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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## WOMEN'S CITIZENSHIP VERSUS INVOLVEMENT IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE: THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMING POLITICAL SPACES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

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#### Abstract

Despite the enviable democratic credentials and leadership role exhibited by Ghana within the African Region, democratisation and governance in Ghana is compromised with cultural demands and gender role expectations dominated by patriarchal societal norms. Premised on the fact that gender equality, full citizenship rights and equal opportunities between men and women are constitutional provisions, this paper uses existing empirical literature and relevant secondary data sources to discuss the status of Ghanaian women under a democratically constitutional governance. It presents how gender structures and systems condition women as minors and subject them to marginalisation and oppression within households, communities and in religious as well as state institutions due to discriminatory implementation of national policies. This paper provides insights into the identity of women as rightful citizens with equal rights to opportunities as men versus the role confusion over the level of participation in several aspects of life such as education, employment, healthcare, control of resources and political life. The paper argues that in spite of the constitutional provision of common humanity of both men and women and the important contributions of women towards nation-building in areas of production, family care activities, educational attainment and the fight for women's human rights, women are still treated as minors occupying subordinate positions at all levels of society. This paper calls for multi-sectoral adoption and implementation of culturally sensitive and structurally transformative agency strategies as well as gender responsive policies and programmes especially in state institutions through active engagement of men as role models, agents of change and indirect beneficiaries of women's empowerment.

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#### Introduction:-

The importance of women's participation in governance has been highlighted in various international conventions and treaties including the 1995 Beijing Platform for Affirmative Action and the 2000 UN Millennium Summit. Engagement of women in politics is central to democratic and sustainable development (UN, 2000; Adaina, 2012; UNDP, 2016a, b). In the light of this, the SDG 5 focuses on gender imbalances and female empowerment with the target of ensuring gender equality in leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

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by 2030. There cannot be a balanced developmental progress in any country without equal opportunities for both men and women (Cann, 2016). Therefore, gender balance in political participation and decision-making has become an internationally agreed target (UN, 2000; ICRW, 2014; UNDP, 2016b). This accounts for the global efforts towards the removal of all forms of discrimination against women including harmful socio-cultural structures that hamper women's empowerment.

Regardless of the global call for democratic governance, structural systems and forces of genderism remain stubborn and resistant to true democratic governance across regions and countries (Cann, 2016; UN Women, 2017a). This is more remarkable in women's participation in politics and decision-making at the familial, local and national levels (GSS, 2014), which invariably, impact their employment (FAO, 2012a, b) and health (ICRW, 2010; Bougangue, 2017). Currently, no region has up to 50% of women in parliament and the Nordic countries leads with 41.1%, followed by Americas 27.7%, Europe (excluding Nordic countries) 24.3%, sub-Saharan Africa 23.1%, Asia 19.2%, Arab States 18.4% and Pacific 13.5% (UN Women, 2017b).

In many parts of the world, gender inequalities remain deeply entrenched and progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment has been halting and remains uneven (ICRW, 2008, 2010, 2014; Cann, 2016). Consequently, few women are represented in key political and economic decision-making positions (IDEA, 2012). The representation of women in legislatures across the world is only 22.8%, with only 10 women as heads of state. Globally, only 2 countries (Rwanda 63.8% & Bolivia 53.1%) have 50% or more women in parliament (Cann, 2016; UN Women, 2017b). In regions and countries with the critical minority of 30% women in legislation, the success had to go through difficult hurdles and uncompromising resistance to women's empowerment (UN Women, 2017a). Meanwhile, the contribution of women in local and national governance makes a significant difference in all dimensions of development (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002; UN Women, 2017a). For example, in India, local council water projects entrusted in the hands of women was 62% higher than those handled by men (Bratton & Ray, 2002). Similarly, a study in Norway established a direct causal relationship between the presence of women in municipal councils and childcare coverage (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004). Pathetically, at the risks of poor economic growth and development, the world is facing acute misuse of talent for neglect of gender equality (Cann, 2016). With a gradual progress in education and health from very low levels, progress towards parity in key economic areas has slowed dramatically with a gap of 59% to the disadvantage of females - the largest since 2008. Averagely, women earn just over half of what men earn irrespective of the long hours in unpaid work. Currently, only 54% of women in the world as compared with 81% of men are employed (Cann, 2016).

