same cannot be said of a girl child. Usually such birth is received with mixed feelings. This is no thanks to the importance placed on the male child. A son means insurance, he will inherit his father's property and get a job to support the family, while girls are often seen or perceived as a "No good investment, since in the long run she is going to be shipped away to someone else's home to become a "House wife".

Some women even weep when they find out that their baby is a girl-child because, to them, a daughter is just another expense.

Gender discrimination and violence against women or the girl-child is a global phenomenon as old as the human history. In my community, Aniocha LGA of Delta State, the story is not different.

Some of the discrimination against the female gender includes:

i. Female genital mutilation or female circumcision - it involves the surgical removal of parts or all of the most sensitive female genital organs, and it is usually done a few days after birth.

It is erroneously believed that the girls have to be mutilated so as not to "disturb" them during childbirth and also to prevent them from being wayward! What an excuse!

ii. Preference of the male-child over female - this practice denies the girl-child good health, education, economic opportunity and the right to choose her partner. As a matter of fact, in Ubulu Uku my maternal village, women are not allowed to have input or say in matters affecting the family, their opinion is not sought and when given it is not accepted. When it comes to inheritance sharing, the girl-child is not given any property. Peradventure the woman keeps giving birth to only girls, the husband is usually advised to take a second and sometimes a third wife.

iii. Dehumanizing widowhood rites and practices - the woman is made to mourn the death of her husband for an upward of 3-6 months and within this period, her movement is restricted to the village, confined to her compound in mourning dress. She is expected to wake up every day at 4.00a.m. to wail. If she refuses, she would be sanctioned for breaking tradition.

In a situation whereby the woman has been alleged to have mistreated her husband or not taken care of him on his sick bed, she would be asked to drink the water used to bathe the corpse of her husband to prove her innocence. If she refuses to drink the water, she would be punished. However nothing of such is expected of the man. Unfortunately women (Umu Ada as they call them) are the ones that mete out such treatment on their fellow women, what an irony!

Some of these practices are fading away gradually due to education and awareness.

Uncaring in-laws, dead in feelings



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I recall with much pain in my heart almost 10 years ago my father had a sudden attack of palsy (partial paralysis). I had to rush him to the hospital where he was put on admission for further examination on the cause of the attack as he was “fine” some hours before.

While in the hospital, my mom was the one that waited on him and took good care of him. Then one fateful morning, as usual, on my way to work, I stopped by the hospital to drop the food I had prepared for him and my mum. To my surprise I found my mum sitting outside the gate of the hospital looking dejected. I feared for the worst. On inquiry, she told me that my father had vanished into thin air when she went to the convenience. That was how the search for my dad began. We searched every government hospital and mortuary, everywhere we could possibly cover. We also reported at various police stations for missing elderly persons to no avail.

All this while, my paternal uncles were informed of the incident and informed of the efforts at looking for him. My mum and my eldest brother were summoned to appear before the elders in the village asking them to give details of the event that led to the disappearance of their son. After narrating it to them and efforts that were made after the incident, they were subjected to so much psychological torture, they were harassed, threatened and had to keep going to the village every other week from Lagos to countless number of meetings. They even went as far as to my

mother's village to report her to her folks and threatened all manner of consequence if she did not produce him - my father.

Alas, she was accused of being responsible for the disappearance of her husband (a marriage of over 40 years!) by my uncles. These were people who had at one time lived in our house when my dad brought them to Lagos and my mum took care of every one of them.

To prove her innocence, she was asked to take an oath before the gods of the land. She agreed to this. Need I say that we - the children - vehemently opposed the oath taking, saying that it could be a way of ensnaring her. However, 10 years on, not a single member of my dad's siblings has ever visited us the children to commiserate with us on the incident or to sympathize with us.

As I recall this incident, my mother is yet to be summoned to take the oath she was threatened with, how ironic!

The main reason I had chosen to recount this particular incident out of the many betrayals I have experienced in life is to expose some of the challenges or ill treatment being meted out to the female gender, because if the reverse were the case, I am very sure my dad would not have been given a similar treatment.



I'm not a big believer in regrets, says Sery



I've dedicated my vocational life as a teacher to children and teens with several sorts of psychological and mental problems, struggling for their part-time integration in normal schools, giving them the opportunity of living good moments outside of hospital environment.

I have been an Inner Wheel member since 2005, I served different functions within my club and District 920. Since 2011, I started my commitment for Inner Wheel outside of my island



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and attended the colloquium “Women for Europe 4” in Turin. Since that time I have taken part in 3 other colloquiums as well as 2 Conventions and Conferences in Australia and Philippines. I am now the elected Chairman of District 920.

Reunion Island, a tropical island located in the Southern Indian Ocean is an overseas region of France, with a population of about 830,000 inhabitants.

Reunion Island has been suffering from the phenomenon of domestic violence against women: about 15% (12,500) of female victims of the Island every year suffer a high level of serious violence as against 9% in the mainland. There are 60,000 single-parent families in Reunion Island and the number keeps growing: 24% of women are single parents as against 11% in the mainland France.

Causes

Women's fragility and vulnerability in Reunion Island is very serious: the level of domestic violence, the number of teen pregnancies (600 births per year from girls 14 to 16 years old), the female illiteracy rate are higher than in the mainland France. The culmination of those factors of precariousness is common and requires a complex support to help women violated psychologically and physically, to fill their need of security.

The victims often keep silent, because of a feeling of shame and ignorance, afraid of what people might think. So, it's very important to give them back confidence in themselves. About 65% of the aggressors are the partners while about 14% are by the exes. Jealousy and couple's break-up are often triggering factors of violence; alcohol and drug consumption are aggravating factors.

Forms of violence: Domestic violence against girls and women is a pervasive violation of human rights and takes many forms, including: verbal (death threat, insults), psychological abuse (humiliations), sexual abuse (sexual assault, rape, forced prostitution), physical abuse (wounds, strangulation, sequestration), act of cruelty and torture (burns, serious injuries), and homicides.

Several domestic tragedies occur every year in the Island and result in serious physical injury and even death. Since the beginning of 2016, 5 women, Ingrid, Géraldine, Jocelyne, Marie-Andrée and Patricia have died, savagely killed by their exes or husbands. These kinds of lethal aggressions are on the increase.

How to help? The extent of domestic violence has led the local authorities to work hand-in-hand with associations through campaigns: awareness about sexist violence destined against



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children and teens in schools, programmes on parenting and conjugality... 115, a single, free and anonymous 24-hour hotline (for victims of violence, children in situation of danger and people feeling excluded) offers attentive listening, information, support, orientation and shelter if necessary.

The local authorities and associations struggling against domestic violence offer many kinds of shelters: provisional emergency shelters and overnight stays in hotels, and offering protection to victims taken out of threatening environment, permanent social housing for pregnant women (often very young) and their children under 3 years old.

In Reunion Island, Inner Wheel clubs support those homes and give support to mothers and children, celebrating events with them (such as Mother's day, Christmas, etc.) - accommodation within welcoming families for people estranged from their own families.

The emergency plan includes: provision of a taxi service to reach a provisional emergency shelter, and psychological and judicial support to victims.

Role of associations: Mrs. Therese Baillif whose watchword has ever been 'don't let abuse control your life' is now 82 years old. She has been carrying out a hard struggle for the respect of women's rights, within the association AFAR that

she created 30 years ago.

So, she is the one who established the struggle for women's rights in 1986, in a prominently chauvinist Reunion Island.

In 2007, she founded CEVIF (Collective Elimination of Violence Intra-Family) with a vision of a Reunion Island's united society, respectful of the differences, responsible, where each citizen, each family might live well. CEVIF plays an essential and multiple roles in the care of women victims of domestic violence: welcome, judicial advice, shelter.

CEVIF had been founded so that associations work in collaboration and struggle more efficiently against all forms of intra-family violences and dysfunctions within families.

The associations note that the last 2 years, victims have been breaking silence and seeking assistance via hotline more easily. A step forward for making true Mrs. Baillif's watchword: 'don't let abuse control your life'!



INTERVIEWS BY ONAJOMO ORERE

'I dream to make
it like
Aliko Dangote'

Miss Tinuola Esther Rasak knows where her bread was buttered, so to speak. But for the intervention of Inner Wheel District 910 Nigeria, her life would have been a complete misery today due to a debilitating condition called sickle cell disease. But now, the pretty young woman in her thirties is back to life. Her skin texture is now glowing. That is because she can easily pass for a 20-year old. From afar, it would be difficult to guess she is suffering from sickle cell anaemia until one observes her at close range. Only then one would discern it from her eyes. The condition caused her to abort her secondary school education half way through. In a family of four children, she is number three and the only child with the disease condition. In secondary school, she just became aware of her continuous state of poor health. That is the fort of most sickle cell sufferers. She was always falling sick. The red blood cells of sickle cell sufferers are sickled as such they do not have sufficient oxygen to enable them carry out normal everyday activities of other human beings.

'I was always falling sick. Thanks to my understanding parents who always provided me support,' she said. Luckily for her, her parents never ascribed her condition to evil machination or an affliction of a witch. That was why her parent's support was total.

Tinuola said that after dropping out of school, her parents re-directed her to learn the art of photography for three years. Not satisfied, they sent her to be trained in the art of baking confessionary.

As she drew older, her condition was deteriorating daily. A friend of hers, a nurse, told her to go to the Sickle Cell Foundation, Lagos two years ago as she would be helped out there. Somehow, she instead was re-directed to the National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, Yaba, Lagos where she was told she must undergo bone graft surgery for the total regeneration of her blood cells.

'The cost of the surgery was far, far above that which my family could afford. I was dumbfounded. I lost hope. But from nowhere, the Inner Wheel clubs of District 910 came to my rescue. How they knew about me, I do not know up till today. Who spotted me out, I have not asked,' Tinuola said.

Environment plays a part in shaping a teen's life

Olayinka Ayanwale was born on March 3rd 1960 to Ahaji M.O. Omopariola and Alhaja R.A. Omopariola, both of blessed memory. I attended Surulere Baptist primary school and Reagan Memorial Baptist Girls Secondary School, Yaba in 1973-1978. I worked briefly with United Bank for Africa, Ilupeju branch, from 1978-1980. After which I proceeded to Lagos State College of Science and Technology, now Lagos State Polytechnic where I had a Diploma in Catering and Hotel Management. I ran a successful outdoor catering business for about 20years before I packed it up to take a franchise with UAC Restaurants Ltd (Mr Biggs) till date. My interest in service to humanity which I had been doing on my own led me to joining Inner Wheel when my husband was introduced to Rotary in 1986. Since then I have enjoyed every bit of my stay and actions in the organization and have put in my best in every position I have held and I will continue to serve to the best of my abilities.





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I was born in the early hours of a Thursday, as the 6th child of a polygamous family and the 3rd child of my mother's eight children, Mrs. Raliat Ajoke Omopariola and my elderly father Alhaji Mohammed Tajudeen Oke Omopariola both of blessed memory. I grew up in a strict and disciplinary Muslim home. Most authorities and instructions came from my father's first born and sometimes the second born as they were both much older than the rest of us.

The first born was 15 years older than my mother's first and the second 11 years older; who later left for the United Kingdom when I was 7 years old. I was born and raised in Mushin, a house my father built in the early 50s when he relocated from Lagos Island. I will say I was raised in Mushin with a difference because I had little or no interactions with my peers around then.

I went to a private primary school (a fee paying school at the time) in Surulere (Surulere Baptist Primary School) and when it was time to go to secondary school, my father insisted it must be Reagan Baptist or Methodist Girls High School.

Although my father did not have western education, he was very vast in Arabic and Islamic knowledge and as a result, education was very important to him. He put the fear and service to God in us very early in our childhood, so much that if anything happened or in sickness, the first question you had to answer was "have you prayed?" And if you hadn't, that was the cause of your illness and 90 percent of the

time, observing your Salat was the cure. I will say that coming from a God-fearing and disciplined background prepared me well for life.

One of the strict measures in my home then was we were not allowed to mix with children on the street. Furthermore, our house at that time was the only house where the main entrance was always locked. Due to the fact that none of my schoolmates were in Mushin, I didn't have friends in my neighbourhood. Coupled with their loose and bad characters, many of the children dropped out of schools, some after primary school and a bigger percentage dropped out in form 4, having been put in the family way. Growing up in this environment made me aware of the abuses in different forms.

Some were brought as house helps from very young ages, many hawking different goods on the streets and highways and many being impregnated with nobody to claim responsibility for the pregnancy. I believe that this awareness set me up on the path I am on now.

Yeye Dupe Oyeduntan (nee Oshin) was born in Ibadan about 60 years ago. She qualified as a Chartered Accountant in June 1978, and is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, England & Wales (ACCA) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) and had her professional training in Ogunbajo, Okubule & Co and Deloitte Haskins+ Sells (Chartered Accountants). In 1981, she joined the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) as an Accountant and



rose to become the first female Director of Finance in WAEC Nigeria Office. She retired in November 2015.

I have always wondered from the age of 10 why my parents treated me differently from my younger brother. They were very protective. There were some childhood pranks that my younger brother did and got away with that I dared not try without adverse consequence! During my teenage years and early adulthood, I wasn't allowed to go out at will. I must not be seen near any male except those that are blood relations. My movement was closely monitored. Flouting these directives meant serious trouble. Several times I was severely punished for offences I did not commit simply because my parents felt that I was in a vulnerable situation with a boy or man, even when I had no inkling of what boy/girl relationship was.

My Father would always warn me of the dire consequences of making the serious mistake of having an unwanted pregnancy. He would also always drum it into my ears that he wanted me to have my Education and acquire Knowledge to the point that no man would take advantage of me but rather give me

***Society fuels cynicism
about the successes
of women***



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respect. He believed that knowledge is a catalyst to economic power and with economic power, respect is earned. In my later years I understood perfectly where my Father was coming from, and his worries. One of his very close cousins then, got pregnant out of wedlock; she fell out of favour and stopped coming to our house. The girls - only Convent Secondary school I attended did also not give room for pranks as the Reverend Sisters did not brook any nonsense. We were protected, shielded from boys and closely monitored. Thankfully, we all made our O' level papers (WASCE) in flying colours!

Thankfully, when I got married several years later, my husband allowed me to be what I wanted to be. He gave me the freedom to practice my religion of Christianity, he being a devout Muslim. With his cooperation and encouragement on the home front, I was able to rise to the peak of my career in all the organizations that I worked, before my retirement in 2015. By virtue of my profession as the first female Professionally Qualified Chartered Accountant in a male dominated Management of an organization, the men were intimidated and did not take kindly to the fact that a "mere woman" was in charge of the Finances. Even the women colleagues fared no better. The resultant effect was a lot of intrigues, intimidation, blackmail and eventually, persecution of my person. However, with the kind of professional training I had, my background in the growing-up years, a very supportive husband at the home front and the unfailing help of the Almighty God, one was able to overcome.

The society fares no better. To some men, a woman is a piece of property. Male drivers tend to take advantage of women on the road to the extent that women drivers have become toughened and some even have worse driving manners than the men. A man that is angry with one no matter how young he is would not hesitate to mention rudely that he has a wife like one at home! The boss in the office who is a man feels that he is not respected simply because you want to be professional in the discharge of your schedule of duties and in the organization's interest. Even at that, one has to work twice as hard as the male colleagues, and ensure that the home front does not suffer. The Society is also sometimes cynical about the successes recorded by some women as they feel that such successes were tainted by immoral acts.

Our Culture too encourages some of the negative treatment that is meted out to women. What with domestic violence, genital manipulation in the name of female circumcision, girl-child marriage and VVF. Some men marry many wives or keeping concubines in their quest for a male child, inhumane treatment in some cultures, of widows on the death of their husbands because of inheritance. The education of the girl-child gives her knowledge. And, knowledge is POWER! Education empowers the girl-child to lead a more interesting, productive and very fruitful life that makes her aware of her fundamental human rights. As the saying goes, when you educate a woman, you educate a nation!

Yoruba Traditional Wedding

Sola Arogundade Jacobs

Yoruba is a major tribe that occupies more than 6 states of the Nigerian Federation. The Yoruba people are rich in culture and values. The language spoken by the 6 states is called Yoruba. One of the traditions of the Yoruba people is the wedding ceremony. Traditional weddings vary greatly from one culture, ethnic group, religion, family, state and social class even within Yoruba race.

Before the modernisation of traditional wedding, if a man sees a woman he loves and wants to marry her, he will inform the parents. They will find out the type of family she comes from, this will enable them to know that they are not related, also they will find out if there is any incurable disease, sickness, stigma that will prevent them from marrying. Once that is done they will appoint a Go-between (Alarina) someone close to the family of the bride to be.

