

## **Feminist Media Activism and Women's Ordeal in Africa**

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### **Abstract**

*Out of the many issues confronting the world today, gender issues are one of them. These issues manifest in the discrepancies between the rights, potentials, and roles of men and women in patriarchal societies, which are founded on stereotypes, inequality and inequity through the entrenchment of the rights of women. While Western societies have made concerted efforts towards dealing with such issues through the lawful entrenchment of women's rights, the Middle East and Africa are still adamant in recognizing women as being equal to men due to cultural and religious ideologies. Women are still seen today as men's property and as kitchen users, irrespective of their social status and level of education. All these dehumanizing misconceptions are well pronounced in African politics where the womenfolk is seen as a means to an end, a class of little or no importance. Thus, they are denied rights/privileges and offices. However, the feminist push for women's liberation and empowerment is felt more in the 21st century as online media has made the call very easy and impactful reaching out to larger audiences in different places and at the same time. Our lead questions are: How are women underrepresented in Africa? Is culture more important than state law? In what practical ways, has feminist media activism responded to women's ordeal in Africa? In this chapter, therefore, we examine feminist media activism as a liberating tool for eradicating women's ordeal in Africa and argue for the dignity of African women as a means in themselves and invaluable assets in Africa and beyond.*

**Keywords:** *Africa, gender, stereotyping, culture, social media, activism, ordeal, dominance.*

### **1 Introduction**

African cultural beliefs that a woman's place is in the private sphere and not in the public sphere explain why women are largely denied equitable distribution of goods and services. Bothered by the plight of women in Zimbabwe, Tom and Banda (2023) assert that "women farm workers have so far received limited scholarly attention in Zimbabwe's agrarian and labour policy literature. This is in a context where a conscious understanding of land reform as a social policy instrument is paltry". As such, there is a wide gap between men and women in the public sphere. But is all this, a true reflection of African

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women? Certainly not! Behind every successful man, there is a woman. That is to say, wives' support contributes to the success of their husbands.

African women are women of valor, value, and great potential with diverse talents. In short, they are survivors. It is saddening that African culture and religious ideologies have suppressed the good in women, placing on them less importance. The ordeal experienced by African women is so great that they have become objects of pity. Gender stereotyping exists virtually in every aspect of African society, which undermines the dignity of women. The political aspect of a nation, so to speak, is so significant that, if not well managed, can have adverse effects on the other aspects of the nation. Politics is a means through which citizens elect their leaders, especially in a democratic system of government as handed over to African countries by Westminster and America shortly after independence. By this, every citizen has the right to vote and be voted for. In Africa, it is not a problem when women exercise their franchise in voting, but it becomes problematic when they want to be voted for, following men's natural inclination to exercise dominion over the political arena. As such, women remain underrepresented in leadership (de Lay Rey, 2005).

Nevertheless, the 21st century appears to be unique and result-oriented than other centuries because of its dense presence of feminist movements agitating for equity in the sharing and allocation of resources. They have so far, started professing the idea that women can do better than men if given elective positions in the public sphere. The 21st century is also festooned with remarkable feats of great African and non-African women leaders alike in the public space. It was reported that "since 2000, the representation of women in politics has increased globally with specific gains in Africa. For example, the number of seats held by women in lower houses of parliament worldwide increased from 12% to 26% between 2000 and 2021, while the number of women holding seats in lower houses of parliament in Africa rose from 8% to 25% over the same period" (IPU, 2005; Parline, 2021). The reasons for women's increased political participation in Africa are the Availability of donor funds, increased educational opportunities, the Beijing Consensus International Women's Movement, and Multi-party Democracy in Africa (Wyk 2009).

Several scholars have researched gender stereotyping and women's emancipation in Africa. We, therefore, lend our voice to theirs by first, discouraging the marginalization of African women in politics and other facets of human endeavours arguing that, political offices and performance are not determined by gender but by competence, potentiality, and personality. Thus, the idea of "who performs better" is immaterial. Second, to posit that gender stereotyping in Africa has become a serious concern to feminist advocacy groups whose aim is to ensure that women's voice is heard and respected. Through technologies, especially social media networks, feminist groups- private and government organizations are reaching out to women, sensitizing them on their fundamental human rights, and at the same time, enlightening the public about the dangers of gender stereotyping. This negates the marginalization of African women in all ramifications and promotes the dignity of African women, an invaluable asset to the survival of the society via feminist media activism as a liberating tool and an "escapist gateway" to women's dominance in Africa, allowing African women to achieve both national and international recognitions. This chapter employs a qualitative method to objectively interpret the statistics and assertions brought forward by various feminist and non-feminist scholars; and how feminists, through the use of media, have brought a radical change to the feminist cause. Thus, the need to present African women as survivors rather than as losers or objects of pity is necessary.

