

Bible and Women Identity in Post-Colonial Africa

OLATUNDUN ABOSEDE ODERINDE

Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

Abstract. The contemporary social and political contexts of the African continent are shaped by its multifaceted histories: pre-colonial, colonial, struggles for independence and post-colonial experiences. The church is not left out in all the stages; shaping and being shaped by these contexts and histories. In all these periods, women have struggled with the issue of identity crisis. One significant factor in African cultures is the way the culture ensures the dependence of women on men for their viability in the community; relationships are structured in such a way that without a man, a woman is handicapped. There has not been much significant change in the identity of women in pre-colonial and post-colonial periods. The study adopted the existential approach to biblical exegesis, using both the advocacy criticism and African Cultural hermeneutics to explore the experiences of women in the bible and post-colonial Africa. The truth is that the woman must define her being; come up with an identity grounded in God, define herself in terms of who she is as a person and not who the society says she is. This paper posits that women must renounce all false identities and discover their real identity as human beings created in the image of God.

Keywords: Women identities, Post-Colonial Africa, Culture, Bible

1. Introduction

Women identity refers to the question of their status and experience as human beings; it is about women's essence as females, in relation to their male counterparts. Identity is necessary for social interaction. "The search for an identity is usually a search for that lost, pure, true, real, genuine, original, authentic self, often situated within a process of elimination of all that is considered other, superfluous, fake, corrupted, or Westernized".

In Africa, the identity of women from time immemorial has been subsumed under the cloud of her male dominated culture. She beholds her image in the mirror of masculinity which has pervaded her own identity. The pre-colonial African woman was conditioned to see her identity in the light of cultural projection; which defines her identity in view of her functional role to her husband and males around her world. Her world revolves round the orbit of men; she laboured hard to get attention, significance and recognition.

The pre-colonial and colonial African women identity is defined in term of her role as a mother, wife within the wife-husband relationship. This is very similar to the identity of the woman in the Bible – woman, wife and mother. The woman's creation from Adam, his declaration that she is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and consequently the derivation of her name from this reality affirm that the maxim "they will become one flesh" indicates woman's

lack of a separate legal identity, with all the legal and practical ramifications this implies. Woman is a synonym for wife, procreation and lactation. The functions fulfilled by a woman are necessarily linked to and derived from her being... in other words, there is a reciprocal effect between who she is and what she becomes by what role or function she performs. They have being defined by marital status, educational status, career status, kinship affiliation and so on. The beliefs and values embodied in the Bible and perpetuated by the Church have shaped perceptions of women in a way which must be continually challenged if significant social change is to come about, and if individual women are to have a more complete sense of their identity and their role.

In precolonial Africa, women in the indigenous African setting played important roles in many political realms of African cultures, such like Nubian women who sometimes rule Nubia as queens in their own right. Where women in precolonial Africa played significant economic roles within their societies, especially as traders, their involvement in such economic enterprises meant they could accumulate wealth and establish a notable degree of independence for themselves. Societies abound in precolonial Africa where women rode on the back of their economic fortune to political acceptance. Lord Lugard's view of the African woman as cited by Ogbu Kalu describes the status of women in some parts of Africa in the precolonial period:

She is ambitious, courageous, self-reliant, hard-working and independent...she claims full equality with the opposite sex and would seem indeed to be the dominant partner. The Women's Councils (approved and trusted by men) enact laws for the protection of the crops and enforce them by suitable penalties – including ridicule.

Kalu argued that in the colonial era, incidents of women's rebellion against the colonial change agents surprised the assumptions of docile, suppressed womenfolk. However, colonialism marginalized women and this left them with limited skills in both the public and private sectors. Patriarchal religions were used as a tool in the oppression of women.

Dube (2011) explained that African women were not allowed to speak for themselves during the colonial era; thus, when the national liberation were won, women then have no voice and their gender empowerment battle had barely begun. 'African post-colonial feminism' quest as an acknowledgment which situates most African women in a situation of juggling with several issues; where seeking balance becomes a strategy for survival and resistance; attempts to reclaim the women pre-colonial social space of power, affirming the African culture but rejecting oppressive practices posed by the western and African cultures; thus liberation and resistance comes in. Ladele posits; 'the complexity of tensions and conflicts that have etched themselves into the psyche of the colonized and which continue to emerge from that experience permeates post-colonialism'.