The family members can refuse the marriage due to close relationship or laziness. If the Go-between confirms the family is good, an official representative will be sent to the house of the bride-to-be with the



good news that their son is interested in their daughter. The family of the bride-to-be will send a message across to all the people that needs to know especially the elders in the family. When they have all agreed, a message will be sent through the Go-between. An official letter will be written and sent in an envelope to the bride-to-be and an acceptance letter will be taken to the man's family.

This will be followed by proposing a date of engagement that will be convenient and acceptable to both families. This process can take up to two years depending on individual families.

When the above is completed the list of engagement requirements will be sent out to the groom's family which in the olden days include:

The Bride price of 12 shillings during the period Nigeria was spending pounds and shillings. However, bride price payment varies from family to family. Other items are:

Aso-Ofi, Aran which are peculiar to some families. Edibles include 21 pieces of Yam, 21Ejaosan, Oyin, Ireke, Obi, Orogbo. Apart from bride price, some cash for other members of the family are collected according to the taste of each family.

In modern times, the gift items are arranged at the venue before the ceremony starts. Gifts are usually packaged in baskets or boxes, which are designed to match the wedding colour or wedding theme. The engagement gifts (known as Eru-Iyawo in Yoruba) are presented to the family of the bride on the traditional wedding day. Some of the compulsory items include the Bible, kola nut and bitter kola.

On the engagement day, all the gift items will be presented in a brass big bowl or pan. Each item of the engagement is important and prayer-specific. A party is organised in the evening and the (Iyawo Ile) will bring the bride from the room to the compound with her face covered. The father- and mother-in-laws will open her face and pray for her. The new bride will then be asked to pick whatever she likes from the engagement gift. For a Christian bride, she usually picks the Bible.

The significance of picking the Bible

Observing that all other items are onetime items or consumables, the Bible is a life enduring item. It lives beyond the marriage. The words of the Bible are the manual of life; the instructions for a more stable marriage institution; a flowing water to navigate all forms of challenges in any marriage. The Bible has resolved diverse marital conflicts. The Bible contains wisdom and knowledge of God; the mind of God concerning the marriage institution is to create a society of family for the couple so as to secure comfort and continuity for them. It is the most important item in the engagement list that needs to be handled with all carefulness because it will determine the future and the fulfilment of destiny both in life and eternity.

The Bible says where there is no counsellor, people make mistake and fall. Proverbs 11:14. The Bible is used as a Counsellor. The Bible is a covenant that God has made and the word therein can never be changed by culture or race.

In conclusion, the importance of the Bible in a traditional wedding has formed a major institutional item that helps the marriage to become an enduring value. The ring and the Bible have become a permanent covenant in a marriage institution.



Some observations of Finnish life story

I am Maija-Leena Virta-Kangas, a member of Inner Wheel Finland: National representative 2012-2014, Past National Representative 2014-2016. President of National Council 2012-2014, Past President of National Council 2014-2016; Member of District 140 for 29 years. Retired high school teacher, non-fiction writer. The main subjects: ethics, religion and religions, psychology and history. IIW: Board Director 2016-2017.

Finland: Republic, independent since 1917, approx. 390,000 square kilometres, some 5.5 million inhabitants, around 200,000 lakes.

“In our country we have more boys being born than girls, mums and dads an equal amount, grand mums more than grand papas.”

After the birth of a child the mother is able to get a maternity benefit and a maternity leave approximately for a year. A part of that time is paid

according to mother`s salary. The father can also stay at home and take care of their child some months with a pay.

Every child has the right to get day care. Those parents who have a low income get the day care for free, otherwise the payment depends on the income of the parents. Since 1949 every mother has received a maternity package. Before that year only poor families got the package.



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The free-of-charge compulsory education begins in our country at the age of seven and lasts for nine years. Before the age of seven the child may attend a preschool for a year. The healthcare is free for all schoolchildren. After comprehensive school, students continue to the high schools or to the vocational schools. All the lines of work and professions are open for boys and girls. For example, we have male midwives, female army personal and female priests.

At the age of 14, a teenager is allowed to do light work for some hours per week but with certain restrictions.

If the teenager under 16 years of age is sexually assaulted, abused or even raped, the punishment for the crime is more severe than after the age of 16 according to our criminal law. Today, 10 % of sexual victims are younger than 16 years. Unfortunately, about 25 % of the sexual criminals are foreigners even though the total number of foreigner of our population is only three per cent. This problem may be a result of the cultural differences between the immigrants and the natives.

At the age of 17, the child benefit ends, but a young person has the opportunity to get student grant from the government.

A young person becomes of age at the age of 18. After that she or he can get married without their parent`s permission, get a driver's licence, get the right to vote, consume light alcohol, etc. Finland was the first

country in Europe where women got the right to vote in 1906.

In our Parliament 41.5 % of MP`s are women while 58.5 % are men at the moment. We have 14 ministers in our government and five of those are women. In Finland the female rate of employment is about 68%.

At the age of 30 and over one can get sterilization on grounds of the age among other reasons. Both women and men can control their own properties.

When you reach the age of 60 and you are unemployed you can get unemployment pension and three years later everyone gets retirement pension.

At the age of 70, e.g. the driving licence expires, but you can have it extended.

The aged people can be cared for at private homes or communal homes and even their own homes if they wish so.

All these rights belong to all Finnish people: both women and men because in our country we are equal.

Something my mother told me that affected me positively- “iṣé loògùn iṣé”



My mother's constant saying to me was 'iṣé loògùn iṣé' which translates to 'hard work is the panacea to poverty'. It was a common saying with which parents admonished their children and wards to imbibe the virtue of hard work in my part of my country, Nigeria.

I was born and raised in early life as a farmer's child.

IPDC Florence Olubola Odeleye

Born in 1955. Had primary education in Akure and Ikorodu and secondary education at Reagan Memorial Baptist Girls' Secondary School, Lagos.

Graduate of the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in Microbiology (1980), University of Ibadan (B. Pharm. 1980; M.Sc., 2003)

Worked with Oyo and Osun States governments, Bimpek Pharmacy, Ibadan, O.L.A. Catholic Hospital, Ibadan, before joining Olabisi Onabanjo University, Sagamu, Ogun State as a lecturer in the Faculty of Pharmacy in June 2011. Joined Inner Wheel Club of Bodija, District 913 in 1989, Assistant Secretary in 1990/19/91, Secretary 1991/19/92, President 1993/19/94, District Treasurer 2011/20/12 and Chairman 2014/2015.

Our daily routine was a very busy one - rise up early, keep the home tidy in and out, prepare breakfast, and so on before the parents leave for the farm and the children for school. On returning from school, I had to join my parents on the farm along with my older siblings to assist in whatever still needed to be done. On returning home in the evening, another round of household chores would commence which included fetching water for the following day from a stream that might have been as far as two kilometers away from our home.

In addition to this daily routine, I was taught to work extra hard during the planting season in order to have a good harvest which would ensure my school fees



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would be paid, new clothes and shoes bought as well as sumptuous meals during Christmas and new year festivities. The new shoes and clothes were usually a reward for the child's dedication and hard work during the planting season; a child who was lazy at that time would miss out on the reward. This was a practical way in which our parents demonstrated that hard work pays. Any complaint of being over-worked would bring forth another but similar saying from my mother: 'iṣé kii pàniyàn' which means hard work does not kill.

By the time I left home for a boarding secondary school, hard work and multitasking had become a way of life for me and saw me succeeding with high grades not only in secondary school where I combined active participation in sports up to state level with regular academic work and still excelled in both but also in the university.

The saying was also a source of strength for me in later years when I had to face very challenging situations to move ahead in life. Two experiences readily come to mind.

1. By the time I left secondary school, I had decided that I would like to be a pharmacist but admission challenges forced me to settle for another course. I did not however give up and by the time I had an opportunity to go back to the University to study Pharmacy, I already had two children and was pregnant with a third whom I delivered shortly after I started. I hard to wake up very early, prepare the older children for school and nurse the baby before resuming in school at 8.00a.m. I often got back home at about 7.00p.m.

and would give attention to the children until about 10.00p.m. Only then would I have time for assignments, laboratory reports and studying. The implication was that I hardly had more than three hours of sleep a day for a period of three years.

I graduated with one of the best results in my set.

Against all odds, I followed up with a Masters degree 13 years later in 2003. This is what made it possible for me to be employed as a lecturer some years later.

Truly, 'hard work is the panacea to poverty'

2. Year 2014 was particularly challenging for me. My three children chose three consecutive months - February, March and April - for their weddings.

3. In the midst of these, my church society chose me in absentia to head the harvest committee and gave me no chance to refuse. Meanwhile, I had to take on the leadership of my Inner Wheel District as Chairman in June of the same year. All these I had to cope with along with my job as a lecturer in a University some 150 kilometers away from my home.

All these activities came out successful.

Indeed I can affirm 'hard work does not kill'. Looking into the future, I continue to see this saying affecting me. No matter what the future holds, I will continue to work hard and teach my lineage to do so. I must give glory to God who blesses our hard work with success.

God bless my mother and all mothers who teach their children to imbibe the virtue of hard work.

Italian women in real life

Silvia Castagna Andretta is a member of IIWheel Club of Monza, Italy. She is a hematologist who is married with two sons and a grand son. Our Club takes a particular interest in the issue of discrimination against women. During my time as president of the club, I promoted a social service providing Microcredit for women in Madagascar. I started a cultural service in collaboration with the Polytechnic of Milan, with the creation of a bilingual multimedia website entitled “Queens of Italy: Women in Power in Medieval Italy,” dedicated to four revolutionary female figures in Italian history. We participate alongside the Polytechnic in an educational service for schools: we believe that education is one of the most important vehicles for changing culture and advancing the role of women.

Dear Friends

It is not easy to explain the lifestyle of Italian women. It is so complex that when you try to describe it, you risk falling into stereotypes.

Family

The Italian family has undergone many changes in recent years. Three quarters of the work done within the family is carried out by women; employment rates among younger mothers have increased; mother-daughter alliances enable daughters to remain in the labor market; marital instability rates have risen; sexual relations before



and outside marriage are more widely accepted; grandparents, or rather

grandmothers, represent an emergency child care resource during illness and school holidays. Women can break out of established patterns of behavior because they can count on intergenerational support networks within the family.

But if the Media are the Main Source of Knowledge

Women are mostly represented in diverse sexualized images and beauty is portrayed as being more important for women than intelligence. This message has a negative effect on everybody, but especially on adolescent girls, because they are learning some dangerous equations:

- woman equals sexuality;
- it is normal to be very sexy at an early age: this is another very unhealthy idea;



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- to be successful you have to be sexually attractive.

Why should we be worried about this?

It is important to understand that:

- in real life women can cope with everyday difficulties because they have learnt useful strategies from sources other than the media;
- it is parents who transmit valuable strategies to help their offspring survive in the real world. Violence against women in Italy...The Middle Ages: surprisingly modern legislation

ELEANOR OF ARBOREA, Sardinia.

Her most important legacy (1392-1395) is "The Carta de Logu," her extraordinary body of laws. Several aspects of the Carta are unexpectedly modern:

- Women were protected by specific rules concerning inheritance, family and even violence.
- Rape, for example, was considered an offense against the state (not against decency) and there were special provisions in favor of women.
- Marriage could be taken into consideration only if the offended woman agreed.
- Nowadays Virginity was not fundamentally important.

Cradle to Old Age

In most cases of violence against women in Italy, they are victims of a man within their affective context - husband, friend or relative - and women of all ages and economic status are affected. The reasons favoring the continuation of abuse within the couple are complex: they include the presence of children, economic dependence, feeling of guilt due to cultural background putting the responsibility for keeping the family together on the woman. Above all, when the abuse continues over a long period of time, victims form a relationship of dependence with the perpetrator which destroys their self-confidence and efficacy. The reactions differ from person to person, according to the individual's personal psychological

makeup, environmental conditioning and previous experience, all of which make each woman absolutely unique.

Gender is a key victimogenous factor, a contributing bio-physiological feature of primary importance.

Rape, for instance, is a crime committed almost exclusively against women, as is murder following sexual violence, ethnic rape and torture; the latter, if directed against a woman, almost always takes the form of rape and is designed to humiliate and punish the woman, in short, destroy her dignity.

But Concern for the Victim tends to fade rapidly, and another important aspect is neglected: Violence and abuse have huge emotional significance, as revealed by recent research indicating that over 20% of victims develop a post-traumatic stress disorder, equivalent to approximately 8% of the total adult population who may suffer from PTSD during their lives. To raise awareness and ensure attention remains focused on violence against women, women, associations and institutions in Milan have adhered to the artist Jo Squillo's project Wall of Dolls. This is an installation in the city center whose purpose is to convey the message that women are not objects, or dolls. A wall to be symbolically broken down, inviting women to overcome their fear and report violence or abuse. Laws in Italy are of great importance but they alone are not enough; what is also needed is real cultural and political awareness. Nobody can decline some measure of responsibility when they find out about an episode of abuse.

With thanks to:

Carmen Principe, Monza
Rosaria Iardino, Milan.



Marriage in Igboland

Dr. Bakky Ngozi Adirika was the charter secretary and Past President of Inner Wheel club of Enugu South, Charter President, IWC, Awka, Chairman, D914 in 1995/1996, National Representative Nigeria in 2010/2011 and served as Board Director, IIWP, 2011/2012. She was a Principal Special Grade in the Anambra State secondary school system until she joined Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, in 2005. On joining the University, she has served as hostel warden, Elmada hostel, Coordinator, UniZik nursery, primary and secondary schools at both Awka and Nnewi campuses, Sub-Dean, Faculty of Education and was a member of the university's Senate. She is currently the Deputy Director, School of General Studies and a lecturer at both graduate and undergraduate levels. She has also served as external moderator and examiner at the tertiary education level. Bakky served the community as Commissioner, Girl Guides, President, University of Nigeria Alumni Association (UNAA) Awka Branch, President, Ojoto Akanasato Town Union, Coordinator, Idemili South Local Government women Presidents-General, and General President, Ojoto Anglican Community. She is a motivational speaker. She is married and blessed with five children and several grandchildren.



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The marriage institution is highly respected in Igboland. It allows a man and woman and in some cases women, to raise children in fulfilling and love circuited environments often referred to as the family by many. Marriage is also a fulfilling obligation for youngsters who newly emerged into adulthood. This is because unmarried persons at middle or later adulthood are regarded generally as irresponsible, not capable of the hassles of parenting.

Why do the Igbos of Nigeria regard marriage so sacrosanct? It is believed that their deep-rooted acceptance of the family unit is contributory. The family is created at marriage and it is a very basic unit in any society. It is at the family level that the first lessons of life are learnt, earliest prejudices imbibed and preferences inculcated. Personalities of individuals can often be linked or traced to abstractions and constructs valued in their families. The Igbos, therefore do not just get up and pick marriage partners

They often go into series of inquiries which may be direct or indirect but aimed at learning deeply about the would-be partner. Satisfied with the family standing of prospective in-laws, a move is made to make known marriage intentions.

Marriage customs and rites being aspects of culture are dynamic. They are witnessing numerous changes that are in consonance with other changes in times and styles. In the earlier times girls get married off to men who choose them or who are chosen for them by their parents. The idea was to ensure that certain desirable qualities are not left to chance. Without the consent of the youngsters that are to be married, arrangements were made and negotiated on their behalf by parents or guardians. Today the girls decide when to get married with majority choosing to involve in marriage when they have acquired formal education to a certain level in order to be able to contribute to the partnership positively.

In marriage discussions, in recent times as in times gone by, nothing is said directly. Most things are said in proverbs and idioms and other in non-verbal modes. This practice is to distinguish between the usual buying and selling of animals and other inanimate objects from marriage negotiations. Humans have dignity and bride price negotiations must depict this dignity. Nobody therefore talks of naira and kobo. They would rather talk about kegs of palm wine, bundles of broom and bags of pebbles! Even at that, the process passes many stages aimed often at allowing enough interaction to build



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friendships and relationships between the two groups contending marriage.

There is always a first stage of introduction code named “iku aka n'uzo”- knocking at the gate. Discussion was done in parables and both parties have opportunities to inquire more on issues relating to the intended partners. The second stage involved another visit to the would-be bride with more palm wine and other gifts like yam, tobacco and hot drinks by the family of the intending groom in company of his father or guardian. At this time the girl may be invited to greet the visitors and told that they were in their home to see her. If given a glass of wine brought by the visitors and she accepted, it would be interpreted that she has accepted their proposal and this would lead to the third stage of bride price haggling. Though the haggling may linger and last for hours, it usually does not lead to disagreements because emphasis is not really focused on real amount of money paid in cash but on love and care often demanded of the groom's family for the intended bride.

