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**THE ECONOMIC RAMIFICATION IN EQUATING WOMEN  
EMPOWERMENT WITH FEMINISM IN AFRICA**

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## **I. ABSTRACT**

There is quantum empirical evidence and numerous literatures that correlate women economic empowerment to macroeconomic growth, which further argue a strong correlation of economic empowerment of women to feminism agenda. This has led to the rise of gender democracy and feminism in the past two decades up to date. However, this development of women with high educational status driven under feminism is failing to correlate to any meaningful macroeconomic growth in Africa as proposed, which this paper phenomenological seeks to prove the lack of correlation between feminism and women economic empowerment, hence leading to low or no effect in macroeconomic growth in Africa economic ecosystem.

## **II. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The paper acknowledge all the literatures that has argued to support women economic empowerment, smartly equating it to feminism and perfectly drawing a correlation graph to depicts it contribution to macroeconomic development of a Africa and supported by different empirical evidence depending on the geographical areas chosen for the research studies. For these very reasons, the researcher selectively relied on popularly known scholarly publications, which has gained wide readership on the subject matter of feminism as a reference material to establish it argument on it ramification to the African continent.

The report of United Nations Economic and social council in March 1969 underscore the place of women in Ethiopian society, as at that time. The paper state, "Women occupy a very significant and decisive place in the society, cultural, economic and

political life of Ethiopia". And further posit, their importance is evident both in modern and traditional sectors, not only as housewives and mothers in society as a para-eminent role, but also their contribution to quality of day-to-day life (Pg.2 E/CN.14/SW/INF.15)

It was noted "Ethiopia being a predominantly an agricultural country, farming is primary occupation that determined the rhythm of economic life. In such environment, people live modesty, dedicating themselves mostly to traditional occupations. Since farming is a family enterprise, women in Ethiopia help in agricultural activities and have a quasi-equal social status with men. A farmers wife is his chief adviser and helper and it may well fall to her lot to be responsible for the marketing also" (Pg 3. E/CN.13/SW/INF.15). This underscore the fact that, to create a meaningful economic growth, one has to understand the endogenous market value concept of a particular geographical location and engineer most of it labour force to this sector of the market.

However an error immerge when an effort is made to logically correlate women economic empowerment to high level educated women activism in gender equality and women right advocacy as the (Pg3 E/CN.13/SW/INF.15) observed, the modern features of government allow women to enjoy equal right, privileges and obligations under the law and have been called upon to fight for these right, as most women in the past and current continue to do in some part of the world. This is noted to be the premise upon which all the publicly and most promoted research papers on feminism rely on to argue their case as a universal applicable theory, however this paper seek to argue that, feminism agenda is highly inapplicable in Africa ecosystem. And an attempt to persuasively interpret data of women economic empowerment as feminists' agenda and establish a correlation graph that depicts it

macroeconomic growth of a nation on the continent of Africa, will be a suicidal theory of application with long term economic effects.

In the context of Africa, women economic empowerment has always been defined as acquiring skills that is complimentary to the effort of the husband or the man in the society that she looks up to, not to ascend and equalize in the same status within socioeconomic agenda which (Pg7. E/CN.14/SW/INF.15) of United Nations Economic and Social Council 1969 paper succinctly define it replicable phenomena in Ethiopia by stating, “As a rule, Ethiopian women are very clever with their hands and eager to acquire new skills; most of them possess skills in pottery making, basketry, spinning, weaving etc. but the items which they produce are usually for their own domestic use and not so much for sale. As the paper finally concludes; what was required to support women, was the need of encouragement and guidance as to how their own crafts could be used as a means of increasing family income.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

The focus of this studies was to establish a qualitative understanding from the active performance of women in their various degrees of socio-economic status and its correlation to macroeconomic development, for easy comparative analysis. A phenomenological study of the grounded theory approach was adapted to record, describe, analyze and theorize the experience relating to women activities to national economic development in Africa. This approach was adopted to develop a deeper understanding of the existing problems within the phenomenon to allow for converging of new ideas with the old (Troachim, 2006). Strauss (1987) suggest that grounded inquiry by careful analysis of data, involving the examination of field notes, study of the

transcribed interviews sentence by sentence, coding of each sentence or phrase, sorting the codes, making comparisons among the categories and ultimately constructing a theory by this approach. This is able to unravel the elements of experience, their interrelationship for a theory to be developed. This enables the researcher to understand the nature and the meaning of an experience in reference to a particular setting (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The Subjective experience of people is the most objective means of establishing scientific knowledge (Epistemological Assumptions) (Creswell, 2013; Wolcott, 2008; Guba and Lincoln, 1998). Moustakas (1994) underscores that, phenomenological research is the only means of capturing subtle meanings and personally held beliefs without external thought complexes on the participants.