The post-colonial era came with a quest for the true meaning and identity of women in Africa. The rise of industrial and technological development after the colonial period called for a redefinition of the identity of women. Her struggle to find her identity in the social and economic spheres of life has made her lost her identity, to some extent, in terms of her role as mother, wife in wife-husband relationship. This has led to women identity crises in African post-colonial society.

2. African culture and Women Identities

Africa is rich in culture; this culture differs from one tribe to the other. Culture in Africa stands as a means of identity and it is a variegated phenomenon with a broader range of application and meaning. Africa culture seems to pose a threat to women as their identity seems subsumed under men. Traditionally, in Africa, women identity is often view in her tie to man. This tie is clearly reflected from the cyclic of identification from birth to death in Africa. At birth, she is identified with the name of her father; later the man gives these rights of identification to another man by means of marriage and she continue in this trend of tie till her death. African women are basically identified in relation to their male counterparts. This is caused by patrilineal nature of African

societies. Gray described patriarchy as a culture that is slanted so that men are valued a lot and women are valued less, or in which man's prestige is up and women's prestige is down. Aina furthers the point earlier made by Gray when he argues that patriarchy is:

a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of the females.

Among the Yoruba, women are treated with inferiority notion right from birth. Olabode affirms this in his comments this way:

Immediately a child is born, the question that will be posed will centre on sex, not minding the health of the mother. If the baby is a female, the mother will be scolded and treated as lazy; a good for nothing woman. On the other hand if the child is a male, praise will be showered on the mother, not considering the fact that biology has shown that it is the father who determines the sex of an offspring.

Akintunde believes that African culture has revealed a long tale of discrimination and injustice to women as there has not been equity in the opportunity, dignity and power between men and women. She buttressed this position as she showed that there are several aspects of the African culture, which restrict them from attaining equal status with men. A typical example of this was pointed out by Oduyoye who commented that African culture is replete with language that enables the community to diminish the humanity of women.

An example is the Yoruba axiom, *Oko ni ori aya* which is translated as the husband, that is, the man, is the head of the wife, the woman. This implies that, the man is to lead while the woman is to follow. Another example is *Omo to dara ni ti baba, eyi to ko dara niti iya*, this means, a well behaved child belongs to the father while the notorious child belongs to the mother. Everything that is referred to as bad in the family is associated with the woman while the good is for the man.

3. Pre-colonial and Colonial views of African Womanhood

Before the British colonial time in Africa, women take a cognitive place in the African society. They share in the economic and political life of the society. Although the precolonial African woman is susceptible to man's dominion yet significant role are played by women in religious court, political life and economic development of the society. Akintan notes that '... women play an important role in king making and some occupy important positions in the highest legislative council among the Yoruba-the *Ogboni*. A woman occupies the position of *Erelu*. This position is so important that without the *Erelu* nothing or no tangible decision can be made by the upper legislative council of the Yoruba society. Also in addition to this, Akintan (2012) cited another powerful position for women among the Yoruba leadership cadre which is *Iyalode*. She noted that *Iyalode* is a powerful political figure who fights the cause of women in Yoruba society. Notable among such figures in Yorubaland is Madam Efunroye Tinubu and Efunsetan Aniwura. *Iyaloja* is an economic leadership role by women in Yorubaland; this position controls the economic fortunes of the women.

Marginalization of women is well at home in Africa yet there are considerable breakout of women in leadership and religious role. Ogbomo explained that precolonial African women's access to power and authority depended on many factors, including the political system, class, kinship relations, marriage links, economic structures and economic opportunities. It also included women's ritual powers and the capacity and effectiveness of women's organisations. Women had to rely on kinship and marriage relations in order to gain access to power. Women who had achieved access to power and authority were invariably members of the royal family, and by implication, members of the privileged class; some were appointed chiefs on the basis of personal achievements while some others had access to power based on the existence of women's organisations.

The pre-colonial African woman control a very good sector of the societal economy amidst her trading, clothes making, cooking tools and selling of farm produce. The pre-colonial woman in Africa can even secure landed property but all this is swept under the authority of her husband who can do and undo with such property. Parpat however, notes that:

Whatever the state's ideology or level of economic development, women never control the ruling apparatus...women generally work in the worst paid, least skilled, most unsecured jobs. They exist on the economic margin of society, often surviving through back-breaking, poorly paid labour in the informal sector or casual labour.