The final stage is the wine carrying and traditional wedding! The groom's family brings lots of presents to the bride's family. Many guests are invited and there are usually provisions in food and wine by

both families. Spinsters and bachelors are also invited to use the opportunity to gravitate towards possible suitors. Beautiful clothes are worn and festivities rend the air. Eventually different dance steps and songs are rendered for the couple who dance and enjoy themselves. Towards the end, the extended family members of the bride settle down to bless her using the kola nuts to call the blessings of the gods on their daughter. The girl is finally given to the husband's family to keep and to hold, to care and to love for always.

Changes in times and style have introduced such things as cakes, asoebi groups that spice up the ceremony but one thing remains - the joys shared on such occasions .

In this age and times, we call on parents to spend quality time with their children while it lasts and thereafter when their children get married to allow them to build their new homes together without interference as well allow them to make their own mistakes and learn from them while genuinely supporting them as best they could! Igbo girls are very industrious and pretty. Dare to ask the hand of one of them in marriage!



I am Mercedes Velten Díaz, Inner Wheel member since 1983 and International Inner Wheel Board Director between 2009-2011. I am a Psychotherapist and a teacher. I have been married for 41 years; have 3 children and 4 grandchildren. I am Mexican.

Situation of the women in Mexico

"The position that women occupy in a nation, is the first parameter of human and cultural level of the people."

Peter Ketter, German theologian.

Despite being a beautiful place full of natural resources, México faces a lot of problems today. Poverty, undistributed richness, lack of education for a great percentage of people, corrupt governments and authorities, insecurity, increase of drug dealers - cartels, violence, very polluted, crazy and crowded large cities (such as México City, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Querétaro and Puebla), unbalanced families, growing inflation process and others. Mexican women are having a difficult historic moment because besides the above problems, they



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equally suffer gender oppression. There is a marked difference in the way women and men have been incorporated into the citizenship and labor market. I think the two main problems for women in México are:

- 1) Accessibility of jobs.
- 2) Feminicides.

Against the modern illusion that “female oppression” was finished, reality shows that working-women, in both rural and urban, are still oppressed. Mexico has 128.47 million people (50.7% are females); more than 89 million are over 15 years old, 60.42% are economically active population, of that number, 37.8% are females. One of the clearest indicators of the disadvantageous situation of women at the working level, in Mexico, is this example: in Mexico City, 25 % of the female EAP, receive less than the minimum wage (\$33 pesos/hour, less than US\$2) while only 10% of the men are occupied in this unfortunate condition. It has been calculated by the International Bureau of the work (BIT), that the participation of women in Latin American plantations, oscillates between one third and one half of the total number of workers, of that number, 65% work on a temporary basis. All these figures leave little room for hope with respect to the situation of women in Mexico.

CONAPO (National Council of Population) estimated an increase of women for 2050 to be 52%. Women aged 14 and less are decreasing and woman aged 15 to 64 are increasing. Between 2020 and 2030 it is expected that this group of age will grow to 67%. This means that Mexico will have more women in

productive age, expecting to have a job. The average age of women in 2010 was 27 years old and by 2050 is expected to be 37 years old. This requires an increase in the supply of jobs and health services.

According to CONAPO, in Mexico 17.3 % of the households, are headed by single mothers, widows, separated or simply 'independent women'. During the last years, in Mexico, it has been recorded an increase of divorced and single women. As we can see, the number of females heading a household is huge (in all socio-economic levels). It seems that the mission of the Mexican mother is endless (at home because she has many dependent children and in her job). In México, children continue living in their parent's home after they are 18 years old; unlike what happens in other countries where children at an early age leave the parental home. Usually, when Mexican women start bearing children, they devote themselves fully to the family, using most of their capacity in the development and welfare of those around her.

Recent research on the inclusion of women in the labor market offer a number of statistics that show, in a raw way, clearly disadvantageous situation of women workers in the current Mexico. The problem of the entry of women in the labor market goes beyond issues such as voluntary and individual choice among the "leisure" and "profit", or factors as training and education. Some theorists argue that female "human capital" is low compared to men, in terms of investment in education, training and accumulated experience level, as a result of staying in the labor market. However, studies show that the incorporation of women in the labor market is not due exclusively to



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factors such as different productivity or only to levels of training, but it involves aspects of other related factors of supply and demand, which should be known and considered. Mexican women perform multiple tasks, which are characterized by a huge heterogeneity, regional, ethnic, class and gender.

Investigations show the incidence of various factors relating to the capacity of absorption of working women in the economy, and certain cultural patterns of traditional type, highly complex, which are connected with the family structure, and involved in the decision on who and when people are incorporated into paid work. There is a phenomenon of concentration of the female labor in certain sectors and branches of production, as well as in certain occupations. This does not mean that there is a natural "division of labor", considering "reproductive work" (domestic and unpaid) like a natural women work. In fact, the problem of the inclusion of women in the labor market is very complex, because there is not a neutral labor market.

In other words, studies of the inclusion of women in the labor market in Mexico show the existence of two types of occupational segregation by gender: one horizontal, which affects the concentration of female labour force in a few occupations and professions, and the other vertical, corresponding to the place or the location of the women in the established social hierarchies, in different workplaces. Several investigations mark the trend to the "feminization" of certain economic sectors, such as services - in special health, education

and the so-called informal sector. It is not easy to break with the common image and the myth of the 'self-sacrificing mother' - which denies other capacities for serving the husband (or man who lives with her, if there is so) and children, in order to nurture them. She lives in body and soul in order to give and be around the life of others.

The growing number of murders against women is a tragedy and a national shame in México. Between 2006 and 2013, most of the murders occurred at home and that speaks of high levels of family violence. In 2009, the numbers of murdered woman began to grow, especially the number of women killed in public. From 2010 to 2012, half of the murders took place on the street. In the last 15 years, from 2000 to 2014, the number of women killed in Mexico amounts to 26,267, that means an average of 5.1 murders per day. From 2000 to 2014 the amount of yearly homicides doubled from 1,284 to 2,349, according to the INEGI (National Institute of Geography and History). "Murders of women derive in a cultural pattern and less due to the phenomenon of social violence by organized crime," says the INEGI. The conclusion is alarming, and speaks of a sexist society that does not respect the lives of women. The years which recorded the highest number of female murders goes from 2010 to 2013: 2,418 in 2010; 2,693 in 2011; 2,764 in 2012, and 2,647 in 2013. INEGI records a growth of murders with increased violence, that is, with those committed to cause greater pain in order to prolong the suffering. In 2013, 32 of every 100 were hanged, strangled, burned, injured with sharp



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objects, or beaten with objects. 2004-2013 increased the percentage of the murdered with a firearm from the 28.8% to the 43.0%.

The representative in Mexico of UN women argues that more frequent violence against the women in the country comes from their partners or ex-partners. And it warns about the general and very serious problem of the impunity of the killers. Natalia Flores, gender equity of the UNAM (National University) programme, says that the killing of women “is a historical problem and statistic show that. The problem has been getting worse. It is paradoxical because there is an effort made by the State to engage in the protection of the human rights of women, but the number of cases increase. The violence is structural.” Government, churches, schools and organized civil society should work in a coordinated effort to solve the problem from its roots. The family, in many cases, is a school of violence against women that explains, in large part, the structural character of the feminicides.

Analyzing the roles of Latin women, Carmelita de Freitas states that in the background, the Latin man feels inferior to woman. The woman - according to this author - feels more capable, intelligent, and has a powerful influence on children, though she feels inferior to male in physical strength and social support because she is more criticized and carries more social pressures of the environment. The female role is limited by the 'civilization', exalting the male works, which belong more to the public sphere, while female

works passes unnoticed (nobody gives you a medal for being a good mother, wife or housekeeper), her job is inserted more in the domestic and private sphere.

To substantiate and justify social roles based on gender, we have different explanations, including the biological about the essence of masculine and feminine. In them, women should always be at the domestic sphere, where she is relegated. In the public sphere, the woman has been allowed to look out only under discriminatory conditions, that is, while suited to the prevailing male norms. Here the public and private sectors have particular significance because “public” is the field of decision and making excellence. In this field woman works as subaltern (and in most cases, earns less). The “private” is associated with domesticity, thus depoliticized, and it is in this sphere is that the woman is confined. This stigmatization acts in the consciousness of individuals impeding the questioning. To relegate women to the domestic sphere is prevent her access to power and deny historical incidence, alienating her consciousness and practices. In México, we have never had a woman President. In the last elections we had a woman candidate (Josefina Vázquez Mota) and the opposition mocked at her publically and told her to go home and take care of her “own business”.

Culture, on one hand has thrown us into incredible developments, on the other hand, has tied us to traditions and prejudices that hinder the realization of many human beings; including women. For centuries, women had remained in darkness and



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anonymity; a wife was 'accompanying music', female's sensuality was associated with sin, the perverse and the subordinate. Although women have had in the last hundred years an interesting trajectory, many women have a hard time when they try to be "themselves and do for themselves." An uneducated woman in México still thinks about herself not as a person, but as "something" functional for society. Today still remains a relationship of domination from men and tyranny towards women.

The "Macho Men"

In Mexico, a "macho" is a strong man, full of virility. The "machos" head a nationwide movement called "machismo". The machismo has been used as a stereotype in trying to describe the character of the Mexican and Latin men in general. The machismo is a system of norms, attitudes, and socio-cultural features of man, which not only slows the development of women, but the feeling of inferiority as well; this ideas dominate the whole society. In this system, the woman is trained to respect the arrogance of the man; this respect is expressed in attitudes, words, gestures, behaviors and responses towards men, who treat her with a hostile attitude and even violence.

The correlative term of "machismo" is the "mothering" (an excessive protecting attitude of the mother), both terms are linked in the everyday life. These stereotypes have strong roots, which remain valid over the time. Machismo takes many forms and degrees, depending on the time and the group to

which it relates in particular. In addition to the macho behavior, there are multiple forms of chauvinism represented through songs, poems, sayings, etc. Most of the time, the relationships are established under this pathological cultural trait. Jessica Kreimerman says that talking about sexism in México, there is an interaction, not just what the wretches do to women, but a general society system followed by all Mexicans (females and males) and what they do to other Mexicans, like jokes or mocking (for example: the nice guy who helps his wife at home is called "mandilón" that means: "The one who uses the apron all the time, with a submissive attitude". No man wants to be called "mandilón").

In Mexico, men learn to play the game of "the macho", a game of jealousy and insecurity; to play it requires at least two players (one sadist and masochist the other) who consent on the rules. Mainly (and it is sad to say) male victims are victims of themselves, of their unsolved traumas. Machismo affects everyone equally. Men are perpetrators and women - who give permission tacitly- are victims. The entire system of abuse lives in all society; and the 'stronger' takes advantage of the weakest. This system works great with other social rules, and never ends. The family institution justifies this practice: "Holy motherhood" and "sacrificed victims" (as in the time of the Aztecs) are the stereotypical award given to women, around which an impregnated personality full of attitudes of submission, dedication, perseverance, diligence, loyalty,



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courage, sacrifice, fertility, homey perfect, etc. The compensation is a supposed “moral gratification”. In this whole process, the woman is both: victim and accomplice. Sadly, in the education of children, home care, etc. females recreate attitudes and practices that reaffirm the dominant male power. Mexican woman shares machismo and accomplices the practice of it according to the degree of consciousness that she acquires from the power structures which govern relations between the sexes; she reproduce or contributes to the men continue play.

Stereotypes of Women.

The stereotypes of women, among other things, remain as a burden for women's progress. Marcela Lagarde makes an analysis of women in history and describes different ways "being a woman" in our Mexican society, these forms also have to do with an attitude toward spiritual and religious:

1) Mother-wife (Madresposas): These women are considered with positive qualities. They use their sexuality just for procreative purposes, maintaining a loyal marital relationship. They promote traditional and religious values. In this category women have small aspirations for education or personal development, their sole purpose is to find a 'good husband' and have a stable home.

2) The whores, are erotically worn by men, but the links with them are never permanent. These women do not promote (and perhaps do not know) moral, religious and spiritual values.

3) The nuns, they do not have children or sexually

relate to men but take the title of 'universal mothers', forming a bond of “God wives” to whom they dedicate their lives, serving others sometimes. They promote ethical and religious values.

4) The dams. In this category Lagarde brings together all women in one way or another, because they are captive in a relationship, whether it is in a home, in a brothel, a convent, a madhouse or a prison. Perhaps this is the group of women who most need to find new values ??in their life that can give a liberating sense in their daily lives.

5) The crazy, are those unable to feel and act like “women” in their society or are called crazy for being too capable, so they frighten people. They are marginalized in their social group. These women dissent with traditional values ??of society and seek to introduce more innovative ideas.

With this classification Lagarde does not intends to define all Mexican women, but the general way they are considered in México. Lagarde wants to raise this issue in order to formulate new theories that break these stereotypes and myths, that are learned in childhood and recorded again and again through stories and songs, giving images of what it means to be a man or a woman. For example: The wolf eats Little Red Riding Hood and her grandma, Sleeping Beauty waiting to be kissed by her prince and awaked to life while her three fairies-godmothers (spinsters, old and fat), overprotect her isolating the inevitable



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danger; Cinderella, poor, very poor and abused by other women, dreams to be rescued by a prince, Wendy carries motherly duties with her male brothers and Peter Pan, while he is having a great time with the sexy Tinkerbelle and the 'lost children'. Merlin is a kind old wise (men have to grow old to be wise), but his opponent, Madame Mim is an old, perverse, crafty witch, spinster, evil, fat and in addition ugly.

The magic of Merlin is white and innocent, hers is black and scary. The good little rat mother sweeps her house. The little female ants go to the fountain to wash their underwear, afterwards they have to iron. With very little money, the mother duck goes to the market to buy food for her children, while father duck does nothing but rest. Mickey Mouse has no children, Donald duck is a lousy uncle (he has no own children either). Stories and cartoons give us two different realities: the male and female world. They present powerful kings and evil queens, handsome princes, cunning male wolves, brave warriors, conquerors, policemen, male adventurers, rogues, etc. All these characters are well seen. It is fine if women are wives of kings (not queens), patient princesses who wait for their princes, wicked witches, wicked stepmothers, domestic women or weak and fearful girls. Men handle scepters, swords, shields, ships, horses, guns and money. Women use magic wands, brooms, mirrors, spinning wheels, threads, needles, baskets, plates, flowers, poisons and ornaments. This involves different attitudes. For men: courage, boldness, aggression, domination,

leadership, adventure, courage, honor, strength, success, triumphs, wealth, intelligence, etc. For women: passivity, submission, shyness, flirtation, villainy, innocence, evil, vanity, docility, pettiness, industriousness and weakness... always subordinated to the dominant male power.

Lagarde says that women who try to break these social stigmas are seen as sick or rare and that all women, even those who see themselves away from these patterns, met, even partially with them. Until society finishes reproducing these stereotypes, men and women will continue repeating the same roles and living the same stratifications. Teacher L. Leñero Otero said that this problem of subordination in México was already present in pre-Hispanic family and was extended during the colony because the mother was predominantly indigenous and the father (the conqueror) was creole or Spanish. The relationship of conqueror-conquered also occurred in sexual intercourse.

Virginity, Marriage and Motherhood.

Virginity is a cultural concept that refers to the conservation of hymen or protective membrane at the entrance to the vagina. Preserving female virginity is understood as an obligation imposed on women by society and especially by men. Lagarde says this is another taboo in México. There is a belief that the man who marries a virgin woman has an easy dominating relationship with her. Female virginity is a basic requirement of conjugality, as stated by current documents of the Catholic Church. In Mexico



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the dominant religion is Catholicism thus, virgins are sacred female examples for the rest of the women in México. An old religious text says: "Unless female virginity has been devoted to God willingly, or to her husband, woman will have a marriage with the devil." The virgins whom man has not mastered, and the old women who have shirked their power, are seen as witches more easily than the others because the fate of women is to be allocated to another, and if not suffer the yoke of man is willing to accept the devil.