Grounded theory is more distinctive from priory theoretical orientations because its practice is underlined in the assumption that theory should be grounded in data from the field; actions, interactions and social process of people (Creswell, 2013) juxtaposing with the literature or scholarly work on feminism translated to women economic empowerment and its defined correlation to national economic development. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to the sample population to give meaning to the phenomenological and inductive nature of the research studies to arrive at the proposition or theorize based on (Descarte, 1912: 1988) self-evidence. (Kant, 1966) which underscores three source of knowledge; Sense (phenomenological empirical given in perception); Imagination (necessary to arrive at a synthesis of knowledge) and Apperception (consciousness of the identity of things). Thus the only means of ensuring comprehensive self-report which give the research participant the latitude of open-ended questionnaire to freely express themselves un-ended regarding any of the phenomenon of investigation. Probability sampling method was used, which involves identifying and questioning people because there were members of the chosen population.

#### IV. THEORY & LITERATURE

(Dollar and Gatti 1999; Klasen 1999) asserted the primary pathways through which gender systems affect growth are by influencing the productivity of labour and the allocation efficiency of the economy. (Pg.12.E/CN.14/SW/INF.11) report that in Ethiopia, participation of women in community development programmes dates back to some very humble beginnings initiated by the wives of the men community development workers in 1961/62. During that time, some efforts were made by men to organize women for educational purpose and they tried to involve their wives to assist them in carrying out the programme for women in the rural areas. Women were encouraged and helped to form their informal groups. However majority of the rural women were not attracted by the ideas and were reluctant to join.

This present a critical question, why did the women felt reluctant to join the groups for women economic empowerment initiatives. S. Lubega (2000) posit that traditional concept of women in Uganda places them in an inferior position in relation to men. Kiswahili proverb, according to S. Lubega depict that, when a woman assumes power in the house, the house is as good as destroyed because all sorts of people will seize the opportunity to confuse it. She further asserted, married women usually must seek permission from their husbands to conduct business. Particularly in rural areas women frequently have to give-up income from their business to their husbands. Finally she concludes, economic independence of women lies at the heart of the problem. Women lack of control over productive resource and assets is systemic issues. Inequality in marital status and property ownership intersects with cultural attitude and beliefs. And Ugandan men express the view that women will become uncontrollable, unmanageable, disrespectful, if gain economic dependence. UPPAP (2002) asserted that, Bride wealth payments lead to the perception among both men and women, that men own women and that it is therefore a woman's job to both provide for and serve man.

Structure of Uganda’s productive economy (1997) in percentage Elson and Evers

Sector	Share of GDP	Contribution of Women to GDP	Contribution of Men to GDP
Agriculture with small holders	49.0%	72.6%	24.8%
Industry	14.4%	4.3%	24.8%
Services	36.6%	23.1%	50.4%

Emmanuel Akyeampong (2012) posit “warfare, state formation and political centralization elevated men over women but even in non-centralized states, the process of production and reproduction in kinship networks subordinated women to men”. Claude Meillassoux (1981) asserted, if we are to understand how the domestic society operates then reproduction must be taken into central consideration. The domestic community is indeed the only economic and social system which manages the physical reproduction of human beings, the reproduction of the producers and the social reproduction at large through a comprehensive set of institutions by the ordered manipulation of the living means of reproduction, should be properly studied and understood.

(Boserup, 1970; Goody, 1976) observed agricultural patterns mapped into marriage, so where the plough was used and men were doing much of the work in agriculture, polygamy was minor because the wives were largely dependents on the economic provision of the husbands but where women were the primary agricultural workers such as in planting activities, polygamy was valued and men married many wives. Akyeampong (2012) further argued on historical and ethnographical accounts by indicating that, pre-colonial Africa was not an era of perfect gender parity, colonial Africa clearly emerged as an era of institutionalize gender inequality. He finally submitted that, the contours of the colonial production system excluded women from the cash economy and created gender-biased.



From all the literature submission by this paper, argue clearly that, the African economic ecosystem never permit women to assume gender parity with men, as the premise upon which this paper stands to draw an empirical analysis from field data that measure the economic impact of highly educated women classified feminist with marginal or low level educated women classified non-feminist in a comparative studies to deduce it ramification to national economy on the continent of Africa

## V. DATA DEVELOPMENT, ANALYSIS & DEDUCTION

The studies was conducted using thousand(1000) women as a sample size population for the survey within the West African region, taking into consideration women at the age of (18-60) years of age. The studies were measured strictly with four (4) major variables to analyze the impact of women to national economic development. Which are defined below;

- a. **Feminism:** Accounting for the population size of women who belief in the operational principles of feminism within the West African region
- b. **Education:** Measuring and comparing the level of education of women into feminism and Non-feminism
- c. **House Hold Duty:** Measuring the extent of active performance of women in household duty as feminists and non-feminists
- d. **Domestic Impact:** Measuring the impacts of women as feminists and non-feminists of the sample population size on economic livelihood of their family, community and the society in general.