Reviewing the gender-linked division of labour in the colonial period, numerous scholars have established that African women performed mostly domestic duties. Outside the household, in the realm of agriculture, women were primarily employed as workers, helping their husbands with food production and conservation. In contrast, and as sole owners of the family enterprise and related production factors, men enjoyed the full control of household assets and inherent production under that social division of labour. Inequality in the ownership and distribution of resources and sexual division of labour in agricultural production was widespread across Africa, irrespective of the colonial power.

Even when African women participated 'legitimately' in the colonial economy, they were attacked and punished for being economically independent on the premise that their financial autonomy is correlated with sexual immorality. For example, in Colonial Asante, unmarried women over the age of 15 were arrested by local chiefs between 1929 and 1933 for being single, and thereby, uncontrollable prostitutes. Allman contends that the unmarried women were arrested at a critical period when 'women were beginning to negotiate their own spaces within the colonial economy'. She argues that the arrests were really 'about the struggle for control over women's productive and reproductive labour'. Thus, rather than articulating the actual problem

and concerns, the issues were transferred onto the women's bodies and consequently framed as a moral crisis.

During the colonial rule in Nigeria, women were seriously hindered from political participation in the society; women were the most marginalized, she was denied any leadership role especially in the political terrain. Traditionally, the focus is chiefly on man, and life revolves around him, his needs and interest. The place of women is understood in the context of man's identity. Culturally, leadership position is constantly viewed as masculine prerogative.

Awe (1989) appropriates the colonial disposition to women leadership in Africa when she remarks that, in political sphere, women lost even more than the men, as colonial officials denied them the opportunity which they had enjoyed to participate, if only to a certain degree in decision-making. Women are obviously sidelined in political matters and leadership role.

Many scholars have argued that the colonial era reworked gender relations in African societies mainly to the detriment of women. Elkins explained that African women were at the receiving end with the fact that they were victims of rape from African and British guards. In Boserup's opinion; the complimentary roles of women to men no longer exist in Africa, but Africa's women subordination to men and gender inequality continues in various forms. Dube argues that colonialism is a relationship of domination and subordination of modern imperialism. Machakanja explained colonial influence as that which restricts the participation of women in the African social, economic and political affairs. Women thus had relatively or little opportunity to become involved in whatever they desired. In other words, Africa's contact with European colonialism ignites gender inequality in Africa. The marginalization of women in African colonial setting as a result of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the gender relations complexities in Africa is plausible and logically contrary to the pre-colonial era.

The pre-colonial and Colonial African women identity remains what the culture of her society

defines it to be. The colonial and pre-colonial periods defined the identity of women as sexual object, property of her husband, labour machine, contributor that eats little, second class gender and a weak person. African women then live as they were orchestrated and fashioned by the society to see themselves. It was then considered an aberration in colonial Africa for women to be at the helm of affairs above men. Such women were considered rebels and persons who break social organogram. While the colonial era seems to have lightened the societal perspective on women, it only hardened it by reinforcing the limitation of women in political affairs and controlling of the societal economy.

4. The Bible and Women Identities

The Old Testament reflects a patriarchal mind set consistent with the dominant culture of the Ancient Near East, and as such, stories are told in ways that reflect a male mind set and concern³³. Women are defined by their roles in the home, many of the great women are identified only in reference to the man – Sarah is Abraham’s wife, Miriam is Moses’ sister, Rachel is the wife of Jacob, Deborah is the wife of Lapidoth, Jael is the wife of Heber and so on. The story is similar in the New Testament, Anah the daughter of Phanael, Elizabeth, wife of Zacharias was one of the daughters of Aaron, Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law, and so on. Yahweh is the God of the *fathers*, the patriarchs, making God and the divine blessings appear patriarchal and androcentric. Men often have centre stage, with women in the periphery. Cullen rightly observes that a total of 1,426 names are mentioned in the Hebrew Scripture, 1,315 are men and 111 are women³⁴. Some texts appear to be patently misogynistic, treating women as inferior to men. It seems impossible not to conclude that the Bible is written by men, about men, and for men.