About virginity Simone de Beauvoir says that it also has its erotic appeal, but only when it is linked to youth, its mystery is lost if the virgin is old. Monogamy for women is exclusivity - emotional, legal and physical - it guarantees to men the procreative conjugal exclusivity, ensuring socially and legally, the real offspring of their children. This idea is still widespread by women themselves who advise their children to relate to virgin girls, which are not 'easy'. Female virginity also frees man from the possibility of being compared by his wife with previous lovers; this idea thus is protecting male insecurity and fear. Monogamous marriage preserves the continuity of a group. General beliefs hold the idea that the most predominant line is one in which man assumes, at least formally, the family power, and the political and religious power of the group. This favors men's superior fitness and the biological status of women, mostly linked to pregnancy, childbirth and mothering. The religious institution reinforces this arrogant man standing, giving it a sacred qualification. Western civilization exalts the value of the conjugal family ...

gaining importance conjugal love, sexual puritanism, the right of affiliation and direct inheritance of the children, etc. Comparing female virginity with men, we found that this is not a requirement that women demands from the man, and when male virginity occurs is almost always for mystical and religious reasons. Otherwise, virgin men are even despised. When the European Catholic Church revised the pagan pre-Hispanic marriage laws, it was determined (among other things) that all property of women would pass directly into the hands of her husband. The dowry remains in some countries as an essential male requirement for a getting married. The woman herself becomes a property of the husband. Traditions still encourage the punishment of women by their male spouses. So for 'disciplining' a woman, a man can torture and even kill his wife. She does not have any legal or religious defense. These beatings were a good argument to convince many women to become nuns. In Mexico, 87% of cases of domestic violence, man is the aggressor and in 90% of cases the victim is the woman. According to the UN, violence against women is the most common crime that occurs in the world (World Bank data). This can easily explain the feminicides in México.

Leñero Otero says that we live a stereotyped idea that links "family ties" to the religious aspects and this moves us away from education on a realistic basis preventing the young to make a critical judgment in the families, and seeing some socially accepted unfair "rules" as something sacred - that can't be changed - that is why children do not break



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learned patterns and repeat the same mistakes of parents and grandparents. The stereotype of the 'family as sacred unity' creates confusion between traditional aspirations and practices. In many countries male polygamy is socially acceptable, as well as the fact that a man does not need to go "virgin" to his marriage - which is even frowned upon -. Male polygamy is carried out with whores (the 'bad' women), used, scorned and maintained by men in all societies. Male fidelity that spouses promise before the altar is hypothetical, because rarely occurs during marriage; society encourages male infidelity, generating major conflicts at home; the conflict arises from the contradictions of the same social model followed by couples. Equality is a dream, an egalitarian ideal based on the demand in which the woman must ensure absolute loyalty, fidelity and security of the union, while the man enjoys freedom and may even incur in debauchery.

In Mexico, it is common that the man has his lover or so called "movida" or goes to resort with prostitutes with whom he can find eroticism that is forbidden with his wife. Leñero Otero speaks of a disguised polygamy, in which many men in México have two families (or more) simultaneously. The Mexican usually says jokingly phrases such as: "the married is my wife ..." or "this is my small house (the wife's), the other (the lover's) has pediment and pool." Leñero Otero believes that marriage in Mexico is a family institution, apparently founded in a loving agreement, but structurally integrated on more social than

individual basis. Lagarde says: "We must work hard to change the image of women as sex objects and in turn, leave behind the idea that the erotic joy is prohibited with the wife, just because she is the holy mother of the children".

Mexican Women and Change: The Social Development of Women

No one can deny this: the time has come; it is time for women to grow and be themselves. The wait is over and half of humanity - so far silent - wants to make their voices heard and actively participate in the creation of the many aspects of the social life. María Del Carmen Elu L. studied more than 2500 Mexican couples from different social classes in various areas of the country, concluding that Mexican women no longer responded so much as they used to the stereotype of selfless, resigned and abandoned motherhood. Many Mexican mothers are no longer completely dependent on their partners in the decisions of their family and personal life. New ideas coming from other countries have come to give a boost to the Mexican woman (though not all influence is positive) and are helping to transform traditional patterns by learning from other models. Unfortunately, we live in a divided Mexico, where many traditions, cultures and economies coexist in the "same" divided society. While more educated women can change social patterns, cultural male tradition is maintained by poor women whose existential conditions do not present outputs for them.



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Opening opportunities for women and the economic need of the capitalist system have promoted women's participation in almost all social, economic and political activities. Educated women compete with men and with other women for leadership positions in business, political parties, governments, trade, education, sports and even bullfighting. The figures support the dimension of change in our country: From 1970 to 1995, female illiteracy, dropped, going from 29.6% to 12.7%, mainly in women under 40. Female illiteracy was reduced by 16.9 points between 1970 and 1995, despite the significant decrease in the proportion of female illiteracy and the fact that the gap between men and women is becoming narrower, yet the difference between the sexes persists. In 1950 in Mexican universities there were 14 women for every 100 men. Twenty years later, in 1970 the proportion was 36 per 100 men in 1990 the figure rose to 70 women for 100 men, 1995, female enrollment in formal education with a degree represents two thirds of the total enrollment level. Day by day the number of women with professional level of academic skills is growing. This has a price: in the metropolitan area of Mexico City, most professional women are divorcee. Still, it is estimated that less than 20% of professional jobs in the country are occupied by women.

The right to vote was granted to Mexican women until 1953, with the reform of article 34 of the Constitution, giving women all political and civil rights. In 1960 Aurora Jimenez became the first

woman elected as Federal Deputy; in that same year, following the initiative of the writer Maruxa Villalta, "Women's Day" is instituted. Griselda Alvarez in 1979 became the first female governor of a Mexican state (Colima). Today we have seen women in our country by political delegations and Secretaries of State, but not Presidents yet. Slowly but surely, we Western women are climbing the ladder in activities that were once the exclusive domain of the male.

The Charter of Principles of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994), stated in point number four that the cornerstone of development on population programmes and the need to "promote equity and equality of the sexes and the rights of women, eliminate violence of all kinds against women and ensure that it is the woman's right to control her own fertility." The woman is slowly leaving secondary positions and in some social sectors is recognized not only in terms of equality before the law, but also in terms of her ability and creativity. Women do not want to be spectators of the changes that are occurring in the world today. They want to be able to influence the shaping of the new international order, which is made on pillars of greater social justice, non-discrimination and less destructive power.

They have formed movements like International Inner Wheel that seek to vindicate the rights of women. In this struggle, women competed with men on male terrain. Feminists fought for absolute equality, this is physiologically impossible



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because we are not equal. The female condition of motherhood requires different treatment of different times and circumstances that allow them to remain taking care of the child or have the support of the father while mother is working. This is an indispensable condition of social preservation. Many feminists in their crazy competition with men, rejected maternity, marriage and family, in order to prove their equality. Others were so busy working and competing with their peers, that they overlooked the opportunity to make a home and a family. We may recognize many successful female entrepreneurs, at their forties who are alone. This whole situation of claims and rebellions have produced many changes in the social structure, such as free unions without marriage, abortions, abandoned children in the hands of third parties or institutions such as kindergartens (sometimes with a television nanny). Nowadays we see changes in the education of children, confusion of roles, changes in family structure, a loss (or modification if you prefer to say so) of values, a relaxation in morals, excess, debauchery, drug addiction, a more hectic life and less satisfactory, considerable increase in the number of divorces and changes in social relations. This has also led to changes in social, political and economic level.

Even today in Mexico, it is difficult for the woman who got prepared through university education, to have a job simultaneously with husband, children and a stable home. For instance, I did not start working until my children were teenagers

and I had more time during the mornings. Occupations as mother, wife and homemaker, do not let women enough time to develop intellectually and culturally. Many women do all these things at the same time but pay a very high price in stress. Maintaining a stable partner and a functional family relationship requires a lot of female effort. The mother's role is socially valuable because no one can replace her. The woman not only gestates children, but helps them grow and forms them as individuals. The mother gives the child's emotional security and emotional structure. You learn these tasks alone, without previous courses and often unassisted. Even some women perform the roles of father and mother with limited resources of time and money. It is also important that in defense of the "feminine values," in Mexico, as in other countries, women do not forget that along with the male, we have the power and duty to form balanced human beings; in egalitarian and harmonious conditions for men and women. Only in this balance we can enjoy a healthier, more just and happier society. To achieve this, women and men alike, must develop mechanisms that allow everyone optimal development as persons.

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The Author, Swarna Soysa is a member of Inner Wheel District 322, Sri Lanka for the last 36 years. She participates actively in projects related specially to girls and women. Last year, a District project named “Educate to Protect” was carried out together with Sri Lanka Police, National Child Protection Authority and the Education Department. I was the acting Coordinator for the project and we successfully educated 10,000 children and over 4,000 parents as to how to deal with the subject of child abuse. The Author is a Board Director of International Inner Wheel for 2016-2017.

Sri Lanka known as the pearl of the Indian Ocean was one of the flourishing countries with a history of over 2,500 years. But with various invasions from other countries it has become one of the third world countries.

Even though the first woman Prime Minister of the world (elected in 1960), is from Sri Lanka, such leadership did not significantly improve the quality of Sri Lankan women. In politics the representation of

**Many years after world's first female PM,
Sri Lanka's girl-rights record still poor**



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women in parliament is a mere 2%. But at least the present government feels that more female members should be there in the parliament to solve the grievances of the females.

With a population of multi-ethnic people, Sri Lanka suffered almost 30 years of civil war that brought untold miseries to its people. The after effects of the civil war were felt mostly by the war widows with no income to maintain their families. Mothers left their children either with their fathers, grandmothers or relations to seek employment abroad.

These children never had the affection and care given by a mother. Some fathers in their drunkenness at the end of the day raped their own daughters. Some girls of very young age were raped and murdered by either drug addicts or sex maniacs as the girls did not have the protection they needed.

Many NGOs in the country came forward to help in such cases. Inner Wheel District 322 conducted “Educate to Protect” a programme together with the Sri Lanka Police, Education Department and National Child Protection Authority and covered over 10,000 children in many parts of the country. But we felt the need was more to educate the parents rather than the children. A police hot line was set up to report such misdeeds and the culprits would be punished. Our aim

was to educate them about what child abuse is and what measures should be taken to control such abuses.

As a raped girl would lose her childhood, she would carry the stigma and the trauma of it although she is the victim. Gender based violence has become a fact of life. Emotional and physical abuse, sexual harassment, domestic violence, violence related to spousal alcohol are common in many low income families.

Although the dowry system was an issue in the past as many girls are employed, it is no longer an issue except in rare cases. As Sri Lanka gained freedom from foreign rule, a social policy package of free health and education services and subsidized food dramatically improved the women's quality of life. But with the financial cost of the war there has been a marked deterioration in the quality of healthcare and education thus affecting the quality of the life of women.

We as Inner Wheel members have given financial aid to selected widows to find self-employment and educate the children. This will give a chance for the children to be with their mothers when they return home from school.

Women in low income families bear the increasing burden of the cost of living. A higher proportion of

widows and elderly poor women are more impoverished and as a result most of the inmates of Elders' Homes are women as there are no ones to look after them. There were recent cases where children were abandoned by single parents and old people were abandoned by their children.

Women are basically the suppliers of cheap labour. Even though many educated women hold high paying jobs as administrators, doctors, lawyers, etc, majority of women work as garment workers in free trade zones, migrant labourers and tea plantation workers earning small salaries, although they bring in the much needed foreign exchange to the country.

But still, with the free education system the very brilliant students get the opportunity of higher education free of charge. Five years ago, our club sponsored four girls who are daughters of farmers. They had obtained good grades in their high school that qualified them to be enrolled in medical college. Now they have graduated as qualified medical doctors and we hope they will work with dedication and help the less fortunate women.

Abortion is not legalized in Sri Lanka and some young or unmarried mothers with unwanted babies abandon them and in some cases murder them. Also, due to the high unemployment rate among school leavers who are unskilled for the

labour market, they can be easily used by unscrupulous people to carry out misdeeds for money. With vocational training and better job opportunities young girls could have better lives.



Evolution of women in Italy in the last 50 years: The development, its feminine revolution

Edy Cardini: Has been an IW member since 2013, incoming President of Inner Wheel Club “FIRENZE IRIS” - one of the 3 clubs of Florence, Italy, in District 209 - for the year 2016/17.

Graduated in foreign languages, has been working for the Tourism Board of Florence for over 10 years. In the late eighties, she was appointed by the Regional Government of Tuscany as Chief of the Protocol of the Region. She retired in 2010. Currently holds courses and seminars on Protocol and Events Organization, for public institutions all over Italy.

This report is about the long legislative path that brought women to have their rights recognized in my country, Italy on a personal, familiar and professional level.

Are these laws respected today? How do they affect our daily lives? Which transformations did they produce in real life of Italian women? How far do we still have to go?

Until World War II women, in Italy, could neither vote nor sue somebody. They had no

assistance for maternity, no access to professional or public positions. Second class citizens, that's what they were! They had no juridical identity. It was as if the simple fact of being women might prevent them from participating actively in public life with the





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same political and civil rights with men.

Things started to change only in 1946. Thanks to a new law, women gained the right to vote and be voted for. For the first time they could sit in the Parliament, give their contribution to the writing of the Constitution and submit the first proposal against gender discrimination in favour of equality.

In fact, women's rights did not come naturally; they are the fruits of long and strong fights.

In 1958, the law abolished legal prostitution and in 1960 Trade Unions obtained equal economic treatment - for men and women - in national collective contracts.

After 1963 it was no longer possible to fire women who got married or were pregnant. Employers immediately invented "blank resignation", a signed blank sheet of paper that could be filled and used at any time.

In 1970, after long fights, Italy introduced divorce and in 1971 another law guaranteed the rights for single working mothers. Finally, in 1977, equality in work was formalized.

Italy recognized the right to interrupt undesired pregnancy in 1978 and in 1996 the first measures against sexual violence were approved.

The laws that see women protagonists in the last 50

years moved into two precise directions:

- on one side they tried to abrogate the most sexist norms trying to promote equality man/woman in the family area.
- on the other side they approved a few rules promoting a new culture in the fields of work and social life.

Slowly but strongly women developed a citizenship dimension that was - for all - social, political and juridical. They pushed the sharing of values and responsibilities trying to spread the principles of the Constitution on equality: without distinction of sex, opinions, political, personal and social conditions.

How are these laws applied today in the real daily life of Italian women? Which were the effective results and which transformations occurred?

About work

In spite of the numerous laws enacted on gender equality, women's employment in Italy is one of the lowest in Europe. They earn less than men, seldom reach high management positions and they are the first to abandon work if they had no help to raise the children. The number of female self-employed workers and entrepreneurs is though increasing.



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In Public Administration and Politics there have been many "positive actions" and "pink quotes" but it seems impossible to put an end to the curse of the "crystal ceiling", an invisible but resistant barrier that prevents women to reach the same economic and social levels of men.

It is not only a question of bad and insufficient welfare services, but it is also due to the persistence of stereotypes and prejudices.

It is still a common opinion that women do not have some "key competences": self-esteem, leadership, incapacity to separate professional activity from affection involvement.

There is specific obstinacy to ascribe to women a large series of feminine virtues which would make them more suitable than men to take care of the house and look after the children.

About violence

The first law on violence against women was enacted in 1996 and the last one in 2013 on gender violence. The legislative action has enormously increased the punishments for those who commit the crime. The government has also financed the opening of anti-violence centers where the victims receive protection, assistance and help to go back to a "normal life".

For violence against little girls, girls and women, they are adopting prevention measures in schools - all levels - and conscious campaigns are constantly carried out through the media. But, once again, the application of the law is insufficient.

The problem of violence against women is not only "urgent". It is, above all, a structural problem that we can win only changing - through education and culture - the mentality of many men and women.

All this, beyond the need of laws, emphasizes the necessity and the importance of the network of women working together - like the International Inner Wheel - in order to realize a real cultural revolution.

We exist! That is our goal!!



Realities of female persons with albinism

About The Author: Oluwaseyi Ogunsu is a Nigerian who holds a B.A. in English from the University of Lagos and a M.Sc. in Media and Communication from Pan-Atlantic University. Ogunsu is a Digital Media Professional and the blogger at LightSkinAfrica™, the first known Nigerian blog for people living with albinism; designed to inform and sensitize the public, address anomalies and consequently, improve the social climate of the society for the benefit of light-skinned Africans.

Ogunsu is also an entrepreneur who runs EvonPink Accessories, a small-scale jewelry-making outfit. Ogunsu is a principled and intelligent lady who loves to sing and solve Sudoku puzzles.



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In Africa where the sun is intense and harmful, the melanin-deficient and cancer-prone skin of Persons with Albinism (PWA) can easily become a burden. Visual impairment further worsens an already tough and unending struggle. In addition to the challenges that nature poses, PWAs are subject to constant discrimination, social exclusion and in some cases, bodily harm and/or loss of life. These stem largely from society's limited understanding of the condition.

For the purpose of this article, an online focus group was constituted to provide credence to issues that will be raised subsequently. The group was made up of 10 participants; seven females PWAs, within ages 20 - 50 and a male PWA; a coloured gentlemen and lady were also invited to give guidance to the group discussion. Although the various instances of discrimination faced by PWAs apply to both genders, Fred Akinmuyisitan, a Nigerian male PWA and Public Relations professional said, "There is this silly thing about this being a man's world. Sometimes, what female albinos experience is some kind of double jeopardy".