## **2 Women's Ordeal in Africa: Survivors amidst all odds**

African women have great potential and it is in this light that the Africa Gender Index Report (2019) submits that women of this generation will define Africa's destiny. A new

generation of young women are reaching adulthood better educated than ever before, and ready to play active roles in their communities, the economy, and national leadership. They are doing so at a time of unprecedented economic, social, environmental, and technological change. It is a time when the role of African women is ripe for redefinition. This view was re-echoed again in 2023 that the women of Africa make a sizeable contribution to the continent's economy. There have been many recent advances in women's empowerment on the continent, including many changes in laws to promote equal rights for women.

Many African countries have closed the gender gap in primary education. In 11 African countries, women hold close to one-third of the seats in parliaments, more than in Europe (Africa Gender Index Report, 2019). Ennaji (2023) noted the remarkable feats of feminist groups in North Africa- Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. According to the World Economic Forum (2022), North African countries have managed to close their gender gaps in education, health, and employment by 50%. In Morocco, female illiteracy fell from 78% in 1962 to 24% in 2021. According to Akor (2023), there has been a rising need for the progressive inclusion of women in society's political life in recent years, particularly in the Afrocentric environment and its legislative body. According to the argument, this will strengthen how the democratic ethos gets institutionalized in society. The average percentage of women in national parliaments has doubled globally over the past 20 years, and all regions have made significant strides toward the target of 30 percent women in decision-making (Nwachukwu et al., 2018). This rise in women's political representation is seen throughout the world. However, because women are underrepresented in political life, Africa, particularly Rwanda, and Nigeria, has yet to progress.

African women are invaluable assets or a life wire of African culture and beyond. To mention, but a few of the African women who have made a great impact in life: Samia Suluhu Hassan, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and Mogul Mosunmola Abudu (Forbes List, 2022). As earlier stated, the idea that "behind every successful man, there is a woman" is apt as women's contributions, starting from the family (the smallest unit but foundational stone of the state) to the public sphere, cannot be taken for granted. By their nature, African women are very industrious, hardworking, and optimistic; they are better finance managers than men. They are also society builders. They have the numbers and with their collective strength, they can achieve their aim. Canton (2014) submits that "women were active agents in the creation of the colonial world as they strived to obtain or maintain their economic autonomy and independence and in their challenge to European perceptions of African femininity, especially regarding motherhood, imposed by colonial authorities."

According to the World Bank (2000), "African women possess hidden brilliance, and the continent has a tremendous amount of untapped potential. across, One of Africa's largest underutilized growth assets is the capacity of women, who make up more than half of the labour force on the continent but do not have equal access to education and production inputs." From a study's findings, it was discovered that gender equality has the potential to significantly speed up the eradication of poverty in Africa (cited in APF, 2017). Blackden and Bhanu (1999) argue that African women put in much more time at the office than African men. Their workdays may be 50% longer on average. Their labour is tightly linked to domestic production processes. Although men predominate in agriculture in parts of the Sahel, women are especially important in agriculture, notably in preparing food crops and supplying water and fuel. Women are more likely to put their earnings to good use by paying for their kids' education, clothing, and food (Ayankoya & Osimen, 2023).

Africa's future depends on empowering African girls and women. Women will contribute more to Africa's rising prosperity if they are allowed to fully engage in their economies and societies. World-renowned experts reported that "any country that encourages the education of its women and girls is on a path to economic prosperity and sustainable

development” (British Council, 2012). For instance, in the Urhobo community of Delta State in the southern part of Nigeria as argued by Ikperha (2003), the contributions of women to the development of the community's cultural values are noticeable. The moral strength of conventional society was consistently influenced by women in the traditional Urhobo family structure. These caregiving responsibilities have traditionally been assigned to women, giving them an advantage for procreation and the sustenance of life. Additionally, this assists the family system in upholding society's principles and values (Ikperha, 2003). In the traditional Urhobo community, women are therefore primarily responsible for the sustenance of families.