In line with international treaties and conventions, Ghana has been committed to upholding women's human rights, ensuring women's participation in politics and public life as well as developing affirmative action. The government is also bound by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana as well as national policies to promote gender equality. The establishment of a ministry for women and children in 2001 was a step towards women's empowerment for democratic growth and development with a core mandate to initiate and co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate policies to promote gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and developmental issues using a multi-sectoral approach (Addo, 2012). Another remarkable attempt is the mainstreaming of justice as a policy area for gender equity in the form of legal reforms including a constitutional provision for gender equity under the law, and the revision of the criminal code of 1960 to ensure criminalising harmful cultural practices such as ritual servitude like the *trokosi system* and female genital mutilation that are perpetuated against young women and girls. Aside, the enactment of domestic violence law and the creation of Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service were steps taken towards healthy and secured relationship especially for women. Regardless of these efforts, just like in other countries, most Ghanaian women are engulfed in the web of gender and treated as secondary citizens (Tsikata, 2007; Adaina, 2012; IDEA, 2012; FAO, 2012a; UN Women, 2017a), which degenerates into a state of crisis of their identify as rightful citizens with equal opportunities as men by the constitutional provision versus the role they play within the family, community and state institutions in relation to the expectations of true democratic governance.

#### **Methods:-**

This paper adopted the structuration theory (Giddens, 1984; Germov, 2014) and the stage theory of psychosocial development (Erikson & Erikson, 1998) to discuss how socio-cultural and political structures create barriers for women at the agency level under democratic governance. The discussions are based on documentary analysis of information from published journals, thesis, conference papers, the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and international organisations such as the World Bank, FAO and UNDP amongst others as well as excerpts from the

media. The paper identifies women in a stage of democratic crisis due to gender-biased structures versus the role confusion over the expectations of true democratic governance regarding their status in society and participation in political and socio-economic activities in relation to men.

#### **Gender and democratic governance in Ghana:-**

The Ghanaian woman is entrapped in the web of genderism under democratic governance within both private and state structures. The gender inequality in governance today traces back to the colonial era, when males were given the opportunity for formal education and skill training (Tsikata, 2007; Adaina, 2012). Before colonialism, Ghanaian women were active and fearless political giants (Adaina, 2012). This is evident in the system of chieftaincy amongst the Akan ethnic group and the immense contribution of women within the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) with the Ghanaian first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in the independence struggle (Azikiwe, 2009; Adaina, 2012). The advent of colonialism widened the existing inequality gaps and created more with political, economic and gender policies (Ikpe, 2004; Lewu, 2005; Omotola, 2007; Oni, 2009, Adaina, 2012).

Women's participation in governance has been observed to be central to democratic and sustainable development (UN, 2000; ICPD, 1994; Adaina, 2012; UNDP, 2016b). However, the commitment towards building a gender-balanced state governance has received a mixed of warm and cold responses in the formulation and implementation of gender responsive policies (Addo, 2012; Atta, 2015; UNDP, 2016b). Either the demands in the international conventions and treaties are yet to be fully domesticated and effectively implemented or it is a conscious and intentional neglect of gender responsiveness or there is no effective legal binding in the form of affirmative action to the application of such policies and laws (Addo, 2012; UNDP, 2016b). For example, the Affirmative Action Bill that is supposed to be passed into law by 2013 to enhance women's participation in governance and decision-making has not received attention. The provision of the 1992 Constitution and existing legal policies indicate that there is more to implementation than the provision of legal structures. The existing laws are in consistence with international legal frameworks for ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment. One key setback is lack of will on the part of the government and political parties to institute measures to ensure that the existing structural inequalities between men and women are removed to promote women's participation in policy decisions (Adaina, 2012; UN Women, 2017a).

