

**MOTIVATION AND INNOVATION: A PANACEA FOR  
WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**

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## ***Abstract***

*This paper discussed the issues of motivation and innovation: A panacea for women for in leadership for sustainable development. The paper explained the concept of leadership, qualities of a good leader, motivation, importance of motivation, innovation and also the need for leaders to be motivated and should be innovative. The paper emphasized reasons why women should be encouraged to support fellow women in leadership positions, and motivate other women that are shying away from leading but has capacity, to aspire to be elected into leadership positions. Furthermore, women are encouraged to choose leadership styles that are sustainable.*

**Keywords:** *Leadership, Motivation, Innovation, Sustainable Development.*

## **Introduction**

Women continue to be vastly under- represented in decision- making in associations, politics, businesses and communities. According to Damilola (2021), there few women in political and leadership space in Nigeria. Currently only seven out of 109 Senators and 22 out of 360 House of Representatives members are women. This means that women are poorly represented, the big question is why?

## **Problem Why Women Are Poorly Represented in Leadership Position**

According to Agbalajobi (2021), she opined that there are multiple factors, some are related to the political party system and structures.

- For instance, the high cost of purchasing form to apply for a political position, prevents women from coming out. Often women don't have enough money to pay for the mandatory expression of interest and nomination forms required by political parties to run for positions on their platforms. In addition, election campaign costs are exorbitant.
- There are also societal problems that impede women's representation, they include culture, religious norms surrounding marriage, indigeneship – a concept that recognises only ethnic groups native to a particular state and the structure that potary women as subordinate to men.
- Even educated women face hindrances, they encounter gender stereotypes that assign leadership to men, sexual assault, pay gaps and unpaid labour, including child care and domestic work, placing the women at a disadvantage position.
- There is also lack of political will and effective government action.

The above mention problems are some of the reasons why women are poorly represented at leadership positions.

Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organization Mark (2017). This goes on to mean that, strategic leadership is very important for sustainable development. Women are powerful agents of change in leadership, women capacity in leadership and decision-making are increasingly recognized in all sphere. It is time for the world and women in particular to recognize the importance of women in leadership, and commit to placing more women in positions of power. This can only be possible if women are ready and willing to support fellow women.

## **Concept of Leadership**

Leadership according to Munroe (2010), is the ability to lead others by influence. To influence requires that your ideas are heard and accepted. You can only win the hearts and minds of the lead when you respect their aspirations, interest and concerns. The capacity to influence, inspire, rally, direct, encourage, motivate, induce, move, and mobilize others to pursue a common goal or purpose while maintaining commitment, momentum, confidence and courage. According to Goleman, (2013), the fundamental task of leaders is to prime good feeling in those they lead. Leadership is one of the most important variables that affect the performance of any organization.

### Qualities of a Good Leader

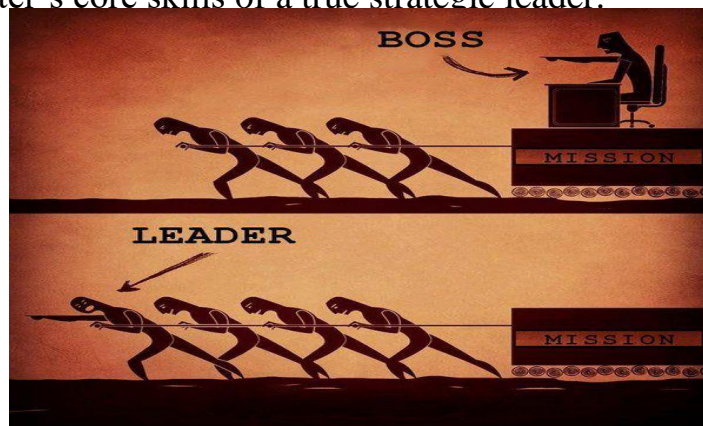
For a leader to be successful, the leader must have the qualities of a good leader according to (Munroe 2010) and they are;

Character, Charisma, Commitment, Effective Communication, Competence, Courage, Discernment, Focus, Generosity, Initiative, Listening, Passion, Positive, Attitude, Problem Solving, Honest, Responsibility, Security, Self-Discipline, Servant hood, Teachable, Vision.

For a leader to be successful, the leader should cultivate the above qualities of a good leader according to Munroe (2010). He also states that there are three levels of leadership and behaviour, they are foundation, middle and top.

**Foundation:** A foundation leader, manages the lead, support others, has the drive, ambition, finds solution, not problems, volunteers, learn skills, loyal and reliable.

**Middle:** Middle leaders are committed, good influencer, builds network, manage conflicts, master's core skills of a true strategic leader.