There are no statistics that show which PWA gender is more educated or qualified for employment. It was however established that both genders suffer greatly in an African employment market that is brimming with qualified graduates of all skin colours and holds disproportionate employment opportunities.

Bonisile Mtsweni, an accomplished South African female PWA said, "I work in the Financial Sector which is heavily dominated by white males so being a black albino woman makes getting a great job three times as difficult". Onome Okagbare-Majaro, a well-read Nigerian female PWA shared her experiences about numerous potential employers who often found her qualified but never sent her job offers. She said, "I feel judged the moment I walk into the room. Most times, from their facial expression, I know I will get a 'We regret to inform you...' mail".

The difficulties experienced by female PWAs in getting proper corporate jobs eventually push some into entrepreneurship as an alternative means of livelihood. In contrast to the usual tales of job seekers, Natalie Devora, a black American PWA writer and avid blogger shares her success story as an entrepreneur. "My professional experience has been that because I am highly regarded, my existing or potential clients never address the albinism; they are more concerned with hoping I can work with them".

Nonetheless, amidst all these difficulties and in the eventuality of a secured job, the female PWA does enjoy less physically exertive or field jobs compared to people of colour or even male PWAs.

The social life of a female PWA raised the most concern for members of the group. Bonisile made a point about the difficulties she has encountered regarding romantic relationships. She



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stated that she rarely ever got asked out on dates from men who were of the same pedigree mostly because they are concerned about how society will react to their love interest; instead she got approached by men who were semi-literate or who held technical jobs.

It was established that female PWAs also tend to encounter indecent sexual advances from men much more frequently than their coloured sisters mostly because their skin makes them conspicuous. The female PWA sometimes has to endure insults after turning down the advances of an admirer. Some men are bold to state out-rightly or imply that female PWAs should feel privileged to be approached since they are not regarded as “premium”.

Other shared experiences reveal that female PWAs are often approached by men of colour purely

out of curiosity and eagerness to discover what sexual encounter with them is like. Bonisile shares, “in fact, one of my friends only dates albino ladies out of fear of rejection”. It takes a female PWA who knows her worth to pinpoint the telltale signs and ward off insincere advances.

Fred agreed that the relationship situation is more difficult for female PWAs. In accordance with the African culture, while male PWAs have the liberty to approach ladies, female PWAs often have to wait to be approached. The wait for an eligible and deserving partner can be frustratingly long. Female PWAs who are determined to get ahead must then strive doggedly in confidence and with faith to achieve their dreams; and live a well-rounded and fulfilled life. In time, consistent enlightenment efforts, personal persistence and perseverance will revolutionize the society into a more tolerant and accepting one for PWAs.

Practice of marrying off widows to in-laws is loathsome - Bolatito



Ojoele-Ayoola Sherifat Bolatito was born 45 years ago to the Alhaji Muhammed Akindele Ojoele and Alhaja Silifat Olabisi Ojoele of Akinsinmide compound, Molete Quarters, Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State in Nigeria. I was weaned at age four by my aunt Alhaja Munirat Ibironke Ojoele-Hamzat whom I hold dear even in death. I attended Christ Church Mapo School 2, Elekuro Ibadan for my primary education and proceeded to Ibadan City Academy Ibadan and Ojongbodun Grammar School, Oyo for my secondary education. I obtained Final Diploma in Science Laboratory Technology with option in Physiology/Pharmacology in 1999 from University of Ibadan and Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition, University of Ibadan in 2004. Due to the entrepreneurial talents and skills acquired from my Aunt, I founded BEADS AND FABRICS CITY (a fashion and accessories outfit). I am naturally endowed with herbal knowledge and this has been a blessing to many right from my undergraduate days and this birthed KINDHEART DIET AND HERBAL RESEARCH CENTER. I'm the Initiator/Founder KINDHEART FOUNDATION, a non-governmental and non-profit organization with the sole aim of training and empowering orphans (girls), single mothers and widows to get focused and live an independent life devoid of

complex. I was Head Girl in both Primary and Secondary Schools, Treasurer and Financial Secretary of National Association of Oyo Students from 1991-1992, Student Representative Council, Idia Hall, University of Ibadan, and a very active member of Nigeria Institute of Science Technology NIST and Nutrition Society of Nigeria, NSN. In my club I have served as Secretary, Vice president, Club president, current District Editor and Incoming District Treasure. I am happily married to Rotarian Ayoola Ismail Adewale and blessed with one girl and two boys.



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It would be worthwhile and be of great benefit if nowadays women especially the youth can be conscious of the essence of womanhood (procreation), their role as a mother, unfortunately, mothers and mothers to be bothered less. I was weaned at age 4 and raised by my aunt (Madam Munirat Ibironke Hamzat) with her grandchildren in a large family setting devoid of hatred, bitterness and laziness. Ma'ami (my mother) my benefactor is an epitome of beauty, a disciplinarian, humble, hardworking, philanthropist, a counselor and a crusader. Her lifestyle, vision and teachings discussed below for the purpose of this book project had greatly encouraged and enabled me to make an informed decision in my teenage years to:

- a. Trust God, work hard and be prayerful.
- b. Have self-confidence and believe in making efforts
- c. Always stay focused even in the face of challenges.
- d. Give quality education and informed choices to all my children.
- f. Good family planning.
- g. Live a purposeful life of service to God through humanity.

The highlighted decisions taken as a teenager that had and still making a meaningful impact on my life which also created a positive pathway that is yielding and of value to humanity were influenced by my mentor's visions and teachings in those years as will be discussed below. Reminiscing on those eventful years, Ma'ami believed and stressed that the shortest

way to find help is going on one's knees, personal contact with God who cannot and will not disappoint. She believed in the scriptural passage which says, "Teach your child thy ways when they are of age and they will not depart."

Also, do onto others as you would want others to do onto you, she would chorus these to our hearing, intending couples, newly married, mothers and youths, for she believed today's youth are tomorrow's hope.

Planning after children are born and not before often leads to emotional pain that will result from inability to provide for the family needs, mother and children would live at the mercy of men around them, she would stress. She narrated a story of a hungry mother whose two daughters got impregnated by her concubine (supportive man). This is the result of the unplanned family. She preached that family life education (sex education) should be taught to a girl-child early in life to give her informed choices so as to prevent silly mistakes happening out of youthful exuberance and ignorance. Ma'ami would stress that African women see sex as something naughty and irritating or not to be discussed with the children which makes it more appealing to the children to explore and even harder for them to talk about it to adults.

I was aware of few of my peers who got impregnated, some lost their lives, a few abandoned



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their babies as a result of their sexual exploration. Parents need to catch their children young. Ma'ami (May God bless her soul in heaven) never saw the four walls of classroom but believed education is the key to freedom, that education makes a woman because her beauty only complements her dignity; it makes a woman self-assured and prevent her from cultural stereotyping of women 's status. Countless girls who are out of school hawking seasonal fruits, drinks and wares, run errands, used to be sexually abused and consequently make them stray into prostitution and invariably end up as street mothers giving birth to future political thugs, suicide bombers and terrorists.

Privacy and decency of a girl-child must be taught to a girl at infancy. A self protective girl-child will savour the pleasure of self-respect, self-confidence and self-reliance. Most mothers who lacked in their duties or are ignorant will leave the care of their girl-child in the hands of the older opposite sex who might be co-tenants or older boys. And no girl or woman who is raped can neither retain nor regain her self-esteem and incapable of undertaking self- protective measure. Some mothers will indecently dress their girl-child while some will encourage the grown up one. This parental attitude makes girl a sex symbol and potential victims of sexually harassment and prostitution, she stressed. She continuously fought for mothers whose in-laws had castigated, hated and labeled as bad eggs all because

of their children's sex, health status (genotype factor). She also counseled mothers or women who had taken female genital mutilation as a profession to switch to a more befitting profession. She argued that sexual control is in the mind of girls brought up in planned homes and not in dehumanizing practice of female circumcision and that God the Creator knows the importance of the clitoris, therefore why should a human being remove it.

She hated the practice of widows being remarried to younger in-laws in the same family with the aim of caring for the deceased children which was often an impossible task. Divorces and single mothers were always counseled to encourage their children to remarry. She counseled parents against arranged marriages between two families to suit the family ego or early marriage of the girl that promoted being a mother before a woman. Meanwhile, my mentor firmly believed that empowerment of a woman is the empowerment of a nation and that being heard was not about the number of rib bones but ability and capability. As a philanthropist, who believed in the service to humanity. She impacted and sowed greatly into humanity. She would say that there is joy in serving and to God be the glory.

Princess (Mrs.) Sarah A. Sosan, OFR, is a former Deputy Governor, Lagos State. CEO, GFR Educational Services Ltd. She trained as a professional teacher and educational administrator. She is an alumnus of University of Lagos, Akoka with a Master's degree. As a deputy governor of Lagos from 2007- 2011, she was the supervisor of the Education sector and a lot of reforms were successfully carried out at this period. She served as a member of the Presidential Taskforce on Education from 2010-2011. After a successful tenure as deputy governor she became an alumnus of IESE Business School, Barcelona and Harvard Kennedy School, Boston for executive education. She is a great motivational leader, passionate and committed to the overall development of the individual. She founded Sarah Adebisi Sosan Foundation (SASF) to promote support for overall growth of a person. She is a fellow of Nigeria Institute of Management (Chartered) and member of Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Nigeria British Chamber of Commerce.



The sound of a baby brings a lot of joy to the parents, friends, relatives, and community. Usually at the spread of this joyful news, what follows is the question of what sex is the child? It is a female! It is a boy! If it is a boy the joyful noise becomes louder but the reverse if it is a girl. The case is worse if the woman has had up to 3 girls in previous births. This practice is prevalent in most African traditions and this is very true amongst my people;

the Aworis especially those in the rural/riverine communities in Lagos.

This practice has made women hunger more for the male child and often dies in the process of having overage pregnancies. When we look at what is practised especially in the sub-Saharan region, we observe that the girl child is exposed to and



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experiences a lot of challenges immediately she arrives into the world till she departs this mother earth.

In many homes, the mothers who are supposed to minimize the burden associated with this gender are the worst culprits. Different treatments are given to the boy and girl in house training. This is exhibited in what house chores to be done, while the girl is forced to sweep, wash plates, clothes and stay with the mother in the kitchen, the boy is allowed to play the big man, he is allowed to play football or engage in activities that “men” do while women are to take care of the men. What a life? Most traditions encourage this to the extent that a 3-year-old boy is revered as head of a family even when he is still in nappies.

As the girl child grows into that beautiful maiden the sexual abuses start, she is prone to abuses from uncles, cousins and even biological fathers. She is perceived as a sexual object and toy for the male gender. It is rather unfortunate that mothers through ignorance encourage this by allowing their daughters as toddlers sit on uncle's laps, watch television in a male neighbour's room. These lapses have exposed these children to incest, rape and various sexual abuses.

In addition to this, many girls hawk goods late into the night. This is said to supplement family's income many girls lives get damaged throughout this and they suffer psychological trauma throughout life.

This often results to many of such girls becoming anti-marriage or they become prostitutes.

When it comes to education and it comes down to choosing who goes to school, in most cases where there are no available resources, the girl-child is asked to step down for her brother, if it happens and she is lucky to start school this gets truncated at a certain age because she has to be married off. The excuse is that a girl's education ends in the kitchen. What does the mother do in this situation? She supports what the head of the family wants because she does not want to compete with the husband's decision nor want to be thrown out of the home; the girl-child bears this pain alone.

Due to the ineffective communication of mother and daughter, many girls had relied on friends and peers advice. Such advice often leads to many of them being involved in negative activities or involved in drugs or cultism. Many become pregnant with unwanted babies and fatherless children. No mother or “community mothers” give valuable counsel, admonition or support required to these innocent teens experiencing adolescent developments.

Today, many girls have grown to be well educated. They hold good jobs, occupy board rooms, chairperson posts, they are political leaders and also decision makers. Are they equally opportune to give or be involved in decision making especially where the male dominates the office hierarchy, the board room meetings or political high level meetings? No,



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the girl-child/woman does not have that opportunity. She has been trained by the mother to be silent when the men speak. A few have broken this taboo and are boldly involved in decision-making. Does her gender support when faced with gender inequalities matters at any level? No! Her gender often times does not give this support but will rather support the male gender due to envy and a pull-down syndrome. We find inequality of opportunities in most offices today especially when the female gender does not give in to sexual overtures. This affects her promotion and other privileges she is entitled.

At the communal levels older women are supposed to contribute to decisions for smooth running and the peace within these settings. This is not the case as in Igbo tradition for example; the women cannot sit with the male elders of the communities. It is a taboo. Widowhood is another big concern that a woman is negatively affected. The loss of a spouse is loss of half of one's life, she loses it all, she loses that love of youth that companionship and all they laboured for in life. In most cases, the family takes all that the widow and her husband had suffered to possess in life. She is exposed to ridicule and sufferings with her children especially if she was dependent on her husband when he was alive. Above all she undergoes a lot of repressive and negative traditional practices.

At this point let us look at privileges the girl-child enjoys, from my opinion, very few privileges

come her way in life except if she is a fighter, these privileges are often limited to family circles. When a woman gives birth, the euphoria of a new baby is experienced and while pregnant she enjoys the care of all members of the family. As soon as she gives birth, the support is limited especially if it turns out to be a girl.

The girl-child while growing up is exempted from some tasks that are considered too strenuous for her. Also she enjoys the protection of her brothers when faced by other male attackers.

These privileges are very limited when we consider and compare the challenges faced from cradle to grave. It is heart-warming that a lot of advocacy to save the girl-child from all abuses are on the increase. Yet this is not enough, all voices especially at global level, women organizations must be louder than before. A lot of enlightenment and education should be available to the girl-child very early and for mothers to prevent the continuation of marginalization and abuses. Gender parity should be driven with all resources to make life better and enjoyable for the girl-child. A woman is multitasking and this is the best God-given gift that the male gender lacks.



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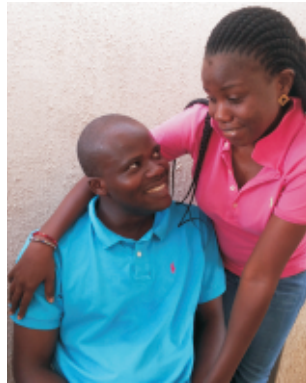
The Chairman
International Inner wheel
District 911

Dear Ma,

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

This is to show my endless appreciation on what I can never have imagined but was given to me by District 911 of Inner Wheel International. About this time three years ago, 24th of March, I was discharged from the National Orthopaedic Hospital Igbobi and had a second chance to live again. I have never heard of osteoporosis, the first time I did, I was diagnosed of it. This means that I needed a total Hip Replacement surgery. I was told I will be needing N1,200,000 which I have never seen or had before. Everything was happening so fast. I lost hope and I was dying so fast.

I want to thank Sickie Cell Foundation for giving me the opportunity to meet Most Wonderful Mothers in the whole world from Inner Wheel International District 911. You came into my life to rescue me and gave me a second chance to be alive again. You my mothers paid for my surgery and saw me through my stay in the hospital, gave me First Class treatment while I was on admission, followed me to my house and also followed up on me while recuperating at home. I never knew people like you exist. You picked-up a total stranger without asking who I was or if I deserved your compassion. You did not just replace my hip, but replaced my mind with a good one, selflessness and service to humanity. May the Almighty God bless the entire



Inner Wheel and your household. I am readily available to promote the course of Inner Wheel at all time I am called upon.

Your daughter,

Idowu Akinfenwa

APPRECIATION LETTERS

I, AJAYI HANNAH ANUOLUWAPO became a beneficiary of this great N.G.O. INNER WHEEL D. 911 Onigbongbo in the year 2006. I was 6 years old when I joined INNER WHEEL Scholarship project. They sponsored me throughout my primary school and Secondary School. Presently I am 16 years of age.

They paid my school bills; feeding allowance; provisions and clothing. My elder brother AJAYI SAMUEL got scholarship into the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (UNAAB). He is now a 100 level student. And before the death of my grandmother she also enjoyed a lot of benefit from INNER WHEEL, e.g., Adult Vocational skills (tie and die) etc.

My million vote of thanks to you all, Inner Wheel D. 911 members.

Your lovely daughter,
AJAYI HANNAH.





I am IWM Bridget Adebayo of Inner Wheel Club of Onigbongbo, a Past District Chairman 2007/2008 and also a Past National Treasurer. I joined Inner Wheel Club in the year 1986 April and since then I have loved and enjoy Inner Wheel because of the service to humanity which dated back to my secondary school days 1965 to 1969.