King observes that while the image of God the father may convey useful ideas about the nature of God's relationship to humanity, it has come to stand for the 'reality' of a male Godhead which justifies the division of the human race into a first and second sex. Constructing alternatives to the myth of God the father represents a

challenge not only to sexism but to a value system based on domination and power.

Through the Scripture, men have constructed not only divinities, but women. Their 'divinely-inspired' texts have provided the ideological justification for women's cultural and social roles; since the central power in any ideological system names those who are its objects; in patriarchal societies men name women, but are not themselves named³⁷. Woman, like history, has been a text to be written and interpreted by man. In turn, women are induced by education, by ideological structures, by language itself, to internalize the terms in which they are named and accept it in silence as truth. In this lies the basis of their oppression.

In contrast to this assertion however, Pokrifka³⁸ proposes that a grand narrative approach can help to understand the Bible as authoritative and redemptive for both women and men. He opines that when the Bible is read with the lens of a grand narrative one will conclude that the biblical account is concerned with restoration and redemption of both gender rather than man alone. One of the goals of grand narrative hermeneutic approach is to restore and redeem injustice against women and break the back of patriarchy. Pokrifka grand narrative approach suggests that both male and female are paramount in the biblical narrative hence, biblical account is male and female narrative. The redemption story is not only to redeem male and female but to also give a lucid picture of the identity of both genders in relationship to the grand plan of God. While the Edenic catastrophe cause a distortion in the identity of both gender, extreme domination of male can be linked to the Edenic fall. Hence, the redemption and restoration story is identity inclusive.

The Bible narrative pictures identity of women under two categories of which both make a single womanhood. First, we can pinpoint those whose identities are revealed in tie to male or patriarchy. This set of individual woman's identity is based on the traditional function of woman as a wife and mother in wife-husband relationship. Their role is complementary to that of their male counterpart as recorded in the scripture. Second, are the ones whose identity is

revealed in relation to social life and civic responsibilities. They have interface with social life and hold their household identity. They ascend to prominent social seat and gain social recognition. This paper draws this dual representation of woman identity in the biblical narratives as both a woman with household role and a person in her own right. Hence, the biblical portrait of woman when considered holistically reveals womanhood with personal identity and household identity.

The first woman mentioned in the Bible is Eve, before the fall she represents the ideal of womanhood. Her identity is tied to the man, her identity finds expression in the mandate given to the man to tend and watch the garden. Sarah is another woman whose identity finds expression in the calling of her man. She controls the affairs of the house and submitted to her husband. The other matriarchs follow the same trend. Their identity is seen in the role they played with their husband. Abigail was depicted as a woman of wisdom who by her wisdom saved her home and husband from the impending destruction. Naomi travelled with her husband to the land of the Moabite she played the role of mother throughout the account in the book of Ruth. The list is replete of women in the bible whose identity is clearly revealed in the role they performed within the household. This is one of the identities of women as revealed in the bible; as wife and mother within a household relationship with little affinity to the social life.

On the other hand, the Bible gives another view of women identity as tied to their civic and social right as persons. There are women in the biblical world who have their identity construct tied to their civic and social responsibility either in the religious circle or within the political terrain. The account of Deborah the wife of Lapidoth shows a woman whose identity is demonstrated as a person capable of receiving instructions from God and giving direction to the people of God in her capacity as a leader of the people of God. Though the bible called her the wife of Lapidoth, she is tied to a man yet she had her own identity. "A female prophet sits beneath her palm tree, judges Israel, summons the war leader Barak, provides military and

tactical instructions, and accompanies the commander to battle. She publicly sings a lengthy victory song, relishing gory violence meted out to Canaanite enemies". Hence, one thing is deducible from Deborah's account that having social status for female is not inconsistent with being a woman.