**Top:** Top leader forms aligns, motivates, communicates, handle crises, decisive, honest, integrity and role model.

## **Leadership Styles**

There are some leadership styles that a leader need to put into practice to become successful. For the purpose of this article, let us look at the eight leadership styles by Munroe, which are;

Authoritarian /Autocratic Leadership, Bureaucratic Leadership, Charismatic Leadership, Democratic / Participatory Leadership, Laissez Fair Leadership, People Oriented Leadership, Servant Leadership, Task Oriented Leadership.

From the above listed leadership styles, you will agree with me that it is difficult to use only one leadership style to be a successful leader. A leader needs to study the terrain, environment or organization to be able to understand the leadership styles to apply as a strategic leader. After studying the environment or organization, the leader can choose the style of leadership that can help his leadership to be successful.

## **Motivation**

As a solution to the leadership under representation of women, women needs to be motivated to participate in leadership positions. Motivation according to the oxford dictionary (2015), is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviours. In everyday usage, the term motivation is frequently used to describe the reason why a person does something. It is the driving force behind human actions, Verywell-Mind (2019). The question now is why is motivation important for women in Leadership? Motivating women in leadership positions is very crucial because, it leads to change in behaviour, it encourages women to develop competencies, creativity, set goals, grow interest, develop talents and boost engagement.

It is time for women to motivate fellow women that have the desire, drive and the capacity to lead, to come out to be voted for into leadership positions. Sometimes, fellow women who do not have the interest to lead, discourages, fellow women not to go for leadership positions and they shy away from it. Women are therefore encouraged to invest in themselves by building their leadership capacity to become good, strategic and effective leaders (Otive, 2018). Let's take a look at some of our college of educations elections and elected positions COEASU EXCO. Federal of

college education (Technical) Asaba, two women, college of education Agbor one woman, College of Education Mosogar three women, college of education Warri one woman at of the ten positions in the EXCO and so on. The problem of few women in the COEASU EXCOs is not with the men but the women. About 70% of the population in most of colleges of educations are made up of women, why then are women so few in COEASU leadership positions? The problem is with women not supporting their fellow women (field survey 2021).



## **Importance of Motivation**

Motivation is necessary to face high level of challenges, to put thoughts into action and paves the way to implement a vision. Motivation helps one to improve self-confidence, self-esteem, self-discipline, and job satisfaction. It is necessary to motivate a fellow woman as a leader or to become a leader, when she feels dissatisfied with the status quo, when morale is low, when deadline is hard to meet and when results are not reached. According to the National Academics of Science, Engineering and Medicine (2018), as a woman who has the desire and the capacity to lead, do not wait to be motivated, you can motive yourself by doing the following;

- Be self-aware, self-discipline, self-motivated to motivate others. By being your own energizer, people will intuitively follow your lead. Also, this will help you discover the areas where you lack motivation, areas where you are easily distracted, areas where you are multitasking and trying to please everyone.
- Know your purpose, remain focus and determined to reach your set goals. Learn to lead by example when met with difficulties. Shine spotlight on what has been accomplished so far rather than what is missing, and focus on the numerous opportunities that can result from the problems. Avoid using negative energy to motivate your team.
- Demonstrate integrity, do the right thing especially when no one is watching.
- Stay close to your convictions and values, treat yourself with fairness and respect.
- Avoid lying to your fellow women to win their favour, because the truth will definitely come to the open. Learn to keep to promises and avoid encouraging a culture of gossip, manipulation, distrust and disrespect.
- Keep learning and don't be afraid to ask questions. Get to know your team and build strong, healthy, and mature relationship with them. Allow your team members to be themselves and not dull vision of themselves. Also it is important to stop stereotyping as a good leader.
- Invest in people around you. Show them the value of their contributions and do not hesitate to show them your appreciation.
- Connect with leaders who are highly motivated and surround yourself with people who have the same value system with you.

From the above list of self-motivation, any woman who wants to lead needs to consider these points and be self-motivated even though she is not being motivated, but has the capacity to lead. When other women come to realize that, with all their discouraging behaviour she still went ahead and she is leading well with good results, majority will start to support her.

## **Innovation in Leadership**

As a leader, you need to be innovative, that is by coming up with new ideas that will strengthen your leadership style. A leader should be willing to learn, unlearn and relearn because learning is for a life time. A successful leader should be able to help their team create new ideas while being able to envisage the future of the organization as well as the benefits that comes with such innovations. Innovation is the practical implementation of ideas that result in introduction of new goods and services or improvement of offering goods and services, (Lisjer, 2018). Rosabeth (2014), opined that innovation springs from a culture that encourages everyone to come forth with new ideas that will grow the organization for sustainable development. A successful leader is a fast strategic thinker, innovative and creative, this puts the organization in front of the competition and a step closer to successful results.