I attended St Teresa's College Ibadan in Oyo State and as an active member of the Legion of Mary a society in the Catholic Church part of our activities was to visit the Cheshire Home for the physically challenged in Ibadan. These visits were made in the company of the college missionary Miss Gilmartin, this I did every Saturday for five years. It gave me an opportunity to interact and impart knowledge to the inmates this past deed made me to become an Inner Wheel member and I have enjoyed every bit of it.

A total sum of €10,000 has been received donated by Gisela Rauhut, this fund was made possible by two distinguished German Inner Wheel ladies; Barbara Saldern and Karin Uwaje specifically for education of six gifted children out of the 54 children of Orphans of Hiv/aids victims. It's a continuous project since 2007 till date despite the demise of Frau Rahout. Two children are already in Higher Institutions and they are forever grateful.

The Chairman of this project is Oluyemisi Alatise and coordinator is PDC Bridget Adebayo. The second laudable project is the replacement of hips to sickle cell patients, this project took place in the year 2012/13 by PDC TaiwoAdisa who was the District Chairman. The surgeries were performed at Orthopaedic Hospital Igbobi, Lagos with the help of PNP OsenikeAjadi. The recipients are Mrs Akinfenwa (alias mama twins) and Ms Tinuola. Serving humanity Inner Wheel destiny serve everyone serve.



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Our adult lives are shaped by our teenage activities, says Bridget

I am IWM Bridget Adebayo of Inner Wheel Club of Onigbongbo, a Past District Chairman 2007/2008 and also a Past National Treasurer. I joined Inner Wheel Club in the year 1986 April and since then I have loved and enjoy Inner Wheel because of the service to humanity which dated back to my secondary school days 1965 to 1969. I attended St. Teresa's College Ibadan in Oyo State and was an active member of the Legion of Mary, a society in the Catholic Church.

As a teenager, it is easy to undertake some activities without realising the impact they would have on one's life as we grew older. Such was my active involvement in our secondary school pastime of going on visits to the Cheshire Home for the physically challenged in Ibadan, Oyo State. It was a compulsory event for us in the school. And as obedient students, we did not grumble. We just did what we were told under the supervision of the strict missionary teachers then. The visits in my school were made in the company of the college missionary Miss Gilmartin.

This we did every Saturday for five years. Later in life, I found myself gravitating towards charity work. The culture of philanthropy was nurtured at that tender age. The visits gave me an opportunity to interact and impart knowledge to the inmates. I

naturally in my adulthood, on being married to a Rotarian, found joy in the charity activities after I was inducted a member of Inner Wheel club, District 910 Nigeria. I have not looked back ever since in the service of this great club of wonderful ladies. I have been enjoying every bit of my time in Inner Wheel. I found out that there is strength in numbers.

By teaming up with other Inner Wheel members all over the world, we make things that are seemingly impossible to happen. Such was the beautiful project we partnered with our sisters in Germany to execute. The first Gisela fund of €10,000 was donated by Frau Gisela Rauhut; this fund was made possible by two distinguished German Inner Wheel ladies; Barbara Saldern and Karin Uwaje specifically for education of six gifted children out of the 54 children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. It's a going concern since 2007



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till date despite the demise of Frau Rauhut. Two children are already in Higher Institutions and they are forever grateful. The Chairman of this project is IIW Oluyemisi Alatise and coordinator is my humble self.

The second laudable project is the replacement of hips to sickle cell patients. This

project took off in 2012/2013 by PDC Taiwo Adisa who was the then District Chairman. The surgeries were performed at Orthopaedic Hospital Igbobi, Lagos with the help of PNP Osenike Ajadi. The recipients are Mrs. Akinfenwa (alias mama twins) and Ms Tinuola. Serving humanity is Inner Wheel's strength.





INTRODUCTION

Inner Wheel District 913, Nigeria was given a sum of N202,007.63 in September, 2014 by the National Governing Body which received same from Inner Wheel Club of Tapiola, Finland as a soft loan. The money was to be given to needy women especially widows to help them move on in life. The District being a large one geographically, decided

Tapiola Soft Loan Report

to split the amount into four to cover the four zones of the District. With this decision, N50,000 was given to a recipient in each zone. Below are responses from some of the recipients, almost two years after.

1. IBADAN ZONE

Name: Mrs. Funmilayo Adeoye

Age: 41 years.

Address: Elewi-Odo, along Iwo Road-Ojoo Expressway, Ibadan

Phone number: 08107944843

Business: Frying puff-puff.

“I used to buy flour in small quantities as needed to prepare puff-puff. On receipt of the Inner Wheel loan, I started buying up to eight bags at a time. With this the quantity of puff-puff I could fry daily increased and I started selling flour in small and big measures. My sales boys increased from one to three. The expanded scope of business increased my income. I was first and foremost saved from the embarrassment of inability to pay my children's school fees. Later on I was able to change accommodation to a more decent one. Without this loan from Inner Wheel, I would probably have relocated to my village in Kogi State to be with extended family members. I sincerely thank all those who made the loan possible. I pray that their sources of livelihood will never dry up.



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If I have opportunity for another loan after paying up this one, I wish to expand further by moving from frying on roadside to a shop, buying a deep freezer to enable me sell drinks along with the puff-puff and flour.”

BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1975 in Kabba, Kogi State of Nigeria. Had primary school education and secondary school up to year three. She had to discontinue because her father died and there was nobody to assist her further. She then worked as a helper in a canteen for about 10 years after which she learnt hair dressing in Kano. On gaining her freedom, she moved to Kaduna where she had an aunty and opened her own salon. The Kaduna riot of year 2000 had her salon burnt and had to relocate to Ibadan through the assistance of a friend. In Ibadan, she met the man she later married and who unfortunately died four years ago at the age of 48 leaving her and three children behind, a boy and two girls. The children are now 13, 8 and 7 years old.

2. INNER WHEEL CLUB OF IJAPO, AKURE ZONE

The N50,000 Finland loan for Inner Wheel Club of Ijapo was given to Mrs. Toyin Mrs. She is married with children. an ha irdresser, Oso. Oso used the soft loan to expand her hairdressing business. According to her, she used to buy the various hair making materials like relaxer, shampoo, weave-on, hair creams etc in small

quantities. But with the bulk money of N50,000, she was able to travel to Ibadan to get the needed materials in bulk. Consequently, she has been making more profit thereby expanding her business. In addition she now has money to buy some other things like bread and provision items to sell and make further profit. She affirmed that with the increased working capital and resultant profit, her living condition and that of her family has improved. She expressed her appreciation.



Name: Mrs Toyin Adewole

Age: 45 years, a mother of 5. Ages 9 to 30

Husband died in 2006

Shortly after, their home and shop were demolished.

This of course created extreme hardship for her.

Inner Wheel Club of Garki added N20,000.00 to purchase her a freezer. She is selling pure water and minerals.

From her profit, she paid for entrepreneurship training on soap and domestic chemicals making.

She completed the course.

She can make soap, IZAL, vaseline, hair cream, air fresher, nail remover and bleach. She is now trying to market and sell the products.

We believe she is a success story.

1. BIDA ZONE- INNER WHEEL CLUB OF BIDA

My name is HadizaNda Abu of Doko community in Bida area, I was born forty years ago. My parents are farmers. I got married to Mallam Abu 22years back with children.

The loan of fifty (50)thousand Naira given to me has really helped my business very well.

Apart from yams, I now go to weekly market to buy grains for sale.

I want to use this opportunity to thank the club for the loan of #50,000 given to me to expand my yam and tomatoes business.

The money helped me a lot when I collected it, but later due to high transportation money the business was affected but am grateful to the club. I will pay back as promised by May ending. Thank you very much.

Signed

Madam HadizaNda Abu

Compiled by

IWM. Bola Odeleye,

Immediate Past District Chairman.

Women are naturally endowed

PDC Abimbola Sowande was born some six decade plus years ago in Lagos. She is an experienced public health physician and has been practicing in public, private sectors for about 40 years since graduation. She is currently the Country Director AIDSFree Nigeria, a project of JSI funded by USAID.

She is a chartered member of Inner Wheel Club of Surulere since 1986 and rose through the rank to be the National Secretary of the National Governing Body of Inner Wheel clubs in Nigeria.

International Inner Wheel: President Inner Wheel Club of Surulere 1991 - 1992. District Chairman (International Inner Wheel District 911 - Lagos and Ogun States) - 2001 - 2002. District Treasurer - 1994/95; 1995/96; 1996/97. National Governing Body of Inner Wheel Clubs in Nigeria (NGB). Treasurer (National Governing of Inner Wheel Clubs in Nigeria) - 2002 - 2003. National GB Editor - 2013 - 2014. National GB Secretary - 2015 - 2016.

Membership of other Service /Non-Governmental Organizations: Lawanson Community Partner for Health - Chairman (1994 - 1998). Joint Lagos Community Partner for Health Consultative Forum - Chairman (1999 - 2001). Infection Control African Network - Honorary Treasurer (2011 to date). International Federation of Infection Control - Member of the Board of Trustee (2013 to date). Association of General and Private Medical Practitioners of Nigeria - Fellow. She is married to Olaolu O. SOWANDE - Baba Ijo of Christ Anglican Church, Ipore Ake, Abeokuta. She has three children and with 4 grandchildren. She is widely travelled.





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Women are naturally endowed with some privileges that help them navigate the waters of life over men. Some of them include the following:

- * It is believed that women can survive longer than men without food because women have more body fat and less muscle mass than men. Moreover, due to having less body mass than men, women use fewer natural resources (i.e. air, water, food, fuel, etc.) so women are naturally "greener" than men.

- *In addition women generally seem to have higher social and emotional intelligence than men, are less violent and aggressive, are almost never serial killers or sexual sadists, and are far safer drivers. In fact, a recent New York Times piece noted that men are found to drive faster overall, ignore traffic laws more often, take greater risks, and are involved in the majority of fatal crashes around the globe.

- *Also, having two X chromosomes provides a huge health advantage, which is clearly the case for X-linked diseases, such as colour blindness, haemophilia and Duchenne's disease (a severe recessive X-linked form of muscular dystrophy). These diseases, caused by mutations on the X chromosome, nearly always affect only men. Since females have two cell lines (one paternal and the other maternal with different X chromosomes active), if just one of a woman's X chromosomes is "healthy," it can prevent the expression of most X-linked diseases. Males, however, who have a "sick" X chromosome will inevitably be

affected, as they have no "back-up" X chromosome from a "healthy" cell line.

- *It is a well-known fact that in most cultures women live longer than men. In the United States, for instance, all races considered, women now live an average of 80.1 years, compared to 74.8 years for men. Hence, from a longevity standpoint, women score a point.

- *Women have better health seeking behaviour than men which helps deal with medical issues better than men. This may be a contributory factor to their living longer.

They however face a number of challenges that put them at risk of various ills in the world. These challenges are more glaring in the developing world where gender stereotyping and socialization put women at a disadvantaged position to male or professional choices.

- *The many nutritional problems faced by women in developing countries can be grouped in three main areas: childhood under nutrition leading to short stature; frequent reproductive cycles contributing to deterioration of maternal nutritional status including anaemia; heavy workloads and expenditure which, together with marginal dietary intakes, mean that many poor women in the Third World are chronically energy deficient. The consequences of these nutritional problems can include increased risk of maternal mortality, reduced

work capacity and increased morbidity due to reduced resistance to infections. Inadequate nutrition amongst women in developing countries will, therefore, often lead to impairments in the women's health and affect their ability to fulfil their social and occupational roles.

*During pregnancy it is a woman that carries the baby so the nutritional status of the mother affects the baby. In the rural areas less developed countries; the women eat the left over from their husbands or get served the least proteinous meal so the development of the uterus and pelvis may be stunted.

*Men are more in the lead in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) professional fields. This is argued to be due exposure of the 'boys' to the STEM field early in life than the 'girls'. Also the awkward work hours that may not be convenient for nursing mothers. This trend is however changing in the present age.

*In essence, the only area where men have a clear biological advantage over women is their physical strength and possibly reaction time. But, unless we're considering sports or athletic performance, even this physical advantage is becoming less and less important due to technological advancements that are levelling the physical playing field.



It's a Boy

Mrs. Kafilat Adeola Afodun was born over five decades ago. She was introduced to the world of "Service above Self" by her husband, Lateef Afodun, a member of the Rotary Club of Lagos Western, Nigeria. She is a Charter member and Past President of Inner Wheel Club of Lagos West, and has also served at District and National Council levels as District Chairman 2003-2004, and National Council Treasurer 2004-2005. She is very active in the services of God and Humanity. She loves reading, singing and making friends. She is blessed with children and grandchildren

The sound of a baby brings a lot of joy to the parents, friends, relatives, and community. Usually at the spread of this joyful news, what follows is the question of what sex is the child? It is a female! It is a boy! If it is a boy the joyful noise becomes louder but the reverse is the case if it is a





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girl. The case is worse if the woman has had up to 3 girls in previous births. This practice is prevalent in most African traditions and this is very true amongst my people, the Awori, especially those in the rural/riverine communities in Lagos. This practice has made women hunger more for the male child and often die in the process of having overage pregnancies. When we look at what is practised, especially in the sub-Saharan region, we observe that the girl child is exposed to and experiences a lot of challenges immediately she arrives into the world till she departs this mother earth.

In many homes, the mothers who are supposed to minimize the burden associated with this gender are the worst culprits. Different treatments are given to the boy and girl in house training. This is exhibited in what house chores to be done, while the girl is forced to sweep, wash plates, clothes and stay with the mother in the kitchen, the boy is allowed to play the big man, he is allowed to play football or engage in activities that “men” do while women are to take care of the men. What a life? Most traditions encourage this to the extent that a 3-year-old boy is revered as head of a family even when he is still in nappies. As the girl child grows into that beautiful maiden the sexual abuses starts, she is prone to abuses from uncles, cousins and even biological fathers. She is perceived as a sexual object and toy for the male gender. It is rather unfortunate that mothers through ignorance encourage this by allowing their daughters as toddlers sit on uncle's laps, watch television in a male neighbor's room. These lapses have exposed

these children to incest, rape and various sexual abuses. In addition to this, many girls hawk goods late into the night. This is said to supplement family's income many girls lives get damaged throughout this and they suffer psychological trauma throughout life. This often results in many of such girls becoming anti-marriage or they become prostitutes.

When it comes to education and it comes down to choosing who goes to school, in most cases where there are no available resources, the girl-child is asked to step down for her brother. If it happens and she is lucky to start school this gets truncated at a certain age because she has to be married off. The excuse is that a girl's education ends in the kitchen. What does the mother do in this situation? She supports what the head of the family wants because she does not want to compete with the husband's decision nor wants to be thrown out of the home; the girl child bears this pain alone. Due to the ineffective communication of mother and daughter, many girls relied on friend's and peers' advices. Such advice often led to many of them being involved in negative activities or involved in drugs or cultism. Many become pregnant with unwanted babies and fatherless children. No mother or “community mothers” give valuable counsel, admonition or support required to these innocent teens experiencing adolescent developments.

Today many girls have grown to be well educated. They hold good jobs, occupy board roles, chairperson posts, they are political leaders and also decision makers. Are they equally opportune to give



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or be involved in decision making especially where the male dominates the office hierarchy, the board room meetings or political high level meetings? No, the girl child/woman does not have that opportunity. She has been trained by the mother to be silent when the men speak. A few have broken this taboo and are boldly involved in decision-making. Does her female gender support her when faced with gender inequalities matters at any level? No! Her female gender often times does not give this support but will rather support the male gender due to envy and a pull down syndrome. We find inequality of opportunities in most offices today especially when the female gender does not give in to sexual overtures. This affects her promotion and other privileges she is entitled.

At the communal levels older women are supposed to contribute to decisions for smooth running and the peace within these settings. This is not the case as in Igbo tradition for example; the women cannot sit with the male elders of the communities. It is a taboo. Widowhood is another big concern that a woman is negatively affected. The loss of a spouse is a loss of half of one's life; she loses it all, she loses that love of youth that companionship and all they labored for in life. In most cases, the family takes all that the widow and her husband had suffered to possess in life. She is exposed to ridicule and sufferings with her children especially if she was dependent on her husband when alive. Above all she undergoes a lot of repressive and negative traditional practices.

At this point let us look at privileges the girl child enjoys, from my opinion, very few privilege comes her way in life except if she is a fighter, these privileges are often limited to family circles. When a woman gives birth, the euphoria of a new baby is experienced and while pregnant she enjoys the care of all members of the family. As soon as she gives birth, the support is limited especially if it turns out to be a girl.