African women are cultural beings, bounded by cultural norms on the one hand. While on the other hand, they are bona fide members of their respective states whose gender rights are protected by the law. As such, is it justifiable for culture to undermine law policies on gender equality and equity?

### **3 Protection Policy Options: Culture or Law?**

Culture shapes a person's mindset. It is powerful and possessive to the extent that one can kill for it (Osimen, Ayankoya & Udoh, 2023). Culture is an “ideal towards which human beings and communities might progress or evolve” (Williams, 1992). According to Falola (2003), culture is “an agency of power”. African cultures breed stereotypical beliefs about women's community and men's agency. Women are seen to possess traits like compassion, sympathy, and sensation whilst men are thought to be assertive and powerful. Although it is gratifying that women are seen as hospital, kind, and supportive, these preconceptions could also be detrimental to their skills and expertise (Szelényi, Denson, & Inkelas, 2013). Amore, Bamgbose & Lawani, (2012) see gender as “the space carved out by culture for male and female to operate in society. The stratification of spaces is organized in such a way that puts the men at the upper stratum and the women at the lower stratum.” In African culture, men are culturally identified with “Self” while women are culturally labelled as “Other”. That is to say, women amount to nothing in comparison to men. This idea of man-centredness cripples women's value (Gray, 1982; Biko, 1986; Opara, 1987; Ujomu, 2001).

African culture appears good but it has some lapses. First, overall importance and recognition are given to men than women. Second, African norms can be formed out of ignorance and self-interest. Right thinking leads to the right action. Religion and culture, if care is not taken, can be misleading. Even the educated are sometimes brainwashed by cultural and religious ideologies. So many cultural and religious beliefs in Africa are obsolete and have been disapproved of in contemporary times. A good example is the killing of newborn twins among the Efik people, in Calabar, an ancient city in Nigeria in the 19th century. The natives saw twins as evil and an abomination, but the practice was later stopped by a Scottish missionary, Mary Slessor. Descriptions such as helpmates, survivors, and valuable assets are more suitable for African women than objects of sex, intimidation, and pity.

Furthermore, state law recognizes the rights of all whether male or female. Everyone is equal before the law. The law makes provisions for women to fight for their fundamental rights, first as human beings and second, as citizens of the state. The state is a legal entity that encompasses its citizens and their respective cultures. The law of the state is not against the people's culture in totality but rather, it serves as a means of putting wrong perceptions or practices right for the good of all. In this regard, culture and law co-exist to better humanity. Gender Stereotyping is an act contrary to human rights (OHCHR, 2014). As such, Article 5 (a) of The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW empowers States Parties to take “all appropriate measures” to “modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women”, to eliminate practices that “are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on

stereotyped roles for men and women.” Article 2(f) reinforces Article 5 by requiring States Parties to take “all appropriate measures” to “modify or abolish ... laws, regulations, customs, and practices which constitute discrimination against women.”

According to the CEDAW's interpretation of the stated clauses, States Parties are expected to change and reform gender stereotypes and get rid of harmful gender stereotyping (Osimen, et al, 2023). This difference is crucial because it acknowledges that, while it can be challenging to demand that state parties "eliminate" stereotyped views, it is crucial to "modify and transform" erroneous views about women. It also acknowledges that States Parties must stop applying stereotypes to specific women and men in ways that go against their human rights. Article 10 of CEDAW further provides that States shall take all appropriate measures to “ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women the elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programs and the adaptation of teaching methods”. Article 5 of CEDAW states that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures... to change the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, to accomplish the elimination of prejudices and customs and all other forms of discrimination which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women” (UNHCR, 2023).

An innovative Protocol that acknowledges the economic importance of women has been accepted by the AU. A supplement to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which was approved in 1981, the African Union ratified a Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa on July 11, 2003 (Africa Partnership Forum, 2017). Furthermore, the leaders of Africa are obligated by the Solemn Declaration to report on the status of gender equality and women's empowerment on the continent. As it enhances African sovereignty of the gender equality agenda and keeps the concerns alive at the highest political level in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGGEA) is a significant African tool for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. The Solemn Declaration binds heads of state and government to submit annual reports on the status of gender equality. Thus, advocating for gender equality in Africa through social media is an excellent way to raise awareness, engage a wide audience, and drive positive change. African societies need to take strategic steps in using social media advocacy on gender inequality in Africa.