The achievement of SDG 3 and 5 will be a mirage in the face of the existing 'patriarchal-autocracy' and authoritarian governance associated with under-representation of women in positions of power and decision-making. Despite the proportion (51.8%) of women in Ghana, their participation in policy making and governance is very low (Adaina, 2012; IDEA, 2012; UN Women, 2017a). As of January, 2017, women constituted only 4 of the 30 cabinet ministers and 14 out of 49 deputy ministers; 3 of the 25 members of council of state (Daily Graphic, 23.12.2016). Out of 133 women who contested in 2016 for parliament seats from the 275 seats, only 37 (13.1%) women won with little improvement over previous 29 (10.5%) of women legislators. Regional distribution of female parliamentarians makes the impact of patriarchal genderism more visible. Women won 5 seats in each of Ashanti and Eastern Regions (matriarchal regions). The gap is widened in the three patriarchal northern regions where women won only one seat each in Upper East and Northern with no seat being won by women in the Upper West Region (Daily Graphic, 23.12.2016). Currently, out of 31 cabinet ministers only 7 women are represented and no woman has been appointed a regional minister out of the 10 regional ministers. Women form only 6.5% of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) at the local government level (UNDP, 2016a, b; Daily Graphic, 23.12.2016). This low representation within the national and local government structures limits women's potentially valuable contribution to development, poverty reduction, and the achievement of gender equality (UNDP, 2016b). The relative improvement of 8.3% to 13.3% in women's representation in parliament from 2009 to 2017, is built on fluctuations since the first parliament signifying inconsistency in progress.

Lack of skills, confidence and public support for women's political participation limits their capacity to challenge government and hold it accountable (Tsikata, 2007; IDEA, 2012). Though there is no discriminatory law against women in politics, there are overt and covert practices such as monetisation of elections that hinder women's abilities to contest men (UN Women, 2017a). Women who are given political appointments have been victims of defamatory allegations from the public in the media. They are alleged to be flirts, incompetent or described as weak decision-makers. Typical instances were the Ghanaian public responses to the appointments of the first female chief justice, Mrs Georgina T. Woode and the first electoral commissioner Mrs Charlotte Osei. As seen in the quotation below, whilst gender activists lauded the president for the move, other people including key political figures described the step as an exchange for sex.

"The NPP MP, Ken Agyapong launched a scathing attack on Charlotte Osei, alleging that she was appointed after sexual favours." (Ghana Web, adomonilne.com, 03-03-2017).

This was the response of the electoral commissioner:

"A woman's beauty is liability, her ugliness is liability'. If you are beautiful it is a liability, if you are ugly it is a liability," – Charlotte Osei (Ghana | Myjoyonline.com 08-03-2017 Time: 05:03:23:pm)

Another crucial hurdle often underestimated and neglected is the traditional gender role expectations and beliefs around decision-making. In patriarchal society, men are given the mandate to make sole decisions which serve as a form of protection for women and children (Bougangue, 2017). As mediators in traditional worship, men use spiritualism as a source of fear and power to control women (Nukunya, 2003; Tsikata, 2007; UNDP, 2016a; Bougangue, 2017). In Nabdram in Ghana, voters were warned against voting for a female candidate in district assembly elections to avoid punishment from the gods and ancestors of the land (UNDP, 2016a). Women who dominate against the societal gender norms of politics are often branded as *flirts, uncontrollable or witches* which normally generates mistrust in their marriages and degenerates into divorce. As a result, family members as well as peers influence women to avoid active participation in politics (UNDP, 2016a).

Furthermore, the media plays a crucial role in shaping voters' opinion as it often stereotypes women as only capable of traditional feminine roles. The consequence is exclusion of women from decision-making processes as leaders, legislators, ministers and chief executives with most of their needs not incorporated into policy formulation and implementation (UNDP, 2016a, b; UN Women, 2017a, b).