The girl child while growing up is exempted from some tasks that are considered too strenuous for her. Also she enjoys the protection of her brothers when faced by other male attackers. These privileges are very limited when we consider and compare the challenges faced from cradle to grave. It is heart-warming that a lot of advocacy to save the girl child from all abuses are on the increase. Yet this is not enough, all voices especially at global level, women organizations must be louder than before. A lot of enlightenment and education should be available to the girl child very early and for mothers to prevent the continuation of marginalization and abuses. Gender parity should be driven with all resources to make life better and enjoyable for the girl child. A woman is multitasking and this is the best God given gift that the male gender lacks.



Flying Girls

I have written a book about Sim. Sim is a little Yoruba girl who lives in two alternate worlds. In one world she is a nine-year old who is rented out as a domestic servant working in the city of Lagos. This is the reality of a fraction of girls under the age of 15 years from rural areas of Nigeria. An overwhelming number of households in the cities rent young girls as servants and (ironically) nannies. The other alternate world Sim lives in is the dream world where she can fly at will. A world with talking birds and butterflies, where shadows are friends. A moon lit world of escapism. Escapism from the thingification and sexualisation of little girls. 'Flying Girls' is a body of works dedicated to girls in my country. A little safe place for them to be children.

A Chapter in my Child Hood

The birth of a child is a blessing to the family. In terms of family lineage continuity, the male child is preferred. But here I am a girl child who heralded the exit of her mother at child birth.

At age three I was virtually an errand girl while living with my aunt in a nearby town. I soon started school at the only Community Primary School many kilometers from our village. I carried the school bags for my other

cousins. I wasn't particularly brilliant, so repeated 3 times in different classes. By the time I was 14 years old, I observed my elder cousin Dele who was already in a secondary school, had developed a funny feeling and relationship with me through his offerings of unsolicited gifts. Before I knew what was happening and against my wish, he had had a carnal knowledge of



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me...my first experience.

I attempted to narrate my experience to my aunt who understood but scolded me never to discuss or revisit the topic. She even threatened to return me to the village if I ever did. This marks the beginning of my frustration and change in my life.

I managed to live with her for another week in fear. The next Sunday, while everyone was in church and was alone doing the house chores, I packed my little belongings and plunged into the world of the unknown.

I somehow found my way to the motor park in the next village and arrived in my father's compound 2 days after but missed him by whiskers, having gone on hunting expedition for 6 days. He came back to receive the good news of the arrival of his latest baby boy born from his third wife... probably younger than me. The excitement overshadowed my arrival and not until after a week that I received his attention.

On telling him that I had finished my primary education, his immediate reaction was to marry me off and this he did in a matter of weeks to his friend. My aunt was not at my wedding because I refused to post the letter I wrote for my father informing her.

My father's friend was highly disappointed after the union that I wasn't a virgin as expected. In a matter of months, and after no signs of pregnancy, I was abandoned by him and out of frustration I moved out of the matrimony unannounced and this time to Lagos. The last bus stop was right in front of a brothel. I approached one of the call girls and asked if I could get a place to lay my head for the night. It took only

minutes to meet the head girl and got accepted and initiated. In no time I became a 'big girl' in a flat and in control of other girls.

I became a mistress to a customer who treated me nicely, yet, unable to conceive for him. In my desperation to get him committed, I arranged with my doctor to feign my pregnancy. But the move backfired as the lover man said there was no such agreement between us. I was shocked and wept uncontrollably and wished to die. I went on drugs, fell unconscious and found myself recuperating in a hospital, having been diagnosed with cancers of all sorts. I spent so much money fighting the disease and almost lost everything I had 'worked' for. While on my sick bed, I learnt the love of my life was already dating one of my good girls. He left all my gifts and gave me lots of money for my treatment but never came to visit me. Knowing that I have a hopeless case, it dawned on me that I had lost everything. No child, no family to take care of me as death was knocking fast. In seconds, I had a flash of my experience with brother Dele and wished my aunt had stood up for me and helped me to regain my confidence; if only my father's friend had treated me with some compassion and helped me to carry on with my life in spite of my initial shortcoming; if only I had not been sweet-talked into the prostitution business that ruined me eventually. Hot flushes of tears came rolling down my cheeks for the last time as I lay down to await the angel of death after consumption of suicide drugs...But today, I am alive, well, married and have children. The past, though painful, has been put behind me.

The effects of FGM on little girls and women

M*rs. Adefunke Ibrahim* was born into the Methodist Church over five decades ago to Engineer Olanipekun Fajemisin (of blessed memory) and Mrs. Fehintola Fajemisin both from Ilesa, Osun State. She is married to Engineer Tajudeen Ibrahim and they are blessed with four adorable children. She is an educationist with years of experience, and runs a private school known as Funtaj International School Limited (A Nursery, Primary and Secondary School). She holds HND certificate in Secretarial Administration, PGDE, and a Masters Degree in Education, specialising in Educational Management and Administration. The awardee is a quiet philanthropist, gentle, humble, unassuming and down-to-earth. She loves dancing and cooking. She likes table tennis and was an athlete while she was younger. Her passion for the less privileged in the society led her to join an International charity Organisation, INTERNATIONAL INNER WHEEL, an organisation that caters for widows, orphans and indigents. I am glad to inform you that this wonderfully blessed woman is also a member of the Methodist Youth League and YWCA of the Methodist Church, Nigeria.





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SYMPOSIUM: February 7, 2014.

In the presence of 30 representatives of African countries, Canada, USA, Europe, representatives of UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF, Obstetricians, Swiss and African Gynecologists, African Ambassadors or Diplomats. President of the Global Alliance against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Dr. Ly Aoua TALL, FGM expert, Sociologist and researcher in human science. After an opening session, there followed interactive sessions on the following topics:

1. Cultures and MGF (CD Aoualy Tall)

It notes the ancient practice of excision and infibulations, dating from 5 BC in parts of Ethiopia and Egypt. It has been practiced by many religions: in Europe, in a Russian Christian Sect with excision or a variation where breasts were cut off. This sect was sadly active for 200 years. Other types of mutilation: in psychiatric hospitals in FR, GB, USA feminine and masculine mutilations are used to prevent masturbation. The female genital organ is considered the seat of the devil so it is cut off. Several reasons are used to justify the practice of excision - aesthetic (female organs are awful).

-Hygiene

-moral: helps reduce women's impulses and preserves virginity, family honour - refusal of orgasm. It emphasizes the universality of FGM in world history. In the Middle Ages; chastity belt, fight against witches.

In China: small feet inflicted on women.

- Burying of women alive with their husbands when they died, in India.

The crusade started with putting on chastity belts to control the body of their wives.

FGM is a custom in religion and yet it is not mentioned in the Bible nor the Koran or the Torah. In the Koran, the Prophet had only daughters and it wasn't used. In Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Maghreb countries, it is not used. In fact this practice is still in Africa because of:

-poverty

-the low education of girls

-the ideological, cultural and religious strength

So we need a global fight against poverty and ignorance.

2. Health and FGM

Effects of FGM on the physical health of girls and women

Dr. Gouremustache, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician, Department of Health in Mali.

It exposes the facts following a study in Mali in 2012.

-Excision is practiced from 1 month to 12 months; younger ages are noted: minimum age 4 days! It is done at home, the excisor comes to the home, the hygienic conditions are catastrophic complications throughout life - bleeding, urinary problems, infections, vulvar oedema, pain, abscesses. In Bamako over 7,000 cases of complications. Newborn: Renal failure: urine cannot get out, so rise to the kidneys.



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Teenagers, young women: No sphincters sometimes, cannot go to school, cannot walk because of the pain; menstrual blood stores each month, swollen belly, vaginal flange causing permanent sterility leading to divorce. Injury in the bridal chamber: because the woman cannot be penetrated: So she is a devil woman. Childbirth: Head blocked, irreparable damage to women, multiple lacerations; For the foetus: suffering, infant death and death of women during childbirth. Action is needed to abandon tradition and superstition.

Presentation of Dr. Rochat

Rochat is a surgeon at the Clinique Beaulieu in Geneva. He spends time between Switzerland and Africa doing reconstructive surgery before birth, physical and moral reconstruction of women. He

exposes different classifications of FGM, type 1, type 2, which are actually different classifications of suffering due to increasing mutilation. Many babies are stillborn, many women die at childbirth, others survive with such physical disabilities they cannot have a social life, they are the "daughters of the devil." During this session, many examples were cited with sincerity, their cries from the heart; for example, Fatoumata, now a refugee in France excised at the age of 6, forcibly married by an ignorant mother. She now feels ready, at the age of 23 to visit his mother and to explain that they must abandon this practice. She also hopes to get her children back! And the poignant story of an educated diplomat, whose daughter was secretly excised by his mother-in-law and his wife. Such suffering...



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Domestic violence in Florence, Tuscany, Italy



Gabriele Maria TanzerLaudani has been a member of IW Club in Firenze Medicea since 2002-2003. Member of the District International Service Committee, District 209-ITALY (2015-2016). My husband, my mother and father are members in their respective IW and Rotary Clubs. I was born in Innsbruck, Austria, but I have been living in the city of Florence, Tuscany, in Italy for 27 years where I work in my own office together with my dear husband. I have a very busy life meeting lots of interesting people every day.

First I must say that in Florence, Tuscany, Italy, we are luckier than many other countries because we don't have the worst cases of violence against women such as trafficking, forced and early marriages or female genital mutilation. Therefore we should be very thankful.

Starting with the younger generation I can give you the good news that especially this year a very important aspect has been deepened, which is the theme of the silent victims who assist or suffer domestic violence: the children. The commissioner on the right of social health explained this at the seventh report presented in conjunction with the World Day Against Violence Against Women (25 November). To arrive at a description and understanding of the phenomenon in more detail the Social Observatory working group on gender violence has acted on many fronts and social cohesion: that of anti - violence centers, the Consultants, the ASL (health care company) through the Pink Code and the Centers for abusive men.

The Antiviolence Center



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The data of 28 structures, including anti-violence centers and counseling services on gender violence, confirmed the results of previous years, this data acknowledged network strength violence by welcoming more than 2,500 new users each year (2,597 in the last twelve months). From 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2015 the total number of women accepted was 13,461. These are women of every age group, social and cultural level. The violence most frequently detected by the Centers is the psychological (81.8%), followed by the physical (63.5%). Proportionally, foreign women are more often subject to physical and economic violence, and bullying and stalking are most popular among Italians.

The Consultants and Rosa Codes Data

The information provided by the Consultants and Rosa Codes differs for a non- secondary aspect: while the first allow you to achieve the individual user level - in 2014, 918 women were counseled for abuse and violent treatments, including 121 girls that were younger than 18. Femicide: Femicide is a sex-based hate crime term, broadly defined as the killing of women, which unfortunately, in 2014 has marked a decline of attention, especially from the media. That means, more broadly speaking, the set of violent behavior that leads to the death of a woman or causes physical or psychological destruction of women. Hate crimes against women witnessed a reduced attention even as such crimes increased in Tuscany in 201 to total number of 12, an increase over the previous three years. From 2006 to 2014, in the region, the number of femicide victims were 77, or one every 46 days: in cases in which the offender has been

identified as "domestic", the nature of these murders has been highlighted and they took place at the hand of a person that she knew: a partner, a former lover, a rejected suitor, a customer, or a son.

Abuser recovery for MEN

The report also examined the work done by the four centers in Tuscany, which are dealing with recovery actions of violent men, as well as performing outreach activities in order to overcome gender stereotypes. In our region, in 2014, 88 men embarked on a path to change their violent behavior; in the first six months of 2015 the number has reached 61, thus showing an increase of attention to the issue of hate crimes against women.

Witnessed Violence

The theme of witnessing violence has been addressed for the first time in this report. It is a type of violence that comes through direct experience or indirect experience, or through exposure of the child to acts of physical, verbal, psychological, sexual and economic violence. The association Artemisia supports children and women victims that need to be recognized as a preliminary identification of domestic violence. Throughout 2014, the Centre followed 111 new cases involving violence victims, plus 75 cases from previous years. The dates of Institute of the Innocents interventions for Childhood and Adolescent also show how during the course of 2014 among the lesser Tuscan social services, 968 victims also witnessed violence. Looking at the statistics and the reports of Social Regional Observatory we find out and need to acknowledge that violence also exists in Florence, Tuscany, and people who are not personally involved in these situations can't even imagine the speed with which they spread.



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Dear Yemisi,

I am not sure if I am the right partner for your Coffee Table Project. I am now 82 years of age and have become a bit slow. I am no longer active in the hierarchy of IW. That means I am no longer in a prominent position of IW. I have finished that business many years ago; so why should other IW sisters have interest to contact me? The only use that I can see is to use my experiences, my net of contacts and my courage and patience to contact people of influence.

But I am still curious in IW projects and I would



like to hear what is going on in your country, especially I would like to hear what you personally are doing, what are your feelings, interests and concerns. As I don't use Twitter or Facebook, I feel I have lost contact with my friends in Nigeria. That is very much to my regret.

In Germany, Inner Wheel, Rotary and other organisations and individuals are busy helping the numerous refugees who come and have come to Germany from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and different African states. What is being done is admirable. In Munich where for several weeks many thousands of refugees arrived by train daily, the officials, NGOs and individuals worked admirably and innovatively together - like angels - to feed, clothe and house these traumatized people. Among them even children and new born babies! So now in every town and village you find families and single teenagers being housed in schools, barracks, factory halls or even tents, to give first shelter to the homeless people. Many families have offered to take some single teenagers as foster children in their homes. Others look after some individuals to help them with the bureaucracy or to find a job or to teach the German language, or to collect and repair bicycles, to get them more mobile.

Nearly all of our friends are engaged in helping the refugees to integrate into our society. We personally and also with Inner Wheel and Rotary help in the sector teaching the language, invite migrant families and take part in an "international breakfast meeting for women" in our village. Unfortunately not everybody is welcoming the refugees. There are some people who are extremely anti-foreigners and they unfortunately behave very aggressively, even attack people or burn houses. But the majority of Germans are



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ashamed of this behaviour.

We personally are so engaged in this project, because my husband I had similar experiences as homeless children during and after the war. Therefore in 1979 we offered hospitality to 3 Vietnamese boys and their aunt (known as boat-people). These are my experiences with refugees who didn't speak a word of German, English or French and came from a complete different culture. They do well now, live still in Germany. Although we had to leave them in Germany when we moved to South Africa, we still kept and keep close contact with three of them as well as to their wives and children. They belong to our family. They are assets for us as family but also for us as society.

In 2001-2002, as Chairman of my District 85, in Northern Germany, I started several joint projects with the District 911 in Nigeria. Karin Uwaje, Yemisi Alatisé and Bridget Adebayo had been my reliable and inspired contact persons. I am very grateful for their support which lasted for 15 years. I say a big thank you to you as well as to all the other DCS of D 911.

Also, in 2001 we in Germany collected funds and you in Lagos organized Computer Literacy Training Courses for needy girls and women and also Awareness Campaigns about HIV/AIDS. With every new DC in Nigeria the campaign got a slightly different focus: one year the information was brought to students of secondary schools in poor regions, in another year to hairdressers, taxi drivers, midwives and healers. One year the support went to HIV/mothers to prevent their new-born babies to be infected. For the last 7 years we gave financial support to orphans of whom the parents had suffered from AIDS.

For several years I did the fundraising in Germany in my club, in my district, among our friends and neighbours. The best fundraising was the one-day-invitation in the spring when over 40 bushes of Camélias (rare in Germany!) were blossoming. For 10 years we offered to the public the flower-show in our glasshouse, sold refreshments, seedlings, fine second-hand clothes, books, self-made jam and cakes and a lottery with lots of attractive sponsored prizes. All members of my club helped, some Rotarians assisted. It was fun for everybody and we collected pretty sums for the projects in Nigeria.

I wish the Coffee Table Project a good start and a long life. I think communication is the first step to friendship.

Barbara von Saldern

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April 2016

Barbara von Saldern was born in 1935 in Germany and lived in Germany. I am married to a Rotarian, have 3 children, 5 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. From 1983 -1994 we lived in South Africa. There my husband became a Rotarian and I became Rotary Ann. I have been a teacher in Germany and in South Africa, as well as an antique dealer. Since my retirement 1995, I learnt to make Silver Jewelry. Returning back to Germany I became founding member of the Inner Wheel Club of Bad Nenndorf-Springe, in 1997-1998; Chairman of my club, and in 2001-2002, Chairman of District 85. I did fundraising for several joint projects together with the IWs of D911, Nigeria.

'The weaker sex is the stronger sex, as the stronger sex has a weakness for the weaker sex'

Mamta Agarwal: President and National Representative 2015-16, Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in India; Charter President of Central Calcutta - D 329. Mamta as the National Representative of India hosted the 14th Triennial Conference "in oneness - let's make a difference" with much aplomb.