#### **4 Feminist Media Activism: Nature and Impact**

According to Schuster (2013), social media connects people beyond their locality, taking care of physical communication. It is “a tool that boosts communication, interaction, and connection among different racial groups, genders, and families across the world” (Brewer, Massey, Vurdelija, and Freeman, 2012). Trottier depicts social media as “dwellings where people act out their lives” (2012). Digital platforms facilitate the expansion of feminist space(s) and enable a wider inclusion, promoting feminist ideas (Crossley, 2015). Social media influencers such as feminist advocacy groups see social media as a tool for positive transformation that will benefit their mission. By using social media advocacy to influence the media, Olarewaju and Babalola (2016) assert that “creating gender awareness is a pre-requisite for achieving behavioral change in African society, and an important component in establishing an enabling environment where women and men work with better understanding, mutual respect, mutual empowerment, justice, and fair play.” In the same vein, Datiri (2020) argues that “with growing internet penetration across Africa, feminist activists on the continent have been handed a new weapon in their struggle. It simplifies mobilisation of the women’s movement.”

Daudu, Osimen, and Shuaibu (2023) agreed that the goal of feminism is a social change of unequal relations between men and women. This social change is reflected in the campaigns of feminist activists for women legal rights (rights of contract, property rights, and voting rights); protecting women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape; advocating workplace rights including (maternity leave and equal pay) and women's right advocacy. The internet and online social media networks or platforms are powerful and effective tools that feminist advocacy groups are using to carry out their campaign plans. In the same vein, Mao (2020) and Han (2018) argued that the Internet, as an accessible and affordable medium, became a significant force in advancing the conversation about gender inclusion for women in light of the gradually shrinking space for activism in the real world due to a lack of funds, staff, volunteers, and members. To make their agenda known, new-generation feminists now typically use a variety of internet venues to disseminate information, promote awareness, and connect with like-minded people (Han, 2018). As an illustration, the Media Monitor for Women Network (later known as Gender Watch Women's Voice or GWWV) established its Weibo account in 2010 and its WeChat account in 2012 to advocate gender parity. A report from Tencent News (2017) states that:

Their misrepresentation of women's ideals is the primary motivator for such intense rage. On the other hand, modern women are equal individuals with independent thoughts and sources of income; the vain, shallow females represented in the film, who want gain without suffering, are at odds with accepted norms. Modern women are not subject to men.

Feminist activism, particularly in Africa, has not been thoroughly researched and documented. As such, it is necessary to investigate and question what the term "feminist advocacy" implies in an African context and, more generally, to record its rich history. They contend that numerous feminist and women's rights organizations and mainstream organizations use the idea with various justifications for why it is, in fact, feminist advocacy, including defining methodologies or about the identities of organizations (Tallis and Tallis, 2022). According to Poluan and Lung (2023), social media has a double-edged effect regarding violence against women (VAW). Unfortunately, despite the widespread use of social media in this digital age, particularly in Africa, the number of VAW cases continues to rise as 56% of 14,000 girls and young women from 31 countries, experience more harassment online than in public (Sanusi, 2021). Daudu, Osimen and Shuaibu (2023) claimed that an example of this, social media is primarily used to promote social movements and ignite activism globally, especially feminist movements like the women's march (WHO, 2009; Poluan and Lung, 2023). Mendes' media coverage of SlutWalks across eight nations (Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, the UK, and the United States) unveils sexual assault as a global issue to be addressed via social media and feminist blogs (2016).

#### 4.1 Shortfall in Feminist Media Advocacy in Africa

Aja, Odoh, and Chukwu (2023) pointed out that media scholars and ethicists agree that fair gender portrayal in the media should be a professional and ethical aspiration, similar to respect for accuracy, fairness, and honesty (White, 2006). Yet, unbalanced gender portrayal seems to be widespread in Afrocentric media. The Global Media Monitoring Project (2020) finds that women are more likely than men to be featured as victims in news stories and to be identified according to family status. Women are also far less likely than men to be featured in the world's news headlines, and to be relied upon as spokespeople or as experts. Certain categories of women, such as the poor, older women, or those belonging to ethnic minorities, are even less visible. Addressing the lack of gender media advocacy requires efforts from various stakeholders, including media organizations, policymakers, activists, and the general public. These efforts could include: Increasing diversity and representation of women; challenging stereotypes against African women; supporting independent Afrocentric media; collaborating and partnering with

African media, and Afrocentric media literacy and education (Osimen, Daudu, & Awogu-Maduagwu, 2023).