#### **Gender and Education:-**

Apart from being a pre-requisite for political participation, education is a fundamental element of poverty reduction strategies and a primary requirement for employment in both formal and informal sectors of the economy (UN, 2000; GSS, 2014). It is a valuable input into production and contributes to differences in productivity and earnings (World Bank, 2012). Female education increases women's labour force participation and improves production and standards of living of women, their families and the entire nation (UNDP, 2016b). Studies show that educated female farmers usually exhibit higher productivity, which sustains the argument that gender differences in human capital translates into differences in agricultural productivity (FAO, 2012a; World Bank, 2012). Law-making, interpretation and policy formulation as well as implementation require literacy skills, which implies that women need education to participate actively in politics as well as other aspects of governance.

To better fit into the fourth industrial revolution, women need formal education and training especially in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). In Ghana, indicators of education reflect gender gaps and disparities (Lambert, Perrino & Barreras, 2012; FAO, 2012a; GSS, 2000, 2012, 2014, 2015). Ghana's literacy rate currently stands at 71.5%, with a notable gap between men (78.3%) and women (65.3%). The recent progress in primary education is associated with a wide gap in the gender parity index (GPI) in completion of schools at all levels (Camfed Ghana, 2012; GSS, 2000, 2012, 2014). The virtual gender parity in enrollment at primary and senior high school levels does not translate into national gender ratio for completion which is estimated to be 67.5% (two girls for every three boys) mainly due to teenage pregnancies and early marriages (Camfed Ghana, 2012).

Female education is the most cost-effective measure to improve living standards in developing countries (ICRW, 2010, 2014; Lambert et al., 2012; Hagman, 2013). Educating females indirectly regulates fertility by increasing age at marriage and childbearing, reducing their reproductive periods and increasing contraceptive use (Magadi & Curtis, 2003; GSS, 2008, 2015). Thus, female education sets young girls particularly free from the obstetric complications often associated with early childbearing. In addition, educated women are able to translate knowledge into practice by putting positive attitudes towards healthcare seeking (Preston, 1989, Magadi & Curtis 2003; Hagman, 2013; ICRW 2010, 2014; Bougangue & Kumi-Kyereme, 2015; Bougangue, 2017). Therefore, denying women access to education means nearly more than half of the country's labour and intellect will be untapped which translates into the country making only half of the GDP that could be realised with women's inclusion (Lambert et al., 2012).

In Ghana, high gender differentials still exist in educational attainment to the disadvantage of women. Out of Ghanaians aged 15 years and above, 34.7% females are illiterates as compared with 21.7% men (GSS, 2014). Apart from lack of good will to implement gender responsive educational policies, conditions such as poverty, sexual

harassment and cultural mind-set are impediments to women's education (Lambert et al., 2012; UN Women, 2017a). Female students especially, adolescents experience unfair treatment and sexual harassment from both teachers and their peers in school (UNICEF, 2011 in Lambert et al., 2012). Aside, especially in the rural northern Islamic areas people focus on a subservient role for women and discourage higher career pursuits for them (Grzybowshi, 2010, FAO, 2012a,b; Atta, 2015). This perception leads the young females into risks such as early/forced marriage, STIs & low contraceptive use, which further place them at the risks of maternal complications and death (Tsikata, 2007; GSS et al., 2008, 2009, 2015).

#### **Employment and Social Welfare:-**

Whilst the constitution and other legal frameworks grant women rightful citizenship with equal opportunities as men, women are held to structural injustices and discriminatory gender norms with far-reaching implications for their citizenship status (Tsikata, 2007). In 60 years of independence, women's rights and gender equity matters have not been consistently prioritised in government policies. The quest for gender equality and women's empowerment has not been adequately and responsively integrated into national policies (Tsikata, 2007; Addo, 2012; UN, 2016b; UN Women, 2017a). For instance, regardless of its cabinet status, the gender ministry is quite marginal in policy making process (Tsikata, 2007).