She initiated an International project for girl students in Nigeria. She is Chair, Apnalay, the project of senior's home in her club valued at Rs 5 crores. She has actively steered projects under TEACH, especially for street children, Sanitation all over India and Cancer Care in various hospitals.

She believes in women's capabilities and specialities and expects them to be treated equally. She deeply believes that education only can bring the desirable reform in this world.

'The weaker sex is the stronger sex, as the stronger sex has a weakness for the weaker sex.'

Although she is referred here as the weaker sex, this powerful quote would make any woman feel great about herself!

'Man' is the most evolved species on our planet. Naturally, the species includes the 'weaker sex' too. Both are born equal with the same feelings, sentiments and physical needs yet have a great deal of psychological and emotional differences.

Truly speaking, physically a woman is not as strong as a man. At the same time she is strong and



resilient enough to give birth to a new life. This is the most unique privilege she has, and in the child bearing and birth process, she enjoys myriad emotions and bonds with a human being like no man can. Bringing up a family is her forte and as a mother she understands the needs of her children far more than a father. Hence, even when families break apart, the children are mostly handed over to the mother since she is able to play both parent roles effectively.



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In different parts of the world, womenfolk have shaped according to the history, social customs and economic situation of the land. In the developed societies, she has equal rights and has a voice of her own to refuse or to rule. While in the backward thinking societies and poor economies, she is still struggling for basic rights and to be treated fairly as a human being.

Not long ago, women were considered inferior to men in all respects. But with changing times and higher education women have been progressing in all disciplines. Countries such as India, have initiated several government reforms, rules and laws in favour of women. This is merely, in order to ensure that the better half of the population paves its path of progress and is not at the mercy of the men around her. As a result, women in India have quotas in educational institutions and in government jobs, and even in public bus seating! This has enabled her to come up the learning curve, take on powerful positions in corporate and public life and face the world on an equal footing. Today, she is a head of a state, a pilot, an athlete, a scholar, a doctor, a lawyer. In fact, in every field she is shining and moving forward.

However, there is a different reality too, which we cannot overlook. My thoughts stem from the situation of women at the grass root level. India being a developing nation, the status of women is still pathetic, especially in villages and it needs a great deal of improvement. The patriarchal society that worships a plethora of Indian goddesses who symbolize power, wealth, learning also oppress and suppress the women in their own family.

Most often she is considered as an object of physical pleasure only. In her childhood she is vulnerable to be

abused by her uncles, teachers, trainers, hair stylists, tailors, etc and at times by her step father too! In her teens she faces the fear of being followed, she is at risk of lewd remarks, gawked at, unpleasant touch, groped, sexually abused or even raped, which she is unable to fight off. Venturing out alone in night is especially unsafe for her. Many a times, one hears about girl-child being raped and sexually abused. In fact, a grown up woman is also at a risk with age no bar. Besides physical abuse, many a times a woman is also subjected to mental abuse in a marriage by a conservative society. Many a times, she is unable to walk out of a troubled marriage since she barely has the courage to stand up for herself.

But overall the situation is changing and thankfully so. Women are getting bold and learning the art of tackling such situations. The society also is waking up to this nuisance and laws are coming into force to favour women. Young girls are being taught how to protect themselves and also how to distinguish good and bad touch from the opposite sex.

Help yourself is the best remedy and women should become economically independent, socially evolved and command respect. The men need to treat women with due respect and be punished harshly for treating women derogatorily. About 50% of the society cannot live in fear of the other 50%, if at all.

Let the world make 100% efforts to bring out the best in all. The world and the society will flourish, if and when women are treated equally with respect.



Life of females is one un-broken chain of challenges, from cradle to old-age, says Uche.

In handling the above topic, I would like to dwell more on the female challenges - cradle to old age, with special emphasis on the various abuses of the Girl-

PDC UCHE AGBIM (PHF)

Born on October 31st 1949 at Enugu. Graduated 1974 with BSc Sociology from Southbank University London.

Retired from PHCN June 2008 as General Manager (Human Resources) after 32 years.

Member of professional and charitable organizations. Married for 45 years and blessed with children, grandchildren, daughter and son in laws to the glory of God.

Charter member Inner Wheel Club Ekulu 1983. Held key positions in the club, District 914 and national governing body before election to the position of National Representative/President 2016/2017. A Paul Harris Fellow.

Lady Uche is serious minded, highly disciplined, philanthropic and sociable.

child from birth to teenage, and from married life to old age.

I have taken this path because I honestly can't think of any privileges due to females in our local communities.

a) At home: At a very tender age, the Girl-child is subjected to abuses. What readily comes to mind at this stage is the issue of girl child circumcision. The most sensitive part of her being is mutilated in the name of circumcision with the un-provable belief that it controls promiscuity in teenage and adult girls. Avoidable deaths in the Girl-child have been known to occur apart from the physical pains that are visited upon the Girl-children that are exposed to these



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barbaric acts.

When they are not circumcised, their mothers daily knead their clitoris with hot water to deaden the sensitivity of this very important organ of the female and to make it shrink in size to such an extent that the clitoris is no longer visible; and in fact, non-functional.

b) At school: In secondary schools, especially mixed schools, there had been incidences where male prefects abuse the teenage girl-children sexually as punishment for trivial issues as lateness to school.

In tertiary institutions like Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities, the story is worse.

Then, there is the menace of the randy lecturers. The Girl-undergraduates are asked to use their own money to book for rooms in hotels and at the agreed hour, the dishonorable lecturers arrive and violate the Girl-undergraduates. If they resisted, they would spend endless years in the university without graduating. Some are frustrated out of the institutions.

c) At workplaces: Akin to what lecturers do to Girl-undergraduates in higher institutions, some company owners and management staff of Government Ministries, Agencies, Parastatals and Private establishments are equally guilty of abuses of female workers. From the point of employment, to upgrading, promotions and even to benefit from training

and development programmes, the female workers are intimidated into submitting themselves for sexual satisfactions of some of these company owners and management staff.

d) Abuse of widows: It is unimaginable, the types and scopes of abuses the widows have had to undergo within our environment.

To mention a few, widows are forced:

- I. To vacate their matrimonial homes on the ground that they have no male child or children at all;
- II. To drink the water used in washing the corpses, in order to establish innocence of causing the death of their late husband;
- III. To remain in compulsory confinement after the death of the spouse for a given period;
- IV. To compulsorily wear mourning clothes of some make or adopt lifestyles indicative of being in mourning for a given period of time;
- V. To remarry a relative of the late husband;
- VI. To visit shrines and to perform rituals for purification before the widow could co-habitat with another man;



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From the above, it becomes clear that the life of females is one un-broken chain of challenges, from cradle to old-age.

Sadly, very few attempts have been made by the government to legislate against the litany of abuses visited on the Girl-child as earlier highlighted apart from that for rape. The issue however is how many parents and the Girl-child victims, are courageous enough and have the wherewithal, to prosecute such cases; not to talk of the cynicism of the law enforcement agencies, especially the police as concerns such cases.

Grandmother's evergreen words of advice

After primary school, as a teenager, green-eyed and about to enter secondary school, I recall my grandmother summoning me on the morning I was to depart for the secondary school. She admonished me thus: "Ada, always remember what I am going to tell you now, it will help you as you mature into womanhood - always keep your thighs closed. Not much good comes from in-between the thighs of men except when you get married. Always bear this in mind, my daughter. It shall be well with you". I nodded to her in my innocence. Her words kept ringing in my brain/head and I kept thinking about them.

It was much later in life that I began to appreciate the depth of the sense in those words of grandma.

Let us think about it - what good really comes from in-

between the thighs of men - if not after marriage?

It is just trouble, trouble and more trouble. Let us face it - I don't know how many of us (imminent Inner Wheel ladies) were able to maintain our chastity till marriage. Let us think back to the day we lost our innocence to some man.

What and how was the experience - excruciating pain - especially when it was forcefully taken from us. Let us remember the trauma that may have also followed.

As we kept being exposed to "in-between the thighs of men", we experience further many more pains - sexually transmitted diseases, un-wanted and un-planned pregnancies, abortion in some cases, with all the obvious troubles that come with it; abandonment of schooling, sometimes; desertion of the homes, at-times; un-planned motherhood, afterbirth in most cases - all of these experiences spell one thing - PAIN. It is this pain that my grandma, very early in life, was referring to and was trying to protect me from. I am eternally grateful to that kindly Spirit for that advice which so positively guided me in navigating through this very treacherous path called life, to become the woman that I am today with hardly any such pain and regrets in that respect. Honestly, I cannot be more thankful.

How I wish that we should today, be in a position to offer such advice, as mothers and grandmothers to our own children and grand-children in today's digitalized world.

FGM in Uganda: An old practice yet to die



The Inner Wheel Club of Kampala was chartered on November 11, 1985. It was the first Inner Wheel Club in Uganda and since then other

Clubs have been started, that is Inner Wheel Club of Mengo, Inner Wheel Club of Jinja and Inner Wheel Club of Mbarara.

The membership has since grown from the original 12 to 35 active members. Since we were chartered, our Projects have remarkably improved the lives of people throughout Uganda especially in the spheres of Education, Health and Social Welfare.

Every year, the Club equips a minimum of 3 maternity centres in the rural areas of the country.

The items we donate include delivery beds, examination beds, delivery kits, BP machines, ward screens, baby cots, sterilisation drums, weighing scales, drip stands, etc. This is the Club's contribution to reducing the rampant infant and maternal mortality rates in our country. We have also spearheaded immunisation drives against the 6 killer diseases in Uganda.

The Club tries to reduce the high school drop out of the girl-child by providing washable sanitary towels to girls in rural areas, also visited women prisoners and provided them with the same sanitary towels in addition to other necessities.

For a long time, IWC of Kampala has taken care of the elderly by providing food, soap and funds to Bakateyamba Home of the Elderly.

Each year, the Club selects a particular baby's home for abandoned children, and to this, we give food, clothes, and other requirements.

We have also provided clean water in rural communities by constructing protected wells and some health centres and schools have received water



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filters from the Club.

To execute these projects, the Club is involved in a lot of fundraising drives, e.g. charity walks. Project proposals are written and sent out to companies and institutions that have a social responsibility to improve the lives of our people.

Although we are not yet a District, we continue to do the best we can, to alleviate the suffering of our people and to adhere to the objectives of International Inner Wheel.

By Beatrice Mpamize, President, Inner Wheel Club of Kampala, Uganda, 2015/2016.

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female circumcision is a practice deeply rooted in traditional cultural practices. It is a deliberate mutilation of the female genitalia. This is often the removal or cutting of the labia and clitoris. In Uganda, FGM is practised by at least 1% of Uganda's population and among the ethnic groups in Sebei and Karamoja sub-regions in preparation for marriage. Usually the goal of female genital cutting is to reduce or excise the clitoris in order to reduce sexual sensitivity, but often, all parts of the external genitals are removed and sometimes the wound is stitched shut (infibulation). Areas where the FGM is practised are so remote and isolated that the people do not receive newspapers, radio or television signals, or visitors. Most of the people have no knowledge of the new Ugandan law that prohibits the practice.

After the cutting, girls are considered to be women, able to get married, speak or dance in

public, or touch food or eating utensils used by others. She is seen as being clean and with good luck. Those who shy away from the knife cannot get married, cannot speak nor dance in public or touch food used by others and even considered to have bad luck. Among the Sabiny, girls are expected to be cut at the age of 15, and among the Pokot, as young as 8 or 9 years old or at the earliest signs of puberty. In some cultures, girls are held down to be cut, but among the Sabiny and Pokot, a girl is not restrained, and she may not even blink an eye in reaction to the pain. If she shows fear, she will be shamed for a lifetime and will be unlikely to find a good husband.

FGM causes a number of health problems including inability to conceive, cysts, chronic complications during labour and delivery as well as challenges on the babies. That aside, there is limited documentation of the social, psychological and psycho-sexual effects of the practice. Anecdotal evidence of women's experiences shows that FGM affects women adversely in these areas of their lives.

The Population Reference Bureau (2001:16) notes that FGM cause harmful health effects for women, including haemorrhage, infection, pain, fever, difficulty urinating, and shock. FGM is a man-made problem that causes grave damage to women (Toubia 1995:13-14). Later in life, one may need surgery for vaginal opening to allow sexual intercourse and childbirth.

The Uganda government and other development partners have worked together to combat the practice. The government has signed a

number of treaties to establish universal standards by recognising fundamental rights and take action. It is also a party to the elimination of all forms of gender convention. In 2009, the government enacted a law banning the FGM practice.

In Uganda, the UNFPA has continued to carry out a programme known as REACH to combat the practice through education. The programme has received strong support from the government as well as support from local leaders from Kapchorwa. It

emphasizes close cooperation with traditional authority figures and peers.

In conclusion, these procedures are mostly carried out on young girls who sometime are between infancy and adolescence, and occasionally on adult women which bring a risk to them. This practice can be curbed through strengthening the health sector response: guidelines, training and policy to ensure that health professionals can provide medical care and counselling to girls and women living with FGM. Building evidence: generating knowledge about the causes and consequences of the practice, how to eliminate it, and how to care for those who have experienced FGM.

Increasing advocacy: developing publications and advocacy tools for international, regional and local efforts to end FGM within a generation.



GRATITUDE TO A PARTICULAR PERSON THAT CHANGED MY OUTLOOK TO LIFE

ADEJUMOKE ANIKE ODULAJA

Born 3rd of December 1962, attended Anglican girls primary school and New Era girls secondary school, both in Surulere, Lagos. Anike joined Nigerian Railway Corporation immediately She finished her school certificate examination and after several in house courses rose to the position of account executive officer (AEO). She later proceeded to Lagos state university where she had her diploma in law. She also had a diploma in computer science and beauty therapy. She has an astute passion for business and in 1994 she registered her first company Goldcard Ventures Ltd. She is now chief executive officer of Goldcard investment and properties limited, Goldcard hotel limited and Sisi-Oge Alaso-oke. She joined Inner Wheel club of Akoka in 1987 as a chartered member, now a past president of IWC of Matori. Member of international women society, member of Lagos country club for over 30 years, and a devoted Christian who is passionate about serving God and humanity. She loves travelling, dancing, aerobics, attending seminars and Okanlawon Odulaja and blessed with handsome children who are professionals.



“Do you see a man diligent and skilful in his business? He will stand before kings. He shall not stand before mean men.” Proverbs 22:29.

I give glory to God for this great opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the astute man who has changed my outlook and perspective to life in several ways. Olufemi Okanlawon Odulaja was born 26th of September 1956 in Odogbolu, Ogun state. A very hard working and intelligent man, who from a very humble beginning built his own empire. He believed in transparency and honesty. He stands for the truth and



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would say the truth no matter whose horse is gored. A philanthropist and industrious man, who has touched and impacted so many lives too numerous to mention. He believes in the saying that: “A man's success is not determined by the number of houses he built or amount in his bank account, but judged in the number of lives he is able to impact”. Okanlawon impacted so many lives.

Some people come into your life as lessons, while some as blessings”. This gentleman of honour has been a blessing to me since he came into my life 35 years ago. A caring father to a fault and a loving husband. He taught me humility, meekness and the importance of giving. He introduced me to the largest female humanitarian club in the world, INNER WHEEL, 30 years ago. As much as he has been a blessing, I have learnt enough lessons from the life he lived. For one, he taught me nothing is permanent and change is the only constant. From his life, I also witnessed the live example of the saying, “All good things come to an end” as his legacy of excellence came to a close.

A disciplinarian to a fault, he would never spare his children when they go wrong. On various occasions when his children faulted or drifted away from the right path, he did his best to align them right. His discipline is a trait each and every one of them inherited. Many say discipline is the bridge between goals and achievements; this indeed was the self-constructed bridge he used to accomplish success and train his children.

He had this positive energy that was infectious to keep striving, despite gridlock

situations of any magnitude. He is the perfect epitome of motivation; my personification of motivation. This motivation gave birth to a mentality that eradicates negative intrusive thoughts, a deep orientation I had when I observed he wasn't dogmatic in tackling problems.

My husband was always one to keep the family together. A dispute resolver and a peace seeker he was. Whenever matters arose, he would always use his wise words in order to prevent issues from escalating. He always wanted to help his relatives in whatsoever way he could no matter the cost. Okanlawon lived in the city, but his heart always lead him home. He was an indigene of Odogbolu in the Odogbolu local government and a trustee. He always yearned after the development and improvement of his home town.

He made his family understand that it is only hard work and prayers that can take one to the top. As much as 2 plus 2 can give you 4, 3 plus 1 likewise. He was my golden hat, mentor and love of my youth, my headmaster, my confidant and most importantly, my best friend. You have laid a good foundation for me to build on and by his grace I will not fail.

2nd of September 2015, your creator decided to take you home for a greater assignment. Your memory will forever remain green in my heart.



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