## **Importance of Innovation in Leadership**

Innovation is often necessary for companies to adapt and overcome the challenges change. Amber (2019), opined that it is very important for a leader to be innovative, creative and be a strategic thinker to be successful. Leadership can drive innovation

and be sustainable if, a leader or someone aspiring to become a leader can consider the following;

1. Innovative leaders have a vision of the future of the organization, looking not just for immediate success but also at long-term goals.
2. Innovative leaders establish trust in their members, which would be reflect back on them.
3. Innovative leaders challenge the status quo, relying not only on safe and comfortable path but on future vision to decisions.
4. Innovative leaders possess expertise in the area that requires innovation, both knowing the details of where their organization stands when it comes to technology, and professional in leadership.
5. Innovative leaders set aspirational goals, improving on the previous leadership system to achieve the set goals.
6. Innovative leaders crave for information, recognizing that relevant facts can drive innovation. Asking good questions and listening to responses is very crucial.
7. Innovative leaders excel at teamwork, putting the interest of collaboration and group-based value first, for the growth and development of the organization.
8. Innovative leaders value diversity and inclusion. Their experiences and opinions of others act as fuel for creativity and sustainable development

### **Women Support for Women in Leadership**

It is very important for women to encourage fellow women in leadership, and also encourage women to come out to be voted into leadership positions. For this support for women leadership to be possible, women should exert greater influence over the choice of the leader they make. Women should create a personal leadership development strategy with women that have leadership desire and capacity.

How to attract and retain women leaders is very important at this point, and should be our primary concern since we need to fight for women in leadership positions. Some ways women can successfully support fellow women into leadership positions and retain them are as follows;

1. Women and women organizations should address women's leadership challenges and needed competencies. Ensure women leaders have the experiences and the resources to learn what they need most. This could include giving guidance as well as coaching, mentoring, and workshops to build their capacity.

It is important that the organization and members are cleared on the goals and objectives, the needed skills, and capacities to be effective in various leadership roles.

2. Women should leverage on the power of choosing leaders, they need to be intentional about their leaders. The power to choose is sometimes overlooked by women, they encourage female leaders in any organization to;
  - Exert greater influence over the choice they make.
  - Take the lead in shaping conversation about their career.
  - Take greater ownership over their career choices.
  - Create a personal leadership development strategy.
3. Rethink systems and challenge assumptions. Look for ways that bring about unconscious bias in the organization, that is affecting opportunities and use that to motivation for women. Women should make increasing gender equity in any organization a priority.

Women should learn how to create the right network of strategic female leaders. The right relationship and ties are asset in getting access to the right information. Women need a network of champions, including mentors, sponsors, and coaches for sustainable women leadership development.

### **Importance of Sustainable Development in Leadership**

Wikipedia defined sustainable development as development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable leadership has emerged as an effective leadership style to cope with sustainable challenges. Presently sustainable development has emerged as one of the challenging issues across the globe (Smith & Ramirez, 2012). Sustainability requires leaders who could foster sustainable practices in the society, organizations and ignite economic prosperity (Metcalf & Benn, 2013). In this perspective, sustainable leadership has emerged as effective leadership style. Sustainable development leadership promotes sustainability values, at the individual, organizational, and social level.

Furthermore, sustainable development leaders, focus on capacity building, sustainable change and long-term results, which make it imperative for leaders to focus on the sustainability of good leadership (Hallinger, 2018). It is therefore very important for women in leadership positions and those aspiring for leadership position, to work on the sustainable leadership style this will result growth and development of the organization.

### **Conclusion**

The article has so far, explained the concept of leadership, qualities of a successful leader, various styles of leadership. The study has looked at the importance of motivation and innovation for women in leadership positions. It also emphasized the need for women to motivate fellow women in leadership positions and encourage women to come out, to be voted into leadership positions. Women are encouraged to build their capacity in leadership, learn to be interested in leadership, be self-confidence, surround themselves with fellow women with the same value system.

### **Recommendations**

- Women are encouraged to have a rethink in their choice of leader.
- Women are advised to support fellow women in leadership like COEASU, WICE and so on
- Women should learn to motivate themselves for them to be strategic leaders for sustainable development
- Women should not shy away from leadership positions, their experiences and leadership skills are highly needed for sustainable development.
- Women should focus on leadership style that will bring about sustainable development

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