There are gender differentials in positions in Ghanaian labour force segmented in terms of sector and status of employment (Offei-Aboagye, 1996; Bortei-Doku Aryeetey, 2000; Awumbila, 2001; Heintz, 2005; Tsikata, 2007; GSS, 2014; UNDP, 2016b). Most Ghanaian women continue to be in less paid informal sector work that are primarily made up of small scale businesses, domestic work and traditional farming (Tsikata, 2007; FAO, 2012a, b; GSS, 2012, 2014). Whilst most women are mainly into small scale food crop cultivation, men are engaged in large scale food and crop production (FAO, 2012a, b; GSS, 2014). This is due to the fact that more men than women have adequate social capital and access to loans for agriculture even from the state owned banking institutions (World Bank, 2012; GSS, 2014). The under-representation of women in the formal sector of the economy is due to their generally low level of education and professional training, the burden of unpaid care activities and many years of discriminatory policies inherited from the colonial administration (Acheampong & Agyei-Mensah, 2006; Tsikata, 2007; Adaina, 2012; FAO, 2012a,b; World Bank, 2012; UNDP, 2016b; UN Women, 2017a).

In Ghana, apart from the service and sales work, elementary occupations and managerial positions, the gender gap is wide in other occupations and more men than women are employed in the public and private formal sectors (GSS, 2014). This discriminatory system of employment against women creates gender inequalities in earnings and production output, which has a consequence of poor economic growth and development (FAO, 2012a, b; World Bank, 2012; Cann, 2016; UNDP, 2016b; UN Women, 2017a).

Under democratic rule, the colonial system of using security forces in tax collection in the informal sector is maintained and applied to traders, most of whom are women, not even in rural areas, but in the big commercial cities including Accra, the capital city (UNICEF, 2002 in Tsikata, 2007; Opare, 2003). This harassment has been normalised and applied in the removal of unauthorised structures in markets usually put up by women who have not been adequately provided with shops. These women have on countless occasions resisted to the orders by the city authorities. It is common to hear the word *aabayee* (a signal that the city guards or the police are coming) at commercial centres and people begin to run. These security guards are used to cease materials on sale at the so-called unauthorised places in the name of decongesting the city. Further, this unfair treatment of women is extended to denial of adequate social amenities such as refuse bins, toilets and portable drinking water at vantage points in the informal working environment where most women work (Tsikata, 2007). Where refuse bins are provided, they are not timely and regularly emptied thereby, generating an offensive odor in the city. Meanwhile, these poor marginalised minors are expected to observe all sanitation laws just like their counterparts, the majority of whom are men who have been provided with the basic sanitation facilities in their offices in the formal sector by the same government.

Gender insensitiveness in Ghana has degenerated into *kaya yei system* (female head portorage), where young girls and women migrate from the poor rural north of the country to earn their living in commercial centres by carrying luggage for traders on daily basis. These are normally either school dropouts or never attended school girls who leave their children with girls aged 6-8 years who act as nannies and later absorbed into the portorage job (UNICEF, 2002 in Tsikata, 2007). This exposes the women to both security and health risks as they sleep on cardboards, sacks and old cloths under wooden structures hired to them by market women on night basis (Tsikata, 2007).

Adherence to traditional gender division of labour within households and the general society relegates women to either less paid or unpaid economic activities that further subject women to less time and resources (FAO, 2012a, b; GSS, 2014). Females spend twice more time on unpaid domestic services within household (171 minutes) than males (85 minutes). Females also spend more time than males in providing unpaid caregiving services to household members - 109 minutes against 62 minutes (GSS, 2014). Traditionally, the Ghanaian men play the role of family heads but today is witnessing a continuous rising of female household heads (GSS, 2014). Apart from death of husbands and migration, this might be due to dissolution of relationships and neglect of children by men which subjects the women to poverty and associated crises at personal, family and community levels.