Digital media, such as social media, must support and disseminate "critical content and complex form" rather than idealistic content in a "standardized form" if they are to get recognized as alternative media that promotes gender equality, equity, and social justice in Africa (Sandoval and Fuchs, 2010). They should contest and change the power imbalances or discriminatory discourses seen in the mainstream media that fuel gender inequality in Africa. Ogwuche (2023) averred that social media have become an increasingly powerful tool for amplifying the voices of the marginalized like women in Africa and facilitating collective action around gender equality. Social media which is digital media can be used to bring attention to gender-based issues in Afrocentric societies, connect activists, and build momentum around campaigns geared toward getting the attention of policymakers on the need for inclusiveness of women in African nation-building.

As observed by Llanos and Nina (2011), the 21st century has seen media most especially social media playing important roles in the development of Afrocentric societies like Rwanda, Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the African continent. This is true because the media in these mentioned countries report on current events, provide frameworks for interpretation, mobilise citizens about various issues, reproduce predominant culture and society, and entertain as such, the media can be an important factor in the promotion of gender equality, both within the working environment (in terms of employment and promotion of female staff at all levels of African societies) and in the representation of women and men (in terms of fair gender portrayal and the use of neutral and non-gender specific language) (Llanos and Nina, 2011).

While mainstream media like television, radio, newspapers, and magazines are at times constrained in their efforts to promote gender equality in Africa due to ownership influence and advertisers' influence, social media can provide or serve as an alternative media or avenue for the promotion of gender equity and equality in Africa. The role of women in Africa's workforce which is undoubtedly linked to the structure of the African economy can be advocated. This is because social media are less restricted like the mainstream media and can be used to project faster the advocacy that as more African economies mature and become more formal, it will be critical not to leave African women behind, but to actively think about how to create opportunities for African women in the formal economy, particularly in sectors that drive economic growth (Moodley et al., 2019).

Gilardi, Gessler, Kubli, and Müller (2022) suggest that influence over the political agenda, and political discourse more broadly, is one of the most important sources of power around the world and in Africa to be specific. That is why a lot of past and current African political leaders and politicians own and control media houses to control public narratives of national issues. It is important to note that the fundamental question that gets to set the media agenda in Africa has long been critiqued and studied from several perspectives, including media studies, policy studies, and political communication (Wolfe et al., 2013). A central argument is that of the agenda-setting function of the mass media (McCombs and Shaw, 1972), which mainly focuses on the role of the mainstream media in setting agenda and which posits that newspapers, television, and radio influence what political actors think and care about, that is, the content of the political agenda. Even the position or postulations of the agenda-setting theory did not take into cognizance the powerful role that social media could play in setting the agenda for discourse most especially in addressing gender inequality in Africa and advocating for equity and equality for Afrocentric women within and without African context.

#### 4.2 Feminist Media Activism as a Liberating Tool and Escapist Gateway to Dominance

Feminism is a form of contentious politics, a global social movement that has spanned three centuries and continues to show enduring vitality (UN Women, 2019). It consists of several social, cultural, and political movements that make attempts for equal rights for men and women (Asnani, 2020). Despite the noticeable shortfall in feminist media advocacy, feminist media activism is a liberating tool and an escapist gateway to African women's freedom and dominance. Here, "dominance" does not mean "male subjugation" but a "display of women's potentiality". Most feminist organizations are headed by African female activists. With the aid of online media platforms, these African female activists were able to reach out to their fellow African women. It is now left for other African women to key into the feminist agenda to bring out their hidden potential. Osimen, Ayankoya and Udoh, (2023) believes that Feminist advocacy groups are many but united under one umbrella of liberating, defending, and speaking in favour of women's rights and at the same, appreciating women's potential and contributions to shaping society. Mention, a few are The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA), Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership in Africa and Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR). Africa Partnership Forum (2017) declared that:

It is time to deliver for women and girls. Africa's growth and development agenda can only succeed if the continent can draw on all its resources and talents, and if women can participate fully in economic, social, and political life. This will require intensified efforts to eliminate discrimination and promote equal rights. The strong commitment which has been demonstrated by African governments needs to be complemented by strong support from the wider international community, within the framework of a clear allocation of responsibilities, and the clear mapping out of specific steps and measures.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1945 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and the International Covenant on Social and Cultural Rights are some of the foundational documents that make up the global Bill of Rights, which promote and protect all people and guarantee that everyone receives treatment equitably irrespective of race, sex, creed, or color. Women's rights and empowerment are specifically addressed in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an international convention to which most countries agreed. Regarding having entry to economic, social, and political opportunities that are open to everyone in society, the CEDAW offers the basis for gender equality and empowerment (Catharine, 2006). Women's empowerment in 12 crucial areas of development—poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflict, economic disparity, power sharing, institutions, human rights, mass media, environment, and the girl child—remains a priority under the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and its follow-up action plans (African Development Forum, 2008).

Omotose (2020) eulogized four female African women from academia who have ventured into politics by appointment or election. Despite women being discriminated against in academia, these women (Bolance Awe, Zaynab Alkali, Remi Sonaiya, and Dora Akunyili) were able to impact their generations and they are well-versed in political communications (Omotose, 2020). According to Muberekwa and Nkomo (2016), feminism in Africa, when placed in historical and critical contexts, cannot ignore the place of female scholars and researchers; women of African descent who by career choice have found themselves at the ivory towers across the continent and beyond. These women are popularly referred to as female academics or intellectual females teaching or conducting research at an institution of higher learning (Awogu-Maduagwu, Daudu, Osimen, Adetunji, 2023). Thus, not only in the educational sector we have great African women of impact but also in other areas of human endeavours. For instance, African



female Presidents/Heads of State and their respective exit years from office are: Slyvie Kiningi of Burundi (1993), Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburi of South Africa (2005), Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia (2018), Rose Francine Rogombe of Gabon (2009), Agnes Monique Ohsan Bellepeau of Mauritius (2015), Joyce Hilda Banda of Malawi (2014), Catherine Sambia of the Central African Republic (2016), Ameenah Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius (2018), and Sahle-Work Zewde of Ethiopia (still in office).

The Brookings Institution (2022) acknowledged the potential of African women. It reported that “African women’s growing presence as public leaders is not confined to national institutions, and African women now hold leadership positions in the World Trade Organisation {Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of Nigeria}, African Union and United Nations, among others” (The Brookings Institution, 2022). African women need to be encouraged and their fundamental rights respected, preserved, and protected. On this note, The Brookings Institution (2022) also emphasized that “it is not enough to recognize that African women and girls deserve rights by adopting new laws and frameworks, countries must ensure that these rights are a lived reality.” Lending her voice to the discourse on African women of impact, Mogoatlhe (2020) mentioned the likes of Bonang Motheba of South Africa, Graca Machel of Mozambique, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie of Nigeria, Aye Chebbi of Tunisia, Lupita Nyong’o of Kenya, among others. In addition, there are the remarkable feats and achievements of some women of African descent living abroad. The list is endless.

## 5 Findings

From what has been investigated, the findings of the chapter are:

- i. African women are survivors amidst all odds.
- ii. Culture and state law co-exist for the betterment of humanity.
- iii. The feminist media advocacy agenda is enhanced in the 21st century,

## 6 Conclusion

African women are amazing survivors of gender stereotyping. With the availability of online media communication technologies in the 21st century, feminist advocacy groups are making the potential of African women more visible and acceptable worldwide. This does not in any way make feminist agenda promotion via media use perfect but rather it is a saving grace for every woman. Little wonder Amadiume (2001) submits that “African women are objectified in the neocolonialist desires and expectations of what African women ought to be doing and where African women should be heading.”

Cultural beliefs are important but they can be harmful when they are not objectively formed. Fundamental human rights apply to everybody irrespective of sex, social status, ethnicity, creed, or religion. Since the state is an enforcer of human rights, it does not condemn culture in its totality but rather, strengthens it in the right perspective to the best interest of its citizens. Women outnumbered men in society, and there is strength in number. As such, this and many more should be the motivating factors for the actualization of the feminist agenda in Africa; women’s emancipation is the freedom to exercise or discharge one’s duties.

## 7 Recommendations

Since the role of African women is an invaluable one, a great asset for the continued existence of society; this chapter, therefore, recommends that:

- i. African religious and cultural beliefs of women need to be revisited and repositioned in the right perspectives regarding women's dignity, and
- ii. African women should be more committed to the cause of the feminist agenda than ever to achieve greatness.

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