The New Testament gives another perspective to the identity of woman within her society. The coming of Jesus and his ministry gives another perspective to woman identity. Jesus revealed the true identity of women when he referred to the woman who had a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13: 16) as a daughter of Abraham and the Hemorrhaging woman in Mark 5:34 as daughter - "And He said to her, Daughter your faith has made you whole". Jesus speaks not as a man to a woman, but as father to child. He identified with her and gave her a sense of belonging. She is a daughter, a very important personality having a special relationship with God⁴⁰. Jesus called her mother, Mary, "woman" in John 2:4 "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

Barsotti points out that the vocative, "woman" is a term of respect and affection which signifies Jesus recognition of Mary's choice to believe and trust in His power. It is therefore an expression of a relationship of love and freedom between Jesus and Mary. It does signify that it is as a "woman" not as Jesus' mother, that she enters the community of faith where she can ask and obtain⁴¹. The woman who anointed Jesus at Bethany shall be remembered not as a wife of any man or a mother but for her acts of love and commitment to Christ; "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me ... she has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burying. And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her" (Mark 14:3-9). She acted on her spiritual insight and understanding despite the sharp criticism that came from the men at the table who did not understand her motive, she exemplified better than anyone else the dedication that all followers of Christ should have, her act was the expression of her deep devotion and profound love for the Master.

Usman argued that, the personhood of woman can be located in the Scriptures and the dignity of the African woman can be more appreciated from that perspective than mere traditional or cultural background. The witness of the Scriptures concerning the personhood of women is attested to by the generous nature and manner in which God pours out His Spirit on “all flesh”(Joel 2:28 – 29 cf acts 2: 1 – 18).

While some women are mentioned with their identity tie to their husband there is no reference to husband or children of some in relation to their identity. Lynn H. Cohick notes that:

It is not often noted, but many stories of women in the Bible make no mention of a husband or children. Although singleness was exceedingly rare in ancient Hebrew culture, no one knows if Miriam, Mary and Martha, or Mary Magdalene ever married. In a jarring break from the culture (and without diminishing the family), the New Testament anchors a woman's identity and purpose to her relationship with Jesus rather than to her parentage, her marital status, or her children.

In the New Testament the identity of a woman is tied to her relationship with Jesus. First, she finds her purpose in Christ and tied knot with Jesus. Child bearing no longer defines the identity of the New Testament woman. Her womanhood must find expression in her relationship with Jesus and impactful living within her society.

The biblical account on women gives a suitable basis to construct women identity under two umbrellas one, is the identity of woman as a wife and mother within the established home and upon this identity she lives to complement her husband and find her joy in sacrificing for her man. Two, biblical women attain social status where she asserts her uniqueness and her prowess gaining social recognition and yet this social status does not abrogate their identity as women. Hence, the holistic picture of woman identity is the combination of her identity within household relationship – wife, mother- with her identity as a person in her own capacity in relation to her intelligence and spirituality. One does not negate the other rather both need the

other to make an ideal representation of woman identity.

5. Post-Colonial African Woman and Her Identity

Post colonialism ushers in different advancement for freedom and decongestion of certain mentality that has both element of colonialism and pre-colonialism. Post-colonialism clamour for redefinition of many issues and challenged some fundamental social order. Notable among such fundamental social order and norms is the question of the true identity of women in relation to her environment. Tyagi explained ‘Postcolonial’ as a term which suggests resistance to “colonial” power and its discourses that continue to shape various cultures, including those whose revolutions have overthrown formal ties to their colonial rulers. He further explained that postcolonial theory focuses on subverting the colonizer’s discourse that attempts to distort the experience and realities, and inscribe inferiority on the colonized people in order to exercise total control. It is also concerned with the production of literature by colonized peoples that articulates their identity and reclaims their past in the face of that past's inevitable otherness³⁰.

The era of post-colonialism critically assesses what was and what should be and tried to make differences on such. In Africa, while many male scholars in the post colonial Africa focus on redefining and reasserting the identity of Africans, the African women joined in the effort too to complete such labour. This collaboration on restructuring the image and defining the identity of African has made the women wing of African scholarship to give new answer to what should be considered the identity of women in the post-colonial Africa.

Post-colonial African woman defines her identity in relation to her person as a human being and her civic roles in the society. Contrary to the conventional “Identity card” given to them by the society which persists for ages; women are now driving a new meaning of womanhood into social consciousness that women are not weak as the society predispose and should not be

reduced to sexual object alone. Post-colonial African woman defines her identity no longer in a cultural tie to her male counterpart but on her own self-sufficient, self-dependent and social status. True womanhood in the post-colonial era is demonstrated in women capacity for economic emancipation and political participation which was not attached to her before. The post-colonial African woman engages in rigorous studies, researches, and entrepreneurship just as men, face the same condition for success and still comply with her domestic role to some extent.