#### **Control of Resources:-**

A country's development depends on its human and material resources including time and technology (World Bank, 2012; UN Women, 2017a). Therefore, inequalities in access to and control of these resources have unpleasant implications for the earnings and output of production of the disadvantaged and the country at large (Bortei-Doku Aryeetey, 2000; Awumbila, 2001; World Bank, 2012; Cann, 2016).

Under democratic rule, history and culture still take precedence in land acquisition and ownership in Ghana (Tsikata, 2007; FAO, 2012a, b). Though the customary laws permit both men and women to obtain land for any activity, women are mostly affected by the mode of land acquisition in the olden days through land clearing which was men's space. The contribution of women in those days in the form of preparing food for the men to gain energy to work and assistance offered on the farm has not been given recognition in land ownership. It has been observed that this gender-biased system of land acquisition and ownership continues to benefit men to the disadvantage of women in the allocation of land as well as in inheritance practices (Nukunya, 1975; Kotey & Tsikata, 1998; Tsikata, 2007). Unfortunately, the problem is doubled by the unwillingness of financial institutions including state owned banks to give equal opportunities of loans to men and women for housing and land acquisition (UN Women, 2017a; GSS, 2014). According to Tsikata, a study conducted between 1989 and 2002 showed that 65% of land titles were in the names of men, 25% in the names of women and 10% jointly registered mostly by spouses. In the same study, between 1970 and 2002, entries in the Deeds Registry indicated that 75% of deeds were for men, 23 for women, whilst 2% were joint entries.

The traditional expectations of property ownership and the perception towards land acquisition and ownership are concrete blocks to women in resource control and ownership (Lambert et al., 2012; FAO, 2012a, b; World Bank, 2012). It is culturally expected that male family members or husbands lead women to acquire land. Under the influence of these expectations, properties are normally registered in the name of a husband whether jointly acquired by spouses or solely acquired by a woman with an implication of contest in the event of husband's death or marriage dissolution (Minkah-Premo & Dowuona-Hammond, 2005). It is the male chiefs and heads of families who are common decisions-makers in regards to land tenure even in matrilineal society. In view of this, Ghanaian men hold 3.2 times more of the total farms than women, and 8.1 times more of the medium and large-sized farms (FAO, 2012a, b).

The distribution of domestic work between men and women in Ghana is not balanced. The average amount of time that women spend in domestic activities is greater than that of men, even if women spend as much time as men in productive activities (UN Women, 2017a; GSS, 2014). For instance, 65% of men spend up to 10 hours per week on domestic activities as compared with 89% of women who engage in the most time-engaging activities such as cooking and household care. Even young women combine greater domestic and productive workloads as compared to their male counterparts. For example, it is estimated that 63% of males as compared with 88% of females in rural Ghana combine greater domestic and productive workloads (UN Women, 2017a). For this reason, women are less likely to be able to take full advantage of economic opportunities, to respond to changing market opportunities, and to participate in income-generating activities because time constraints hamper women's ability to develop their capabilities through education and skills development, which could enhance economic returns and well-being (UN Women, 2017a).

#### **Conclusions and the way forward:-**

The inter-connectedness of education, employment and political participation means that, women's lower level of education, their low representation in decision-making within households, at local and national levels as well as their employment into lowly paid jobs amount to poor economic growth and development (World Bank, 2012; Cann, 2016; UNDP, 2016b). This is because gender inequality undermine local and national efforts for improving living

conditions, reducing poverty and enhancing national development (FAO, 2012a, b). The fact that both men and women are factored in determining per capita income and living standards means it is important to equitably integrate women's resources in all aspects of life. It has been estimated that on the average, gender inequality costs sub-Saharan Africa about \$US105 billion, which is about 6% of the region's GDP, with the implication of jeopardising efforts for inclusive human development and economic growth. Again, it is estimated that 1% increase in gender inequality reduces a country's GDP by 0.75% (UNDP (2016b)).