A sample size of 1000 was derived using the Ecowas region of West Africa as a population size for the empirical test. The result from the response was 90%. This was accepted in accordance to Mitchell (1989) and Evans (1991) which argues that a survey

response rate should be calculated as the number of returned questionnaire divided by the total sample size and further concluded that, a rate in response greater than 80% (>80%) from a small, random sample size is considered preferable to a low response rate from a large sample size.

Table 1. Population sample size data

<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Feminist (25-60yrs)</i>	300	30%
<i>Non-Feminist (18-60yrs)</i>	600	60%
<i>Non-Respondents</i>	100	10%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1000	100%

*Field work report, 2016*

The objective of the entire studies, was to measure the economic impact of feminism comparative to non-feminism, towards macroeconomic development of Africa, as a result chose to minimize the various statistical testing and it computation that has the capability to consume the focus of this paper under the context of statistical rationalization, however certain theoretical relationship was defined scientifically to form the premise upon which to achieve the goal intended by this paper.

*An effort was made to define the exact impact of the activities of feminists and non-feminists in the Ecowas zone, as the data below depicts*

*Table 2*

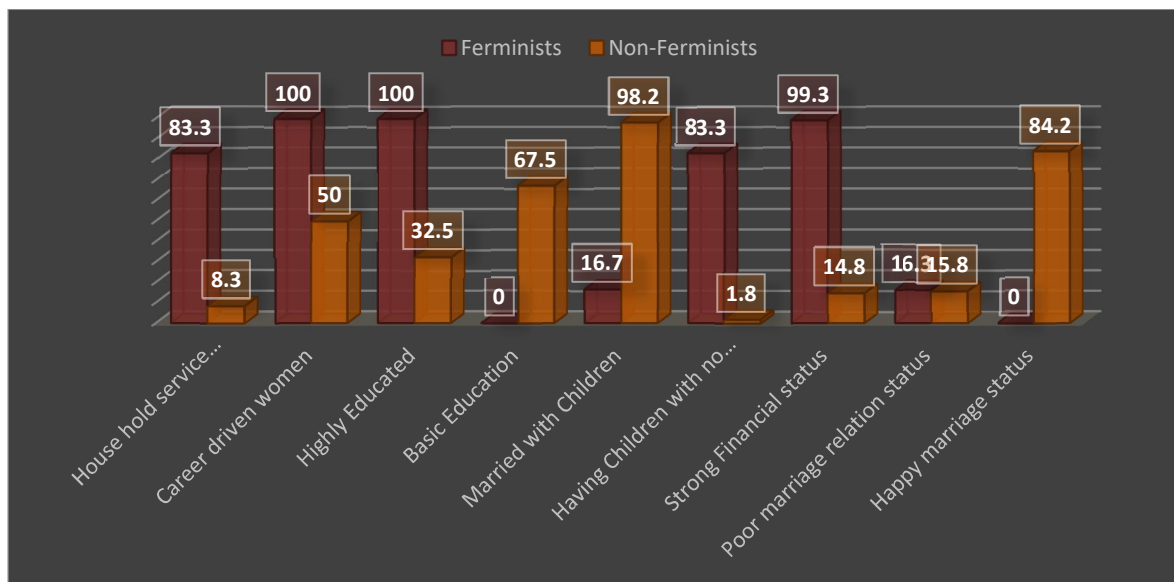
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Feminists</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Non-Feminists</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>House hold service contracted</i>	250	83.3%	50	8.3%
<i>Career driven women</i>	300	100%	300	50%
<i>Highly Educated</i>	300	100%	195	32.5%
<i>Women with Basic Education</i>	0	0%	405	67.5%

Married with Children	50	16.7%	589	98.2%
Having children with no marriage	250	83.3%	11	1.8%
Strong Financial Status	298	99.3%	89	14.8%
Poor marriage relation status	49	16.3%	95	15.8%
Happy marriage status	0	0%	505	84.2%

Field Report of Senzu 2016

Fig. 2

Graphical Economic comparative analysis of feminists and Non-feminists in West Africa



Graphical report of Senzu, 2016

From the graphical report derived from field observation deduce that, generally, highly educated women are feminist, however there were exception whereby about 32.5% of highly educated women surveyed dissociated their stands from the feminism agendas. It was also found that most of the women with basic or non-educational background are non-feminists and it further established per the empirical evidence that Feminists commitment to house hold duty is very less in marriage as comparable to non-

feminists. About 83.3% of feminists have children with no marriage partners and those who have marriage partners are observed to be having a poor marriage relationship status represented by 16.3% per the above graphical reports. It was observed further, that the feminists are career driven women comparable to Non-feminists and mostly noted to have a strong financial status. It was further noted that about 84.2% of women having a happy marriage in the West Africa region are non-feminists and command less in financial authority comparable to the feminist's counterpart.