The African women are now asserting and affirming their identity as a gender with intellectual and economic capacities just like men. While they still bear in mind their traditional identity as wife and mother in a husband-wife relationship, they compete with male in their place of work and area of domination. During the colonial and pre-colonial era, a woman's life is tied to that of the man from birth to death, but there is a paradigm shift today whereby many successful women are breaking tie with men and are still socially relevant. Today, African woman in her quest to find her social identity claims both hills and mountains, crawls the desert and walks the plain, travels both on land and air with men to find and establish her social identity as a capable and intellectual being. Post-colonial women are paying whatever due in the social gender interaction to assert their identity in the post-colonial era.

There are many women today who have made it to the peak of their professions and some even have males as their subjects. This is a shift from the traditional social norm. They are head of departments, CEO of great companies, Professors in higher institutions, members of the parliament, Ministers, business tycoons and Technocrats. The post-colonial women presuppose that women identity is not only to be seen in her tie to man as subject but an independent gender with unique social identity different from men.

Post-Colonial African women are in the quest of asserting and affirming their identity in the male

environment by competing with their counterpart on every stage in order to restore and establish honour and dignity of African womanhood contrary to the traditional belief that women are object of sex and belong to *both the kitchen and the other room*. The post-colonial African women did this under different scholarship umbrellas which are termed African womanism or Post-colonial African feminism that historicizes women's oppression and disempowerment in the continent by critically situating women's rights and discourses of gender equality within colonial histories. It also contests Eurocentric representations of women, current patriarchal systems of power and control on the continent as they relate to nationalism and culture³¹.

African women today seek a new definition of their identity within the society. Post-colonial African woman's quest is to establish her image within the borders of her society and change the traditional understanding that has coloured her self-image as weak and subordinate object in the society. Vigorously she engages in the socio-economy of the nation, participate in leadership role and desire to be ranked among persons of financial substance. Women in today's Africa no longer want to be seen as a weak being whose existence is tied to the fate of man but a self-sufficient and an independent being. Relatively, there is no distinction between genders in job or function specifications as women vile for identification.

However, post-colonial woman finds herself in identity crises of what she thinks about herself and what the society thinks about her. Also, she has difficulty in marrying her external identity with her internal identity which are two but holistic identity. The basis for women identity crises can be traced to the dualistic functions of women. The identity crises of African women are fostered by both internal and external pressure. Suwondo (1981) elucidates the sources of this pressure as;

Being member of a country in regard to civil rights and politics; it includes fair deal to female labour force participation, also called as external function.

Being a mother in a family and wife in the husband-wife household, also called as internal function.

While the society still thinks of her in accordance with her traditional role and function as a wife-mother, she is affirming another aspect of her identity as a social person with social identity and roles. This civic identification then becomes a trap and stance by which she is labelled as a *career woman*, a derogatory term to subsume the holistic identity of women under the old carpet of patriarchy. The society has crises in putting together the two- side identities of women in the post-colonial era which has often resulted in family crises.

The desire and quest to affirm and assert her identity as a social person with civic right and responsibility has made most post-colonial women run into identity crises. Most women are torn between their identity as wife and a mother in a husband-wife relationship and their identity as persons with civic responsibility. Many of the women in the post-colonial Africa pursue social affirmation and assentation and neglect internal identification which is defined in their tie to man in wife-husband relationship.

6. Conclusion

The desire to reinstate the female into a valued role in society is presented not as the self-indulgent preoccupation of Western feminists, but as a global social imperative, which is also linked to Jesus's mission to fight for justice and help the poor. The identity of women in Africa has continued to be a subject of contention between what the norm in the society is and the shifting of such norm by women who continue to assert and affirm their identity not only within the wall of household relationship but also in every sphere of life, both at the peak of economic, politics or academics. The significant improvement in the education of postcolonial African women has helped a great deal in redefining the identity of women. An educated woman almost and always had more value and status in the eye of both her husband and the society. She is lifted to have more awareness,

more opportunities, more choices and more confidence.

The bible gives a grand view of what woman identity is as it asserts and affirms her as a person and a human being in the society and her identity within her household. However, what makes African womanhood a true one is her ability to combine both her identity as a wife and mother with her identity as a person with civic responsibilities and social engagement without losing balance and lacking in one.

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