The social policy dimensions of women's citizenship discussed above are framed by several powerful institutions such as ethnicity, kinship and marriage which govern social relations and practices. These institutions are particularly influential and underpinned by religious beliefs and practices mostly within the context of African Traditional Religion (ATR), Christianity and Islam. These institutions and their practices have been undergoing changes in the past years but their norms and gender ideologies remain very resilient in normalising gender inequalities and rendering women as perpetual minors in society (Tsikata, 2007). As a result, a very few women in Christianity and ATR become leaders whilst women are not allowed at all to lead prayers in Islam. Whilst the ATR particularly is a source of fear to women, it serves as a source of power, influence, domination and oppression to men who control women in society (Nukunya, 2003; Tsikata, 2007; Bougangue, 2017).

Women's personal ideologies are chosen for them either by the state, society or family based on gender-biased structures. Indeed, like adolescents in psychosocial crisis (Gross, 1978; Erikson & Erikson, 1998; Crain, 2011; Macnow, 2014), women are in democratic crisis of citizenship identity versus confusion over their role and status in society due to structural inequalities. They are in a situation of finding answers to existential questions such as "Who am I? Who can I be"? (Macnow, 2014). However, this is a pivotal stage of democratic development, with the possibility of reconciling their status in society with the expectations of true democratic governance. In the light of this, there is the need for the establishment and strengthening of existing women's pressure groups and organisations as well as individual gender activists in collective spirit to radically effect changes in the present injustice and hostile governance (Stevens, 1983).

Undoubtedly, given the present technological advancement, the expected changes will not occur automatically (Erikson & Erikson, 1998; Macnow, 2014). For women to be empowered, recognised and liberated from the present disguised imperialism, it takes the acquisition of skills through formal education and training. Since the present state of women in democracy has the potentials of modification (Erikson & Erikson, 1998; Macnow, 2014), this paper calls for radical structural transformation in political spaces through quota system and funding of women in political contest at all levels, removal of structural barriers such as gender roles and most importantly, equal access to and sustenance of education and training as well as creation of employment for females.

The achievement of gender equality, women's empowerment and democratic freedom by 2030 as SDG 5, will be a mirage unless there is commitment to removal of patriarchal structures that collide with gender responsive policies and legal structures. Removing gender-biased structures will find women in top positions in jobs which will facilitate gender equity in decision-making. In all these, the media have a role to play especially in presenting gender issues to the public. Responsible gender discussions should be held especially on abilities of women in politics or in top hierarchy of public service rather than expression of doubts and condemnation of women.

Since women have better repayment rates than men, putting financial resources in the hands of women in the form of loans will place them on a relatively even platform to promote gender equality (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002). Access to resources alone will not automatically translate into equality or empowerment. At the agency level, women should have the ability to use the resources to achieve their aspirations. Thus, women's empowerment at the agency level will establish a formidable base for social change (World Bank, 2001; Cheston & Kuhn, 2002). In all, education stands tall as the most empowering tool for removing all structures of injustice genderism by changing attitudes of men towards gender roles and positioning women to challenge and effect changes in society (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002; ICRW, 2010, 2014). The Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, Professor Klaus Schwab, has observed that the world is at the beginning of a revolution that is fundamentally changing our living and interaction styles. In his new book, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* he said:

*"Women and men must be equal partners in managing the challenges our world faces – and in reaping the opportunities. Both voices are critical in ensuring the Fourth Industrial Revolution delivers its promise for society"* (Klaus Schwab in Cann, 2016).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution that is focused more on STEM Skills is likely to further deprive economies of women's talents and deteriorate economic growth unless women are given education and training in STEM skills (Cann, 2016). Indeed, there is collision of patriarchy and policies (Atta, 2015) in the present system of democracy which requires a new wind of democratic transformation in political spaces to blow away all social injustices for freedom and justice which constitute the foundation of Ghana's constitutional democracy to operate.

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