Domestic Economic Impact was measured under the following variables defined below

- i. **Positive impact on Children:** The examination of this variable, measure the extent to which children are groomed to be responsible citizen of the society.
- ii. **Strong Family:** It measure the cohesiveness, unity and active contribution to the socioeconomic development of the community and the nation as a whole
- iii. **Husband family impact:** This examine and measure the man's performance on his nuclear family and effect on his scio-economic venture
- iv. **Community Economic Livelihood impact:** This measure the impact of the woman profession in the community according to public report
- v. **Property Creation:** This measure the wealth creation intent to satisfy material interest as individual in the context of women

Table 3.

Domestic Economic Impacts Studies in a comparative analysis

Variables	Positive Impact on Children	Strong Family	Husband impacts on family	Community Economic Livelihood Impact	Property Creation
Feminist	12%	4%	3%	48%%	75%

Non-Feminist	88%	96%	90%	51%	15%
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*Field Report of (Senzu 2016)*

It was empirically deduced according to the Table 3, that feminist impact in the grooming of children to become responsible citizens was much less at an average rate of 12% comparable to non-feminists at 88%. The family composition of cohesiveness, unity and happiness expressed in any properly instituted nuclear family was very high in non-feminists home comparable to feminists, scoring an average of 4% compared to 96% of non-feminists. It was also realized, the impact of men married to feminists in their nuclear family is very less and extensively affect their public engagement and economic ventures as comparable to men engaged to non-feminists. It was further observed that feminists scored an average performance of 48% to 51% of non-feminists in community economic livelihood impact programme, in the context of Africa because the African society set-up perceive feminists as proud figures, hence repel against their contributions and commitments, which deny their full potential to be realized in the community developmental support programmes comparable to their counterpart. In wealth creation, feminists were measured on a high score rate of 75% as against 15% of their counterpart because feminists strive a lot to compete in wealth accumulation with men while the non-feminist place less effort in wealth making with an intention that, all effort as women is to complements the men's energy in wealth making. Considering the empirical analysis above, it succinctly depicts that, the influence of feminism and it extremist agendas has a very strong effect in family formation and smooth developments over time in West Africa, if only the theory of family as model for the organization of the state under the school of thought in political economic philosophy is valid, then the findings above speak volume of long term effect of feminism practice on the continents of Africa.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The paper in its final conclusion accept and believe in the concept of UN-women economic empowerment conference, themed as the progress of the world's women in transforming economies from 2015-2016. However never support the paper preposition with their further fact findings, which seek to interpret and argue in the lenses of feminism. For instance, this paper disagree with an attempt of interpreting the data of 219 countries from 1970 to 2009; submitting that in every additional year of education for women of reproductive age, child mortality decreased by 9.5% and correlate this kind of educational information, as quality impact of feminism on the grounds of theory, to establish advocacy and promote it agenda in Africa, is an error in the context of Africa which is the final conclusion the studies seek to depicts.

## VII. RECOMMENDATION

1. Education of women should be devoid of feminism agenda but actively driven to technical skills and quality house management, a grounds for a strong family which has effect to a strong economy.
2. The economic ecosystem of individual African nations need to be well understood to drive women economic empowerment and educational agenda to enable them become effective economic players as a complimentary role to men who are traditionally leading figures in economic ventures

3. In developing economy, most of the women are at the forefront of informal sector which is very unique of its kind and need not be undermined with high level education within the framework of feminists agenda because such informal structure forms the backbones of such nation's economy. And recommend that, they rather need to be equipped with managerial economics and methods to be efficient in productivity, to step-up the value of their economic livelihood.
4. Theoretical relation identified in the context of Africa during the studies, which is open to further research studies and theoretical examination are stated below;
  - 4.1 There is a strong correlation between highly educated women and feminists character, which is noted to be directly proportional
  - 4.2 There is a strong correlation between low level educated women and non-feminists character, which is observed to be directly proportional
  - 4.3 There is a strong correlation between a high rate of a broken home and a feminists category observed to be directly proportional and inversely proportional to non-feminists category

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